

McGrady and Wylie win in Limavady!



Laura Whyllie showing her smooth style in the pool during the Triangle Triathlon Club's Roe Valley Sprint Triathlon challenge on Saturday. 15098KDR

THE 2018 Triathlon season kicked off in style with the annual Roe Valley Sprint Race last Saturday at the Leisure Centre in Limavady.

The event was organised by the Triangle Triathlon Club and enabled by Northern Velocity with the hard working team of Mervyn Kelly, Stephen Graham and Gavin O'Kane to the fore.

The weather on race day was helpful, with the only problem for the athletes being the strong head wind on the way out to Dungiven in the bike section. First out of the water in Wave 1 was the pre-race favourite, Laura Wylie from the Hi-Elbow club in Antrim. Despite having a lot of traffic to negotiate in the pool, Laura emerged unscathed in less than 10 minutes for the 30 length swim. This meant that each length took her less than 20 seconds!

Laura's swim was the fastest of the day. Laura was wearing number 1 and wanted to stay there! She had a very quick transition in 49 seconds and she was out on the bike section where she completed a 36.55 bike split i.e. 20 miles an hour. Her second transition was 1 minute and 4 seconds and she ran the 5K in 22.27 for a comprehensive win in 1:11:09.

In second place was the evergreen Anne Paul from the host club. Anne had a super race too, to get into second place just a 100 metres from the line where she overtook Naomi Broughton from the Olympian Club in Belfast. Anne was conceding well over 25 years but still managed to prove that talent and hard work and dedication go a long way as she secured the second spot on the podium.

In the men's race, the early pace setter was the Triangle's Joe McCrory, who finished in a great time of 1:11:09. Joe is a noted duathlete and his bike time of 30.56 was the 3rd quickest of the day. Joe's transitions still aren't great but he had a run time of just over 20 minutes to finish eventually 18th overall.

Male winner

The male winner was Finbar McGrady who only took the lead a couple of hundred metres from the line to win by 20 seconds from Andrew Bye. Finbar's swim was just over 11 minutes, his bike time was 30.13 and his run time was 18 minutes.

Andrew Bye held on for second and just behind him was Mark Diamond of the Invictus Club of Belfast. Wayne Morrow, James Clelland of the Hi-Elbow and Emmett Mullan of the North West

rounded out the top six.

First local was Colin Loughery and it was great to see Colin making a comeback after a nasty bike crash last year which resulted in a broken leg. Colin had a very consistent level of performance the whole way through the event to finish 13th overall.

Second local was Jonathan Shirley, finishing 20th in 1:11:59. Jonathan is being coached by James Walton who wasn't at the race because he was taking part in the National Aquathlon Championships at the Bull Wall outside Dublin, organised by the Pulse Triathlon Club which featured a 1K swim in the sea and a 5K beach run and James won the silver medal so it's a great start to his season.

Meanwhile, back in Limavady, Richard Baker from the club finished 31st overall in 1:17:03.

Category winner

Conor McGowan, the club's leading youngster, was 37th overall and the winner of his category in 1:18:59.

Catherine Butcher of the Triangle had a great race. She was sub 15 minutes for the swim i.e. quicker than 30 seconds a length. Her bike split was under 40 minutes and her run split was under 8 minutes a mile. Catherine finished strongly in 1:20:54.

It was great to see athletes from new Triathlon Clubs featuring, including the Island Triathlon Club from Coalisland and the Templemore Triathlon Club from Belfast, proving that this multi-disciplined sport of swim, bike, run, is getting even more popular than ever.

One of the sponsors of the race was Connected Talent and their CEO, Ryan Williams, led from the front and proudly represented his club. Ryan finishing comfortably in 77th place in a great time of 1:28:03.

Legend

There were some legends at the race as well, including Heather Bamford from the Olympian Club in Belfast. Heather is just back from the Marathon Des Sables where she ran a marathon every day for six days in a row in the Sahara Desert in Morocco i.e. the Roe Valley Sprint Triathlon was just a doddle in the park for her!

