

WAKFIELD NATIONAL AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS 2006
2ND JULY (OLYMPIC DISTANCE)

On the 1st July I travelled up to Wakefield with a friend, Sandra and her husband. Sandra Blenkinsop was hoping to retain her title in the 45-50 year age group and I was hoping to compete well in the 40-45 year age group.

We left home at around 10.30am on the Saturday and finally got there just in time to register and then get back to our accommodation before a lazy afternoon of watching the football.

We were both off at 7.30am (19-25 year old women and 40+ age groups) so doing my usual getting up as late as possible meant that we were the last people to leave in the morning. The recommended Days inn hotel was only 5 minutes from the start, but that didn't stop some people getting up at 3.30am when they weren't off until 6.30am. One of them was in the adjacent room unfortunately.

The whole race was based in a very attractive Country Park surrounding a huge 12ft deep lake. Wetsuits were optional.

My swim went as well as it could have done with the amount of swimming I've been doing. It was then into transition. Getting my wetsuit off was as hard as ever, and I had a terrible time trying unsuccessfully to get my feet into my bike shoes whilst they were on the bike. This was only my second attempt at ever doing this and I managed to crash into a series of bollards right in front of a group of marshals. (I really have to practice this more. It looks so easy on the telly) My race was nearly over. By the time I had sorted myself out I was told I was 3 minutes down on the leaders and there were about 7 of them in front.

The bike course was the hardest Olympic distance one I have done. The first 30 minutes was uphill. This was followed by lots of undulations before hitting two very steep hills with about 5 miles to go. It suited the runners in the field more than usual as it was more about aerobic fitness than power.

I gradually caught all of the women by around ¾ of the way around, and then it was just a matter of trying to put in enough time to attempt to stay away on the run.

The run was pancake flat, 4 times around the lake. The sun had come out by this time and was blazing hot. I started running ok but knew from Sandra's husband that I only had around a minute and a half over the next woman in my age group.

With about a lap to go she overtook me and there was nothing I could do about it as much as I tried.

Sandra managed to win her age group in 2.36

I was 2nd in mine in 2.23 which is the slowest I've ever done for this distance. It did however make me feel better when Sandra said she had been 13 minutes slower than Shropshire which was two weeks ago over the same distance.

Emily Bright was 1st in her age group and had one of the fastest swims out of the men and women. Her cycling is improving rapidly and her running going well.

Ruth

