

Race Report – Left Bank Triathlon

Written by Neil Armstrong

The fast growing popularity and interest in the annual Left Bank triathlon was immediately apparent to me this morning as I hunted for that rock star park close to the transition area.

With all the best spaces taken at 5.30am it was obvious that the triathlon rock stars had all got up earlier than I today and swooped into the best parks at the crack of sparrows. No red carpet for me! I later found out that numbers were up 150 on last year's event!

Riverside Road was alive and kicking with heaps of spirited individuals all pushing their bikes and furiously gossiping with fellow competitors, friends and family. A real positive vibe filled the registration area as everyone prepared, racked and tagged!

It's always good to see familiar faces before a race. Jane Yovich, Yvonne and Peter Rash, Barry and Julie De Jong, Di Oliver, Katrina Geyer were all looking pumped!

Steve Doyle helped to make registration much easier this year by forwarding race numbers to everyone in advance. This meant no registration queues (that I experienced anyway) and bike racking made easy through first come best dressed policy. Better than numbered racks (in my opinion)

Steve also did a great briefing and left sensible timing gaps between each of the subsequent wave starts which all got off pretty much on time.

Despite being the last wave off the mark it didn't take long before we were being called to the start. The breeze had picked up early and I had thankfully ticked the wetsuit box as the Doctor had also made an early show having got up early with the rockstars. Even the hardened ones amongst the pack were beginning to shiver!

With 1min 30 to go we made our way into the river and lined up opposite the yellow yacht as instructed. With a good clean start everyone soon got into rhythm and I was quickly surrounded by the pack. With the tide behind us it wasn't long before exit and I made good progress up the beach towards T1 before quickly losing the wetty at the bike rack.

The hill on Riverside Road provides a nice "post swim surprise" and soon gets the HR ramping up. I wanted to get my feet into the shoes well in advance of the hill to help build up some speed. The gel would have to wait.

The 4 lap course went quickly and I thankfully made up some ground on the others overtaking more than had managed to swoop past me. Drafting was definitely not prevalent amongst the packs (that I saw) and everyone appeared to be making an effort to keep left. Steve's sensible wave start timing had indeed provided adequate space for a safe and un-crowded course (during my cycle anyway!)

Rolling downhill before T2 is always a nice bonus and provided some rest to the legs before hitting the uphill minus the bike!

I was pleased with the transition and made a quick exit towards the road on to a busy run leg. A stronger runner past me and gave me the incentive I needed to step up my pace to the next gear just in time for the up slope! The return leg of the loop helped increase my cadence and I soon found a nice rhythm and made my way back to transition ready for lap 2. The hill was just as unforgiving second time around but I worked the arms one last time before the 180 turn at the summit.

I recognised the hairy legs (!) of a fellow competitor who had overtaken me on the bike and made a quick pursuit just in case I was missing the opportunity of a podium place. A quick calculation of remaining distance to finish and subsequent sprint took me past him and across the line. All done.

Was very proud to get a podium third place at this race after coming so close at Bunbury with a fourth!

Congratulations to Steve Doyle for a very well organised race and to all who took part and enjoyed this fabulous local event!

Well done too to my friend and colleague Tony Bartlett who successfully finished his first Triathlon today, without stopping! Good on yer mate!