

ST AUSTELL SUPER SPRINT TRIATHLON June 8th 2014

The clouds gathered and the sky darkened. The wind began to pick up and the waves became higher and more forceful.

We were given the briefing and then descended en masse to acclimatise to the waters. The tide was receding and for most it was a wade on sandy base whilst each found the way which suited them to navigate the breaking rollers which seem to be coming at increasing speed.

We left the waters and stood on the beach waiting for the start. There was an air of apprehension and for some a look of fear. The kayakers themselves were being jostled in the waters as they attempted to form a line to the first buoy.

Finally the call was given for the first wave to start. How they progressed was of much interest to those of us left standing eager to learn any tips. At last all racers were in experiencing their own journey in the best way possible. Sighting proved a problem with the second buoy turned on its side. The pull of the tide was considerable and many of us found ourselves wide of our mark resulting in retracing our steps. Quite a few felt rather sick and breathless in the first 5-10mins whether from fear (as one athlete told me) or from the turbulent waves themselves but it soon passed. Along the way those in kayaks shouted out advice to aid our direction and were in constant attendance providing much reassurance.

At last the sighting of the beach and the temporary joy this brings - a spur to race faster to reach the shore.

The run in bare feet was sandy then stony and it was with relief we reached the transition area.

As we mounted our bikes and began the cycle the clouds burst open and the rain threw down. Thankfully it was not too cold and the ride very pleasant apart from treacherous sharp turns at each end. This is the moment the run is looked forward to knowing that soon we shall be warmed up and the rain will be refreshing. The route was so pretty along the country lanes and the sea front – it was also fairly short!

The cheerful St Austell triathletes seemed to be marshalling on every turn familiar faces calling out words of encouragement.

Afterwards I asked a girl how she managed the sighting. “Oh not too bad” she replied “I followed the line of the boats” Is that reliable?

St Austell sprint is a happy event in a beautiful venue. As a participant you know that you will have hopefully finished within an hour, it has smaller numbers than other events and the route is lovely. The whole event was like a garden party for an extended family with all the fun and drama. Well done to the organisers – brilliant job.

I haven't seen the timings as yet but imagine they will be wildly spread. I say well done to all who braved the sea but especially those courageous newbies who tasted a harsh start to triathlon but faced its challenges just the same.