

Sussex Triathlon Festival 2012

The 2nd year of the Sussex Tri Festival, organised by TL Sports Events, offered three distances to race. Sprint, Standard and the all new Middle – all set from the stunning grounds of Ashburnham Place near Battle, East Sussex.

“The whole team have been looking forward to this event for many months, as the 2011 feedback was so positive and this Festival Weekend of triathlon has so much to offer the athlete. The addition of our first Middle distance triathlon to our event portfolio was very exciting.” Paul Holdaway, Director of TL Sports Events.

All three races were capped and sold out at 200 entries, ensuring a high quality event for each distance as the weekend grew in its 2nd year, this also meant each race could have a mass start creating a true and honest race.

The Standard race took place on Saturday morning. The weather was kind to the athletes and held off for the entire race. The two lap 1500m lake swim started at 8am, with some very quick swimming, the first athletes exited the Lake around 20 minutes. Once out onto the 2 x 20km tough bike course around the East Sussex lanes, the race turned into a battle between two athletes, Adrian Elliott, (2011 winner) from Eastbourne's Bodyworks XTC, and the well-known and experienced Trace Harris. These two athletes continued to compete on the two lap run course within the Ashburnham Place grounds. Heading into the 2nd lap Trace Harris managed to open a small gap of 20 seconds and held to take the win, a very fast running Tom Simpson taking 3rd place overall with the quickest run split of the day. The female race was led from start to finish by local Bodyworks XTC athlete and 2011 winner Emma Richards. Nici Cahusac, RG Active Race Team, was chasing hard on the run to take 2nd with Laura Reid taking 3rd.

Onto the Sunday, the rain had been hammering down all night and was torrential at 5am, but that was the worst over with short showers throughout the rest of day. The run course had to be altered to avoid the worst of the downhill mud slide, which shortened the Sprint distance to just under 5km and the Middle run to around 18.5km, but the nature of the course still made it a tough challenge.

The Sprint race was won by local athlete and well known runner, Nigel Gates, taking his first tri win in 1:16:23, with Robert Hoodless in 2nd and Lloyd Hooper in 3rd. Local Bodyworks XTC athlete Sue Fry took the female win with Liz Lumber and Rachel Baker making up the top three.

112 athletes started the first Sussex Middle Distance Tri, 1900m swim, 85km bike and 18.5km run. The bike route was made up of a large 60km hilly route followed by a 25km loop with athletes entering back into the Ashburnham grounds between the two laps for some encouragement from friends and family. 4 run laps awaited the runners, with probably the most muddy and wet conditions having had 2 races complete the course before them.

Matt Lawrence, took the lead on the bike with a 2:39 split and held on the run (1:39) to take the win, closely followed by Phil Gall and Peter Harrison. Susan Fairfax of Crystal Palace Tri Club took the female win, putting in the quickest bike split of the day for the females and placing 10th overall for the race. Susie Casebourne, local Bexhill athlete, was chasing hard on the run, posting the 3rd quickest run split of the race in 1:29:26 and claiming 2nd place, with Sharon Young making up the top 3 females.

All three distances are now gaining a reputation of being amongst the most challenging but scenic races in the UK.

Huge thanks to all the marshals and volunteers, the athletes for their enthusiasm in the wet conditions, the sponsors TheTriStore.com for their continued sponsorship, Sussex Sport Photography and all the TL Sports crew for making the Sussex Triathlon festival bigger and better, and we hope to continue that trend in 2013! Keep posted on other events at www.tlsportsevents.co.uk facebook/tlsportsevents or @tlsportsevents