It was great also to see Ed Smyth, former head of BBC Sport NI, doing the race, just a minute behind



Members of the Triangle Triathlon Club ready for the Roe Valley Sprint Triathlon challenge on Saturday. 15064KDR

Heather. David McCool from the Triangle Club finished well in 94th place in 1:30:58 and other club members finishing and enjoying the experience, included Tommy Alan 113th in 1:36:37; Michelle McElhinney in 117th overall in 1:38:52 and Bridgeen Duddy, the stalwart of the Tuesday night swimming session finishing in 124th in 1:46:52.

There were nearly 150 entrants for the race, proving that the Roe Valley Sprint is still one of those popular in the calendar.

This weekend the circuit moves onto the Liam Ball race up in the Templemore complex in the Maiden City, organised by the North West Triathlon Club.

Thanks

The Triangle Triathlon Club would like to thank all of those who helped and made the race possible, including the sponsors, Connected Talent, Xperience (whose Iain O'Kane was also marshalling at the race); Gabriel Devlin Motors and Padraig McKaigue of McKaigue Construction. The race simply couldn't have taken place without their invaluable sponsorship.

Key marshals and workers enabling the race included the Limavady Amateur Swim Club, Men's Shed volunteers, the registration officials, club members, staff and management of the Leisure Centre and the Duty Manager, John Peart, the PSNI, Coastal Core Paramedics; the Triathlon Ireland officials, Glenn Grant of Champion Chip Ireland for producing first class results and all of those who marshalled or helped in any way.

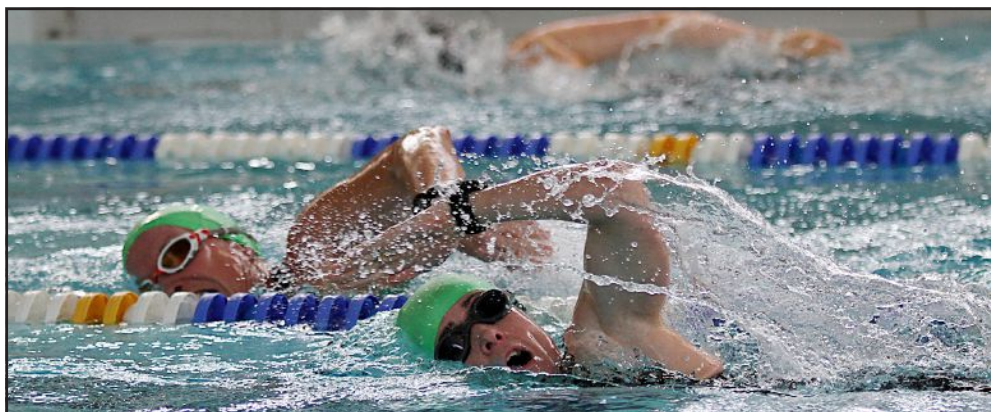
Thanks are also due to the Club's stalwart, Thomas Moore, for taking photographs which are now up on the TTC Facebook page.

All of the athletes had earned their finisher's medal and their goodie bag included a Triangle buff and a Triangle water-bottle.

The club's next race is in Portrush in June. It's the Causeway Coast Standard Distance where the Race Director is Adam Wilson and entries are available on the TI website and the date is June 16th.

The day after the Causeway race, June 17, there is a Sportive from Limavady United Football Club, registration at 9.00 a.m. bikes leaving at 9.30pm.

It's a great way to celebrate Father's Day and to support the Rotary Club of Limavady raise awareness and funds in respect of Prostate Cancer. All welcome for 20K, 50K or 100K.



Pool action at the Triangle Triathlon Club's Roe Valley Sprint Triathlon challenge on Saturday. 15093KDR



Heather Bamford reaches transition during Triangle Triathlon Club's Roe Valley Sprint Triathlon challenge on Saturday 15109KDR