

Just wanted to (belatedly) let you know that the Midnightman and Brutal Double triathlons went very well. I won both both in course records and went sub 9 hours for a PB in the Midnightman which is quite a breakthrough.

The Brutal Double is what I've been looking forward to (and working up to) all year and it didn't disappoint. Definitely brutal in terms of length, course and weather.

The 4.8 mile swim in Lake Padarn was cold. We set off at 9am in torrential sideways rain. The wind caused a lot of chop and spray as well. If it was bad for me, spare a thought for Naomi who had to stand in this rain for 2 hours making sure I had everything I needed; at least I was in a wetsuit. The surrounding mountains were beautiful but you don't get much of a chance to appreciate the scenery when you are trying not to swallow the constant waves. After 2 hours and 5 minutes of swimming I exited for the last time in 6th position. It was a relief to get out and head to transition where I could get my wetsuit off, eat some food quickly and get onto the bike.

The bike course was 230 miles with 8 laps of stunningly beautiful but very hilly countryside around Mount Snowdon culminating in a climb up to Pen-Y-Pass before descending back to Llanberis. Eventually the sun came out in the early afternoon and we were treated to some beautiful views of Snowdon and then a wonderful sunset. Matt arrived with a bacon double cheeseburger which was fabulous and followed this every lap with things like hot rice pudding or chilli con carne sandwiches!

As the sunlight faded it got a bit lonely on the road. On the sixth lap I hit a large pothole going downhill towards Llanberis at 35mph and my front tyre popped and I was bouncing on a metal rim down the mountain road; thankfully I got stopped safely but my fingers were too cold and it was too dark to change my tube. I walked with the bike for 10 minutes until I got some phone signal to ring Naomi; they drove over and we swapped the front wheel and I was off again but this time they drove nearby for the remaining two laps which made me feel much easier. I finished the bike at 2:20am on Sunday morning. I was now first overall (and I wanted to stay there).

The double marathon run consisted of a run up and down Mount Snowdon and then 8 loops around Lake Padarn. Before I could go up Snowdon I had to be checked by a medic to ensure I was safe to proceed (I was!). You also need to carry a mountain pack with safety equipment and one of your support crew needs to go with you...Matt drew the short straw and we set off up Snowdon in the dark with a mixture of running and walking. Matt had been thoughtful again; he brought peperami and a music playlist with 90s dance anthems to blast out across the mountain in to the darkness. Going up Snowdon was my lowest point. My legs were moaning and all they wanted to do was sit down. One more step was one step less. We made it to the top and checked in with the medics and then went back down running. Sadly the darkness meant we had no views to enjoy but we had cracked it and once at the bottom all I had to do was 40 miles around the lake before I could rest! The eight lake laps consisted of a flat first half before a steep climb and then descent through rough trails full of rocks and tree roots. The first lap was tough and was my slowest but then I got into a pattern and managed to keep cracking out good lap times by running mostly and power walking the climbs. The sunrise was special.

The eating continued and I had developed strange cravings for rice krispies and milk. The last lap was a blur. In events like this you get to really know the other competitors, their support crews and the officials. The mutual support from everyone was essential to push through the pain and keep going. Like the midnightman, I managed to negative split the run and after nearly 9 hours, I went under the finish arch in first place completing the course in 26 hours 35 minutes, a new course record by over an hour. Completing something that I could not have thought possible 2 years ago was unforgettable. It was a team effort and there is no way that I could have completed it without Naomi and Matt's help.

I was stiff the next day but managed to get to work. Within two days I was training again (lightly) and have been able to build up and am now back on form.

Just wanted to let you know about the adventure!

I've attached some pictures. I did lap 6 in the BADAC vest and attach a picture.

Chris Cope