

Ironman France 2010

17 members of East Essex Triathlon club are about to tackle the second toughest Ironman in the world in Nice on 27th June 2010. I have had the pleasure of knowing and training with each of these club members and as is now customary I have written a short introduction to each of the club members tackling this event. While East Essex Tri Club is not an Ironman only club and we pride ourselves on our inclusive and openness we still have to recognise the exploits of our club members who dedicate so much of their time to prepare for and race in an Ironman. Of course none of these athletes could get anywhere near the start line without the support and love of their families and for this they are all eternally thankful. There are 17 people starting this race, there will be 17 reasons for taking part and there will be 17 emotional stories to tell come the night of the 27th.

Well done to each one of you for getting this far and best of East Essex Tri Club luck to you all!!

John 'Smiffy' Smith



This is John's second Ironman, having completed Ironman Austria in 2008. John scouted the region around Nice last year while competing in Ironman 70.3 Monaco and loved the area so much he decided to return for the longer event and add to his ever increasing tattoo collection! Preparations were going well for John until a nasty crash on the Hill of The Down sportive. However, in typical Ironman fashion, John dusted himself down applied some liquid plasters and is now rearing to go – even with horrible blisters under his feet which make even walking painful and require tight binding before he cycles or runs. John is famous for his 'lets

ave it East Essex' war cry before each event (and it's hard to argue against someone of John's build and loud voice!)

Charlie 'Chas' Baynes

The ever youthful Chas is taking on his third Ironman – following his success in Switzerland and Austria. Chas has had an eventful few months of Ironman preparations – a fractured cheek during a charity rugby match and a fall along the Southend Sea front have failed to slow Chas. Already a strong gazelle like runner he now is among the quickest bike riders in the club. Chas also somehow manages to get faster the longer he swims – so he'll have plenty of time to get faster over the 2.4 mile swim. Chas doesn't appear to know what pain is – especially when there is a challenge. Will Chas break 11 hours? You wouldn't want to bet against it!



Ian 'Iron' George



Ironman France will be Iron's third Ironman – like Chas Iron has conquered Switzerland and Austria. Iron really excels at the Ironman distance event, relishing the challenge of mixing training, work and a young family. Iron manages all his training early in the morning before most mortals have even awoke. Iron may have a unorthodox swim stroke – but it's hard to argue with a 6 minute 400 metre swim time. Iron makes hill cycling look ridiculously easy (as was witnessed in a recent copy of cycling weekly where Iron was pictured conquering York

Hill in Kent). This skill will come in handy on the hilly Nice course. As an experienced triathlete Iron is always available to willingly share his knowledge and can always be depended upon to lead from the front. Watch out for another quick time in Nice for Iron!

Andrew 'heart rate' Wood

The new man with a plan, Andrew set out a two year plan with his coach Graham Hart, to tackle an Ironman before he turned 40. So Andrew will stand on the start line at Nice, 1 week shy of his 40th birthday – what planning! Andrew's training plan was analysed and followed to the nth degree with a dedication rarely seen outside the professional and elite athletes. Proof is in the pudding with a recent win in the club championship and a great time when finishing the recent Beaver middle distance triathlon. Andrew will start Nice in the form of his life ready to challenge for the honour of being the first East Essex Tri Club member over the finish line.



Richard 'Big Engine' Fuller

Richard interrupted his plan of Ironman every two years to join the team for Nice. Richard really likes the challenge of difficult Ironmen, having already conquered Lanzarote and the Norseman. Richard didn't earn the name 'big engine' lightly as he appears not to know how to slow down – just look at his facebook picture where he kept going despite near exhaustion to cross the New Forest middle distance in under 5 hours. It is rumoured that Richard does sleep – but no one has seen this yet. Richard is a very strong cyclist and an even better runner – constantly reaching 'good for age' marathon times. Richard is another of the club members for whom the Ironman has been invented.

Dan 'Wind is your friend' Stuart

Dan is one of life's 'glass is half full' guys. Even when training in terrible weather conditions Dan manages to put a positive spin on the conditions with phrases like – the wind is your friend when training! When Dan takes the lead in the peloton, heads drop as you know it's going to be a hard day in the saddle. But at least you know you'll have a good sleep that night. A man who never seems to tire on the bike – probably because of his long distance MTB cycling background. Dan is also one of the most encouraging people you can meet – happy to cycle at anyone's pace – as long as he is out on his bike. Dan is another of the club's multi (this will be number 4) Ironmen. (Dan pictured first on left)



Zena 'Captain Marvel' Shean



When it looked like there was going to be a large number of club members entering Nice then Zena stepped up to represent the ladies and signed up for her second Ironman O (never one to miss out on a party!). Zena has spent a lot of time strengthening her core this year and the results can be seen on the bike this year and if she spent a little less energy thanking all the marshals then Zena's time trial times would be at least 2 minutes quicker. Already a strong swimmer and runner, Zena's newly found cycling strength should see her excel in Nice (dare one whisper Hawaii?)

