

Tri, tri, tri again for triple triathlon winner, Iain

Iain Veitch has posted a third win in the annual Edinburgh New Year Triathlon based on a swim in the Commonwealth Pool followed by laps of Holyrood Park on both bike and foot.

Here the 41-year-old who, in 2023, won a trilogy of races featuring the highest peaks in Scotland, Wales and England, tells, in his own words, the story of his triumph in the 27th instalment of an iconic sporting event.



The running leg of 5.8 kilometres around Arthur's Seat concludes the triathlon for adult competitors like Iain Veitch.

"The New Year's Day triathlon is a real bucket list event in the Scottish/British racing calendar.

"With around a third of competitors being first time triathletes it has served as a gateway for a lot athletes, including myself.

"It also serves as a great test event for the more serious athletes looking to see where their winter training has taken them – or as a kick up the backside to shake off festive indulgences!

"The swim is over 400 metres and athletes start one at a time

based on their predicted swim time. The slowest start first and the fastest last.

“I was number 391 which meant I had about an hour to wait from the race starting and had approximately nine competitors starting after me.

“The facilities are fantastic and its actually good fun sitting around the pool deck taking in the atmosphere.

“I had been swimming reasonably well recently but managed to fluff the short 400m swim (so) by the end all nine who started behind me had gone by and I knew I had my work cut out.

“The bikes and running kit are kept outside and while the weather was better than could have been the cold was still a slap in the face after the warmth of the pool.

“I opted for speed over putting on additional layers and hoped I wouldn't regret it.

“The route goes downhill in the park and then takes in three clockwise loops of Arthur's Seat. It's almost all up or down with a couple of short, flat sections.

“Soaking wet and heading downhill in a skimpy triathlon suit at approximately 60 kph towards Holyrood Palace there was some serious questioning going on in my mind as I was already freezing.

“After the first uphill section I started to defrost and it was here I caught sight of the fast guys including a couple of pre-race favourites (one a GB under-23 internationalist) so was able to focus on catching them instead of the cold.

“I passed the guys I thought I needed to on the first main hill but due to the format of the start I was never totally sure who was ahead or behind so had to keep a reasonably honest pace throughout.

“One of the great things about the Edinburgh New Year triathlon is that number of vocal spectators which definitely added a buzz.

“Completing the bike section I was reasonably sure I had a lead so didn't need to rush things which is just as well as it is amazing how complicated a bike helmet buckle and putting (running) shoes on can be with frozen fingers!

“I wanted to enjoy the one lap run of a hilly 5.8 k distance but also didn't want to throw the race by being complacent.

“(So) I kept a decent pace while taking in the sites and sounds, the stunning backdrop.

“As a venue the Edinburgh course is hard to beat.

“Another positive is that you are never alone and whether the fastest or slowest there are always other athletes pushing themselves often wheezing encouragement or sharing suffering.

“Overall, it is a brilliant event and highly recommended.

“Recently, though, the rising cost of hiring the venue and road closures have put pressure on the organisers to actually break even.

“This year with the help of Rockstar Games it went ahead and I hope they can find a way to continue what is an annual tradition for some and a stepping stone into triathlon for many.”



A biked up Iain Veitch described the Edinburgh New Year's Day triathlon course as "stunning".