

Blenheim Triathlon Race Report, May 2005

750m open water swim, 20km bike, 5.2km run

There was the hope we could have an exchange varsity match at the beginning of the year: one year in Cambridge, the next in Oxford. So we had made the offer to Cambridge to organise the first such varsity match in Cambridge as part of the Cambridge triathlon. It was a good idea that did not materialise as Cambridge complained they had to marshal the triathlon and there would not be enough of them competing. We then made them an offer, to have the varsity match at the Blenheim triathlon. The Blenheim organisers were keen and would give us discounts but on the downside they needed from us 20 marshals. Cambridge protested it was too close to Oxford. Definitely a case where you cannot win. So for the third time, varsity was held in neutral ground, equidistantly from Oxford and Cambridge - in Eversholt. But we reached a last ditch agreement with the organisers for a downscaled match between two teams of three and we entered a small team for Blenheim in a trial open water varsity match: James Nichols, Glenn Allen and Kelly Thornber.

Does anyone know who competed for Cambridge and whether we've beaten them? That was the question afterwards. We sought the answer far and wide, even far far to the east. It turned out Cambridge had not entered a team. The organisers had used their places up and as no volunteers materialised from our club to marshal the course, Cambridge was left without cheap entries, in fact no entries at all and not even time to enter. This was not foreseen.

Despite the lack of opposition, there were some good results. Fantastic times from everyone in the swim, especially Kelly's who beat all the men! Derek Li, Nick Aggelopoulos and Mark Ryan also competed for a laugh - maybe even for a cry as in the mayhem of 1200+ male cyclists competing for roadspace, Mark was knocked off his bike and broke his wrist. The course is at places flat and easy but takes in one hill with a sharp turn at either end. Not everyone's handling skills were up to the challenge and traffic jams ensued, with much swearing and chains falling off the chainrings. And on the flat you were not supposed to draft, you just had to ride away from 1200 other cyclists. The run was scenic and the crowds were out in the sun (and even in the rain) to cheer everyone on, which made for something of a party atmosphere.