



### Pre-race

Over the last couple of years I've favoured the more relaxed, slower paced, longer distance Tri events. My last sprint triathlon was 2 years ago in Kilkenny. However, following an invitation from family friends to come visit Glin, a lovely little town nestled on the banks of the Shannon estuary in Limerick, I decided to take the opportunity to mix a family weekend away with a bit of high heart rate Tri activity. It's a fair jaunt down to Glin, nearly 2 ½ hours by car, largely motorway (to Limerick anyway) but I'd probably not make the trip unless I was staying over – Particularly given the race had a mid-afternoon kick off.

While Friday & Sunday were nice, race day weather conditions were manky from start to finish. Rain and wind can make a big difference to race tactics and performance (particularly where the bike is concerned) but the biggest pain is pre-race. Setting up, changing and waiting around in transition in cold and wet conditions is just not pleasant. The one (and only) issue I had with this whole event was the lack of shelter/changing facilities for participants pre/post-race. Maybe I've been spoilt at past events but basically you were out in the elements from transition check in to post race check out.

Registration was on the day (12pm-2pm) with the race starting at 3pm. It's a low key affair but all very well organised and managed. A professional yet friendly vibe from all concerned too. I was recognised at registration by a few Glin members who were down at the Hardman event two weeks ago and quite a few people recognised the ATC gear and commented on our clubs ever increasing profile, "looks like a great club", "you guys are flying" being a taste of several positive comments made to me over the weekend about our club.

Participant numbers were good with 136 (of the 150 registered) turning up despite the tough conditions. Triathletes of note (aside from myself and Lara representing ATC) were Tommy Wallace - a defector from ATC to Glin TC and Jimmy McNulty (aka Actor Dominic West - The Wire, 300, The Affair) who's taken up residence in Glin Castle, the 700 year old ancestral home of his late father in law **The Last Knight of Glin**. He's just another body battling the elements once the gun goes off – but I'd be sure to check his times post-race!! Competitive, me? Naaaah! No sign at the race of the other Glin celeb, former Finance Minister Michael Noonan, but he was spotted holding court that evening in a local water hole.

### The Race

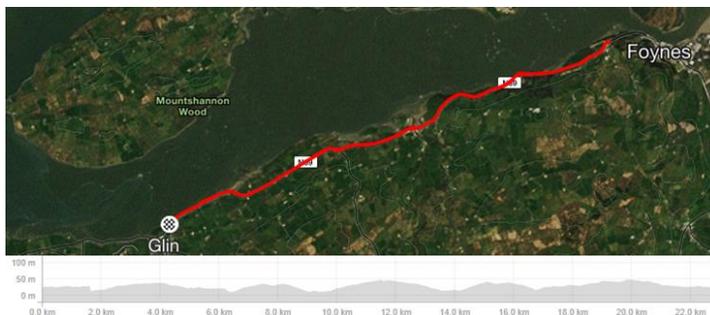
My tactics were to take care in the 750m swim, save the gas but considering the flat bike course I'd give it a good whack on the 23km route and battle through a very tough up and down 6k run course – A "Vo2 session" as the pro's would say – A nice change from the summer of long slow stuff.

**The Swim is a straight forward out & back course** in the semi sheltered (and surprisingly warm watered) banks of the Shannon Estuary. A mass start & from the off it was a proper skirmish. I positioned myself poorly and got caught up in the mayhem which I did not enjoy one bit. After the 1<sup>st</sup> 200m it calmed down and as the field stretched out it was handy enough. Slow & easy ½ half and I tried to pick it up a little on the way back. **All done 14mins 42sec** – happy enough considering the mosh pit start.



I tried not to dilly dally in T1. I even chanced leaving the shoes clipped on the bike and went sockless to save a few seconds – Out the gate in 1min 33sec (must be a T1 record for me!!)

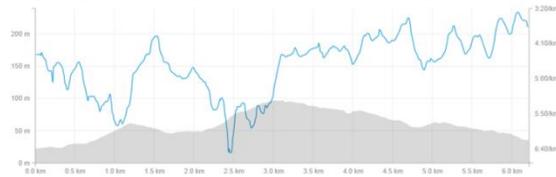
**The Bike is a beautiful scenic** route along the Wild Atlantic Way, out and back from Glin to Foynes. I love these land meets water routes, maybe it's the sea air, space and views. Maybe because I'm surrounded by either city or countryside most days, or the fact my best Triathlon experiences have all been by the sea. On this day however there was no sightseeing. I could barely see in front of me for the rain and spray from car & tractor traffic on the wet (open road) surface. It being slurry season too meant some of that splash was fair pungent! Thankfully, and due largely to the out and back nature of the bike course there were no turns or difficult manoeuvres required. Just get the head down and pedal, over a course Seamus Rowan would describe as "undulating", 150m of elevation over 23.1km. I played a game of "tag catch me if you can" with a couple of Glin TC members on the bike as we went up & down the hills/drags, which helped me keep up the effort and arrived back in T2 after 45mins (31.4kph average). A decent time for me, especially considering the conditions.



**T2** – Amazingly well supported by cheering crowds who stuck in out in the rain, I was spurred on to a quickish 2mins 11sec T2 turnaround and as always, once off the bike I was raring to go.



**The Run is a 1 loop 6.2km route**, starting at the pier and finishing in the town square. My host for the weekend very kindly drove me around the route the previous day so I'd an idea of it, but it really didn't prepare me for the 75m of climbing in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3km. Most of my running this year has been slow and steady, marathon pace and slower, low(ish) HR and controlled pace. No place for that here. I shuffled along up to the 3km point and then with John "the cadence master" Sourke in mind I stuck it into 5<sup>th</sup> gear for the downhill 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Finishing with a run time of 29mins 13sec (4:42min/km) for an all in time of 1:32:38 and 29<sup>th</sup> place overall. Chuffed with that, although I nearly had a stroke



when I checked the Garmin HR info later that evening (surprised I didn't have one during the race) but I gotta say I really enjoyed this change of pace and racing mind-set.

**Final thoughts:**

While Glin wouldn't be big on the Triathlon map, compared to say TriAthy or DCT, I'd give this event a big thumbs up & have already made plans to return in 2018. It's a TT bike dream course and a great Vo2 training day for those pushing on to marathons after the Tri season finishes up, which it now has for me. Glin has plenty of options for postrace refreshments too. Mac Pub Spy happy to recommend The Magpie Bar, Barrett's & O'shaughnessy's for quality & craic.

P.s Jimmy McNulty finished in 1:48:10, just pipping Tommy Wallace (1:48:13) & Lara (1:48:47) to **The Wire** - see what I did there!!!

