

Dyffryn Conwy Mountain Challenge Sunday 13th September 2015

This year, the Fabian4 Dyffryn Conwy Mountain Triathlon (pew, what a mouthful!) metamorphosed into a Mountain Challenge with the addition of a Duathlon to cater for those who do not kayak. As it turned out, there were surprisingly few entries for this option, probably because there were so many other clashing events, though the caliber of those who did enter was high.

A warm, sunny day meant that for marshals and spectators as well as competitors it was a pleasure rather than a penance to be out on the course, which has not always been the case..... As usual the route started from the bridge over the river at Conwy, carefully timed to utilize the flood tide to reach the footbridge at Dolgarrog when the water was at its highest so that getting onto the bank was easy. Despite the absence of slippery mud banks not everyone exited dry, but the only capsized was right at the start when racing boats are at their most vulnerable. The competitor concerned (Tom Dawson) quickly emptied his boat and set off in pursuit of the disappearing field to such good effect that he still finished the leg in 5th place.

For the runners, conditions were wet under foot (when are they not?) from the previous night's rain, but once the hard graft of the dreaded concrete road was past, they were able to enjoy the fast running and spacious feel of the Cowlyd valley. From the top of the ridge above the dam there were stunning views of the high mountains, and many competitors commented on the exhilarating descent into Crafnant.

Down at the event centre at Nant Conwy Rugby Club, the transition from run to bike was quickly made, and it was up into the Gwydyr forest on a course involving fast forest tracks and more technical sections of Marin trail singletrack. There were no serious mishaps, even at the notorious river crossing just before the finish, though Archie Parks was seen describing a complete somersault with his bike and pedaling off unscathed.

The men's individual Triathlon was won by Michael Mason in a time of 3:23:53, an impressive 5 minutes ahead of the first team, 'Masters of the Universe' (Jane Millar, Tom Watson and Joe Barnwell). Seventeen year old Joe Barnwell clocked the fastest time of the day for the bike leg - an astonishing 0:46:55! Last year's winner, Adam Norfolk, had to be content with second place overall this time. First lady was Louise Beetlestone in a time of 4:33:01.

The Duathlon was something of a family affair with Dan Collister winning the men's event with a creditable run time of 1:08:40, and Jo Collister winning the ladies'. Another high-achieving family was the Dallimores - Nick and Caroline - who both won their respective categories in the Triathlon.

Our thanks go to the Rugby Club for hosting the event in their clubhouse, an ideal venue, and providing much needed pasta and drinks for all. Also grateful thanks to the many local businesses who donated such generous prizes and, finally, thanks to the thirty five marshals and other helpers who gave up their Sunday to open gates, fend off traffic, and manage the sophisticated Racetek scanners that enabled race control to keep tabs on who was where and produce lists of results in no time at all. We hope to have raised a goodly sum to donate to the Snowdonia Society.

