

Olympic Distance Event: Sarnian junior claims category victory and finishes 20th overall

Thornton makes a winning debut at Windsor Triathlon

TRIATHLON

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MAX THORNTON mixed it with the seniors and romped home to class victory in the Olympic distance Windsor Tri in a time of 2hr 11min. 24sec.

Thornton, a Guernsey Triathlon Club junior development member, who turned 17 the day before the race, finished as first youth and 20th place overall out of a field of more than 1,600 athletes.

'All the competitors were tense because we had seen some of the weaker swimmers hauled out by the safety boats because of the strong currents caused by the storms two days earlier,' said Thornton as he recalled lining up with 120 other 17-29 age-group triathletes.

'The first leg of the swim was 800m up river so I headed towards the opposite bank where the current was at its weakest. At points the river was shallower and the weaker swimmers were making the most of it with some cheeky running when no one was looking.

'I managed to catch up to three waves in front of me, pushing through groups of weaker swimmers from the earlier waves. I came out of the water second in my wave in a time of 21-09.'

The following 42km cycle was over a smooth course with many of the roads closed, although Thornton did have brief trouble with traffic.

'About halfway round I got held up by a caravan, but once I overtook that, it was plain sailing,' he said.

'With so many people on the course, the road was very busy and many of them were clearly breaking the non-drafting rules.

'There was a long downhill run into transition through the glorious Windsor Great Park, but I didn't have much time to take in the view as I was averaging over 25mph and holding on tightly to my tri-bars. The bike leg isn't my strongest discipline, but my time was still a credible 1-06-58.'



Max Thornton striding to victory in his age group at the Windsor Triathlon.

Thornton then had the 10km run to tackle.

'The run comprised three laps through Windsor, past the castle and over the Thames into Eton. There was a killer hill up from the river to the castle which many of the competitors struggled with,' he said.

'By the third lap, it seemed like the whole of Windsor was on the running course, with more barging and "politely" moving people

out of the way.

'In the end I finished with a time of 2-11-24, a PB by five minutes, first in my age, ahead of some GB Junior triathletes and 20th overall out of 1,630 competitors.

'I was extremely happy with my time given this was my second attempt at an Olympic-length event, but there are clearly areas I can improve on,' added Thornton.

Six other Guernsey Triathlon Club members also took part in

the race.

Richard Stapley finished in 2-14-41, Tim Andrews in 2-16-32 and Andrea Nightingale in a time of 2-49-30.

In the sprint race, Carol-Anne Stapley finished in 2hrs exactly, Richard Le Tocq in 2-06 and Joana Stapley in 2-10.

Thornton's attention now turns to the inter-insular triathlon, sponsored by the Ana Leaf Foundation, taking place this Sunday

in Jersey.

Mark Naftel, president of Guernsey Triathlon Club, said: 'It's great to see young Guernsey triathletes competing on the bigger stage at UK events, particularly with Max hoping to represent Guernsey in the Jersey Island Games in 2015.'

'This is a spectacular result for him and bodes well for his development and for the island triathlon squad overall.'

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