

LAUSANNE TRIATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2006

My 3rd World event so I should be experienced by now, though I still managed to start the run with my bike helmet left on! The Swiss organised the 3,000+ triathletes throughout the weekend with precision, everyone had to cover exactly the same distance so they made transition half a mile long. This added 1 ½ miles onto the distance and transition which usually takes under a minute took over 8 minutes.

The 3 qualifying events this year were Shropshire, The Dambuster on Rutland water and at Wakefield on Pugney's. To get on the GB team you need to get into the first 5 in your age group.

Getting to the airport is always a trial, as I over pack my bike bag, resulting in a unwieldy saggy mass, others seemed to be coping much better. The flight was trouble free but the coach journey took forever and we arrived late missing the opening ceremony and most of the pasta party, no veggie pasta left, I was starving.

I managed a huge breakfast, and started the day's itinerary, registration, bike practise lap, swim practise sighting, check out the run course, wander up and down the endless transition, rack my bike, team photos then team briefing, pasta and bed.

The next day was race day, my race started at 2.20, but as nerves and loud speakers woke me up at 6am I got up to watch the elite junior races. Alistair Brownlee from Leeds came in 14th off the bike and ran through the field for an amazing win, a great start. I went back to bed for a nap.

Last year I was pulled under on the swim start so I made sure that I had a clear channel, it went well, calm, not too cold with plenty of space to swim. I came 17th out of the 1500m swim, struggled out of my wet suit and ran barefoot ½ mile to get my bike. Then ran with my bike ½ mile out of transition to start the 4 lap 40k very technical bike course around the hills of the city. I'm not the best at coming at speed after a fast decent so messed up most tight turns and lost quite a few places.

Into the 10k+ run I managed to pull back some places, it was a flat 4 lap course and seemed unduly hard. I finished in 32nd place out of 66, not bad, managing to beat some women for the first time.

It was a great experience, our team very supportive and the event had a good buzz about it, made even better when Tim Don won the elite men's race and Will Clarke won the Elite u23. GB came 2nd to the USA in the medal tally in the age group races.

Next year the qualifiers are in spring for Hamburg 2007 and then more in autumn for Vancouver 2008!

Lynne Griffiths

My Super Feet

I have some great news. It's about my feet, in particular my right one – the one with one of its toes sticking out more than the rest. I think it looks cute and thought it was normal until Tracey started taking the piss. I've been looking at other peoples feet ever since – you know, in an observational rather than fetish way.

However, despite looking cute, my right foot has recently been causing me some grief. Sometimes, following a run something would tighten up like an elastic band under my foot. It would be like walking on a crooked foot. It would eventually relax but sometimes it was days later, and my sole would be painful until it did.

This problem may have been going on for some time – like a year or so. Initially there wasn't much pain and if there was it recovered fairly quickly so it didn't really register – it felt like my feet were aching that's all. It eventually got worse and worse until I realised that I needed professional help, and importantly I had the Ultra Trail Mount Blanc coming up that will whittle away at any weakness.

I did a bit of asking around and Andrew at Rebound (Settle) seemed to be one of the better foot specialists. I have not looked back since. A few things surprised me, as follows:

- He didn't put my Walshes in the bin. Whilst not recommended for training runs he understood that they were useful for races. No mention was made about cushioning but of the shoe's lateral movement. For instance grab a shoe, one hand on the heel and the other holding its toes, and twist. We apparently should be looking at shoes/trainers that don't twist so much. Clearly this would help to prevent twisted ankles.
- He didn't ring up the nutty farm, although he did comment that his worse customers (or should that be best) are either fell or ultra marathon runners. Worryingly I tick both boxes.
- Often there is no reason why trainers shouldn't last more than 500 miles. Being a Toddy, surrounded by those skinflint Yorkshire folk, I didn't believe this anyway, but it was reassuring being told by an expert. He would recommend changing trainers whenever the misses gets a handbag, or change them whenever the cushioning at the heel is deforming or the uppers are damaged.
- He examined my feet and found that I have inflamed my Plantar Fasciitis.
- I nipped on the treadmill, which showed that I have slight over-pronation. He suggested 'Super Feet' (www.superfeet.com) which offer off the shelf arch support.

He suggested that I take a trip to George Fisher in Keswick and speak to a lady called Lisa. Not only did she sort me out with Super Feet but also introduced me into Montrail trainers. I've been wearing Super Feet ever since and have no problem. My cute feet are now getting stronger and stronger, and I've not had a blister since (apart from on the UTMB – but everyone did).

Some advice then - get assistance sooner rather than later. Failing this strengthen your Plantar Fasciitis by rolling your foot over a baked bean tin – this is what the expert said.

Rhys Watkins