Graeme 'Silky' Silcock

Graeme, the youngest club member to tackle his first Ironman in Nice, didn't have the best start to his training this year. A pair of dodgy knees meant Graeme could only spend the first 2 months swimming. Graeme has defied the odds and with a steely back bone and a dedicated training plan and now stands ready for the Ironman challenge. Graeme has also taken his love of triathlon to the next level by starting his own online triathlon merchandising store



Adam 'Smiley' Gordon



It's Ironman number one at Nice this year for Adam. Having cleverly arranged his wedding for late last year, Adam was clear this year to train for Nice. Adam came into triathlon with a strong swim pedigree. Adam really improved his cycle strength and is now almost unrecognisable from the man who struggled to keep pace with the second 'slow' cycle group last autumn. Adam, really impressed with this time in the recent tough cycle event, 'King of the Downs', with it's 9000 feet of climbing. Adam should keep the group in a cheery mood with his ever present smile and positive outlook.

Lee 'Mankini' Runciman

Lee is back at Nice for another go at the second hardest Ironman in the world. This year Lee will pack extra Imodium with the aim of keeping his socks on his feet for the full race. Lee is now a seasoned Ironman and will be tackling race number 4 at Nice. Lee also has the largest m-dot tattoo you'll ever see. Lee is a wall of muscle with unbounded strength. This year Lee has also really improved his swimming so expect a good time at Nice this year. We can also confirm that rumours of Lee wearing a mankini for the race are not true. However, no matter what happens, we can guarantee Lee will be conquering Nice with a great sense of humour.



Myles 'Mr Nice' Rapley



Myles, a seasoned Ironman, having competed across Europe in the last few years, joins the team to tackle Nice. Myles is another of the club's strong cyclists with the added benefit of being a handy marathon runner. He may not be the greatest lover of the swim section but expect to see Myles claw back loads of lost places during the first few months of the cycle. Myles made his name in the club when he accompanied the club members in a Dulwich Dynamo (an over night cycle event) and became the knight in shining armour for many of the damsels in distress (must stress these were male and female damsels in distress). Yet another of the club's Mr Nice guys who is happiest out cycling – no matter what the pace. Myles seems to get faster and faster each year – expect another fast time this year for Myles.

Neil 'Mr Marathon' Bearwish

Neil joined the club this year with already an impressive Ironman history, this will be Neil's 7th Ironman (it may be more – Neil can't quite remember how many he's done!). Neil is a sub 3 hour

marathon runner who impressed all when he jumped on a cyclo-cross bike for his first cycle of the year – which happened to be a 5 hour ride, easily keeping pace with the others on the ride – even winning some of the sprints to town signs. A cheery quiet man, Neil has fitted well into the club and is a very welcome addition to our family.

Andy 'Mini Me' Dawbarn



Andy tackles his first Ironman this year at Nice. Never a hair out of place, Andy with an ever present smile has built on his already strong running strength to improve his cycle ability to shake off his 's**t on the bike' tag once and for all. Andy is now an accomplished cyclist and will excel this year at Nice.

Andy is the self confessed and self crowned King of the Town Signs – spending many hours studying the best attack position for the cycles into London. This, of course all came thumbling down when he was well and truly trounced by Sue Fuller on a recent cycle back from Lakeside. An ever

popular member of the club, Andy has definitely come along way from his golf days.

Graham 'Catch Me if you can' Shaddock

The bald bomber, Graham has been quietly training on his own this year as he prepares for Ironman number 3. Graham excelled last year at Lanzarote and is relishing the opportunity to match his Ironman skills against the best in the club. It's difficult to spot any weakness in Graham's racing skills – he learnt a lot from his first Ironman where he went too fast on the bike and suffered on the run. That ghost was well and truly laid to rest last year and now Graham is hungry for more. Graham appears unorganised – as was witnessed when he travelled to a recent event minus a helmet and cycle shoes (so he says – we think it was just a ruse to spend money on some new kit). Watch out from Graham's Cervelo in Nice as he bounds up the mountains like a wily old billy goat! (Graham pictured first on right)



Simon 'Where am I' Ford



Simon made the mistake of asking Zena if she thought he was ready for an Ironman, at a track session last year. Zena, distracted by the 101 other things happening at the track said 'yeah sure'. Simon took this as gospel and before he had time to think again had paid his money for Nice. Well that's how Simon tells the story – but the reality is Simon was already well and truly hooked on the idea of Ironman before the conversation and would have signed up anyway. Simon went about training for France with great gusto and was already well into the groove when an unfortunate coming together with a car meant Simon spent a good portion of this year with a broken shoulder and broken ribs. With the help of John Smith, Simon setup a turbo in his garage with some pillow to support his broken body parts and restarted his training. So, here we are a few days before Nice and Simon is another

of the club to defy the odds and be ready for his maiden Ironman.

Paul 'the winner' Gammon'

Paul Gammon is on the brink of his first Ironman. Paul digested his training plan and didn't miss a single session. So, has it worked, well Sunday 27th June will tell – but Paul enters the race as a stronger swimmer (if his plan left him then he could easily be in lane 2 on Monday nights). His bike skills and strength are now amongst the best in the club and he is also now a 20 minute 5k runner. So does sticking to a plan work – of course it does. Does doing lots of training help – of course it does. Will Paul succeed – of course he will! On top of all Paul's training and success he remains a humble likeable chap and a great asset to the club.



Neil 'Disk Wheel' Lynch



Then there is me, not the best 6 months of Ironman training, but I'm here and ready for the start line, with thanks to the patience of Chris Milne and Zena Shean and the Jedi Mind Games by Sue Fuller. It's Ironman number 2 for me – having already completed Austria in 2008. Have now found the best way to win a race is to organise them myself (witness the Indoor Tri this year!) So see you all in Nice!