

## **COPENHAGEN IRONMAN 23rd AUGUST 2015.**

### **RACE REPORT – Mick Fishwick**

It had taken me 10 months of hard work on a Dave Brayer training Plan to get ready to take on the Ironman distance. I celebrated my 61st Birthday on the Wednesday and we arrived in Copenhagen early on the Thursday. Checked in, bike assembled and tested, then off to Amager Beach to assess the swim location and T1. 8 laps of Lavender patch is one thing but seeing a 3.8k course mapped out in one lap is another. It looked big. A 60 minute swim in choppy sea water confirmed my thoughts. I definitely wasn't looking forward to the swim.

As preparations followed over the next few days the weather got warmer. Colin and family arrived and the MVH supporters joined us. Focus and anxiety increased, as Carb' loading continued. Saturday arrived and the bike was racked, bags dropped, then, early evening meal and bed. Not much sleep was had.

**Sunday 4:30am** alarm, breakfast, then a 50 minute journey to the start point at Amager beach to witness the sunrise, and start the day's preparations. Water temperature was announced as 21 degrees. It had all the signs of a very warm day for an Ironman. The Pro's started at 7am. Age Groupers followed at 10 minute intervals. Colin and I started at 8am and I quickly settled into a steady rhythm. Keeping well wide and avoiding trouble. There was plenty around and the water was a little choppy on the downward leg, but progress was steady. Around 1800m returning under a bridge I wrapped my legs around the stanchion and took a gel. It obviously affected my compass because about 10 minutes later I felt big push on the shoulder as a Norwegian hit me and both of us nearly collided with a safety kayak. It was then I saw I was in the middle of the lagoon, in choppier water and a long way from the shorter route the others were taking. Plenty of catching up to get back on the right track. 1hr 22 and I was very happy to be running out of the water. The changing tent was gridlocked and more time was lost. So it was a relief to splash on the factor 30, grab the bike and run to the mount line and my first view of the Yellow Tee shirts of the MVH supporters. No one could miss the screaming shouting hoard from England. They were brilliant. Smiles, waves, banter a quick pose for the paparazzi then off on the 112. I knew I was well down on where I wanted to be, but I'd finished the swim.

Skirting the City and dropping onto the coast with a side wind made life difficult but it could have been worse. Roads were good, progress swift and the HR kept just below threshold. Nutrition and fluids were on the bike so I passed the aid stations until I reached the special needs stop at 60 miles. The MVHers had made it there and a screaming mental hoard welcomed me with cheers, banners and encouragement. I ditched the empties and reloaded. Quick waves, chat, and smiles and off again. I was feeling strong and progress was good. The southerly loop had taken in a changing headwind but I had trained for it and made good progress as the course looped around and lap 2 started. Heading north up the coast again and into the countryside with rolling hills. Aid stations were passed again and a few hours later I returned through the special needs area and headed towards the City and T2. Quickly passing one tiring competitor after another, I was flying. A right turn, into a narrow carpeted street, dismount and handed the bike to the waiting T2 crew, snapped the Garmin off its mount, and a sprint into the tent. Run muscles fired up immediately.

The MVHers had been waiting on the approach to T2 screaming, shouting, and banner waving. That gave me such a big lift. I caught my first glimpse of Colin in the tent as I made up for the poor swim and slow T1 with a 4 minute T2, followed by a sprint through run out onto the 4 lap marathon course.

The sun shone and it was hotter than it should have been but I was surprised at how good I felt. After a few minutes I caught Colin and we had a brief chat. Both of us running and feeling good. His run strategy was different to mine and I was soon on my own. The Dave Brayer mantra Heel, Hips, Head was playing on a loop in my head. Water at aid stations, taking banana, gel and a salt tablet each lap. Drenching my head and thighs, whenever I could, to keep the body cool. The pace never let up, the HR always just below threshold. The mantra was constant as I maintained good form. Sarah Langford was waiting at the half marathon point with Sarah Clark and my special needs bottle. The yellow shirted MVHers were constantly changing their location and surprising me from new positions. They were awesome. My energy levels were high the Tiger was still in the cage and I pushed on. As I collected the 3rd coloured band I felt strong and focussed. I'd made up for the poor start and I was feeling powerful on the run. My son-in-law ran with me at an aid station and told me that tracker was predicting a finish time of 12hrs 11mins. I was astonished, I couldn't believe it, I made him repeat it. Only 1 more lap to go. Head up, mantra playing on a loop, HR steady but touching threshold, legs fast solid and strong. I was constantly overtaking others on the cobbled and uneven surfaces, the winter XC training was paying off and I was motoring. Onto the final turn outside the Palace into the long straight around the monument and right into the finish chute. The emotion was high the speed was constant; the crowd deafening and as I turned onto the blue carpet the MVHers surprised me again and went mental. Arms rose, beaming from ear to ear, shouting and yelling at everyone on the run towards the finish line. I heard my name announced "Michael Fishwick you are an Ironman"

**12 hours, 11 minutes and 32 seconds** on the display. I couldn't have dreamt this.