

Yeovil Yarns

Triathlete

Swim 1.2 miles in open water, cycle 56 miles and run 13.1 miles. That's all you need to do to complete the Outlaw Half triathlon in Nottingham.

I've done the race twice. My second time ended far too soon when I crashed my bike.

My first time went a lot better.

An early morning start saw us at the National Water Sports Center. My wife and my son were there to watch me complete the swim before setting off on the bike leg around the Nottinghamshire countryside.

The swim went well. I managed to complete it close to the time I wanted.

In transition I took my time getting myself ready for the ride to come.

I'd like to say that the bike leg went without incident, but alas I can't.

One of the lessons that you learn as a triathlete is that you never try something on race day that you've not done in training.

The cycle route for the race has two drink stations. The first is at the top of a hill and everything was OK there.

The second drink station is just after you start the second loop before returning to the finish.

Reaching the drink station I tossed an empty drinks bottle into the waiting bins, and without stopping, grabbed a fresh bottle from one of the support staff.

This was the point that I realised I had problems. What do you do with a drinks bottle when you've not practiced putting it into your bottle holder while continuing to cycle? Even more importantly what do you do when your bike starts to veer across the road towards the verge opposite?

Well, I did the only thing I could do. I dropped the bottle, hit the kerb and realising I had no chance of getting my cycling shoes unclipped, fell over; bike and all.

A couple of support staff came over and helped me get back up, checking I was OK. After I'd sorted the bike out and assured them I was fine, I got back on and head onwards. Cursing my very sore wrist.

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At transition I swapped bike shoes for running shoes and headed out on the easiest bit of the race for me, the half marathon.

Several laps of the run course later and I was finally ready to go down the finish chute. Approaching the finish, I saw my son standing alongside the course. Veering towards him I held my hand out. Running to join me, he clasped his hand in mine and we ran down the finishing shoot, crossing the line together for what was to be the only time in his life.

When I race now, he finishes with me every time because I carry some of his ashes in a pendant that I wear. He might not have been a runner or a triathlete during his lifetime, but he's certainly finished at least one marathon since he died, and there will be more races to come.