

Abu Dhabi International Triathlon

Race Report

Andrew and Imee Macpherson – Lantau Buffalos



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Introduction

Abu Dhabi hosted its first international triathlon event in 2010 with 500 competitors.

Such was the success of that inaugural event that this year the number of competitors coming from 51 countries, swelled to over 1,500.

This year there were 65 Elite Triathletes including many World Champions such as Craig Alexander, Chris McCormick, Julie Dibens and Linda Cave.

The race comprises 3 distances:

Long: 3km / 200km / 20km

Short: 1.5km / 100km / 10km

Sprint: 0.75km / 50km / 5km

The course commences with the swim which starts on the white sand beach at the back of the US\$3billion, 6 star Emirates Palace hotel. The clean, calm and turquoise blue waters make the swim a real pleasure.

Once out of the sea, competitors proceed through a fresh water shower to Transition 1, a huge Marquee in the grounds of the Emirates Palace.

The bike course covers the tree-lined roads of Abu Dhabi which are closed for the race. To the east of the city the bike route passes over Saadiyat Island and on to the new sports and leisure development known as Yas Island. Competitors cycle round the Yas Marina Circuit which hosted the final race of the 2010 F1 season.

After racking your bike and passing through the Transition 2 Marquee, the run section of the course is around the coastal boulevard to the west of the city known as the Corniche. The finish line is in the middle of the Corniche.



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Pre-Race Day

Registration and the race briefing were held at Khalidiya Palace, the official race hotel.

The goodie bag included sun block, heat rub, a badge from the Abu Dhabi Tourist Board and some other items but unfortunately the 2XU event tee shirt had to be purchased for AED150.

The Race Director was very experienced having run the London Triathlon several times in the past and the whole briefing was very professional.

Whilst in the hotel I bumped into Craig Alexander.



After registration and the race briefing, competitors had to proceed to T1 to rack their bikes and place their gear in blue bags ready for the bike leg.

Running gear was placed in red bags and hung on pegs in the Marquee for T2.



During the racking of the bikes we noticed the large number of professionals taking part. They had their own special bike racks complete with name and country of origin. Their bikes were being scrutinized and admired by the other participants.



Many of the pro's could be seen in the bike rack and the T1 area and they seemed very friendly and approachable. I met Chris McCormick the current Kona World Ironman Champion.



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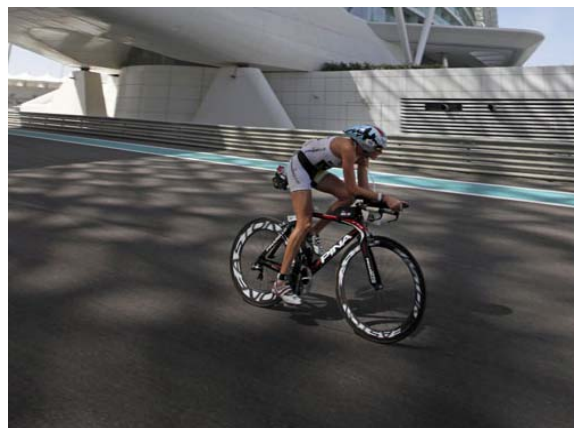
Race Day

Race Day started with a 5:00am wake up call followed by a couple of bananas and short car journey to the Emirates Palace.

It was quite cold first thing in the morning although the forecast was for a hot day.

The race was started in waves commencing with the Elites who did two swim legs.

Then it was the turn of the amateurs. Imee and I got ready to start our races. The water was 22 degrees which at first felt a bit chilly but turned out to be an ideal temperature.



The bike leg was fantastic. The roads were wide, generally flat and fast. Although the temperature rose to 35 degrees there was a cooling breeze. The highlight of the bike leg was one circuit around the new Formula 1 track at Yas Island. Competitors entered into the spirit of being on a race track and it was clear extra effort was being used down the home strait.

After racking the bike and quickly changing into run gear, the run leg around the Corniche was spectacular.



We both finished the race quicker than we had estimated. Very happy!



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Post Race Day

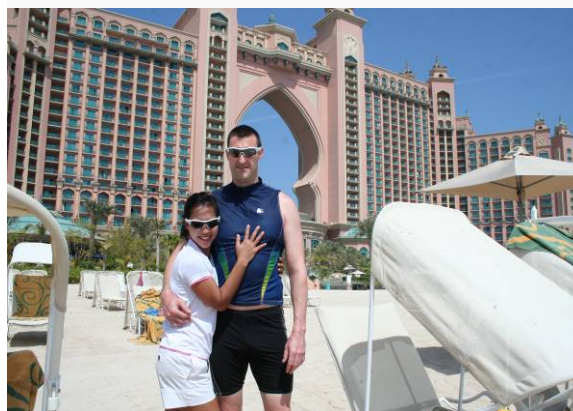
The day after the race commenced with a huge breakfast as we had not fully replaced the several thousand calories expended the day before (at least that was our excuse!).

We spent the rest of the day touring Abu Dhabi and marveling at the amazing buildings, most of which have been built in the last 5 years.

One of the most amazing buildings to see in Abu Dhabi is the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. This Mosque is the 3rd largest in the world.



After Abu Dhabi we drove one hour up the coast to Dubai where we spent the next 3 days. We stayed at the Atlantis Hotel which is located at the far end of the Palm.



Atlantis is known for its massive Aquarium which is home to over 65,000 fish.



Dubai has amazing water parks.



Evenings were spent with Tom and Theresa who we would like to thank for their hospitality.



We will definitely be going back in 2012!!



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