

## **Sandycove Swim, Ireland 2011**

Short report for the final (honest) swim of the season, unfortunately the Sandycove Challenge clashed with the Little Red Lighthouse swim in New York and the prospect of proper Guinness won over New York.

After checking in at our B&B Friday afternoon it was a shortish walk down to Sandycove and the prospect of a training swim.

Unfortunately the weather was a bit extreme and after watching a couple of swimmers in rubber romper suits struggling to reach the first corner of the island in around 20 minutes where it normally takes 5 minutes we decided against a pre-race swim.

After a relaxing night in Kinsale with fellow swimmers from Scotland we woke earlyish to sunshine and a full Irish breakfast accompanied by copious cups of tea. Once refreshed and suitably fed we drove down to Hanlet's in Kinsale for 10:30am registration where we picked up our numbered hat, water bottle, commemorative pin and timing chips. We were now ready for the swim, shame we had two hours to get to the start 3 miles away !!!

Around 2:30pm we joined over 250 swimmers in Sandycove to be briefed by Ned Denison on the swim course including the infamous gap at the first corner. The temperature was supposed to be around 11c but it was a little warmer and definitely warmer than Loch Morlich.

At 3pm 250+ swimmers gathered in 10 waves, the fastest swimmers going in the first wave, the slowest in the last wave. Yours truly was in the second wave and as we reached the bottom of the ramp there was no time for a warm up we were off, 40 seconds after the first wave. As we headed towards the first corner I could make out Ned Denison in the first wave. As Ned reached the corner unusually for Ned he didn't go through the infamous gap. As Ned has swum round the island countless times now was not the time to go through the gap and best to follow Ned's course.

As we turned the corner the waves picked up and we were swimming into a 2 meter swell aka the water was a little lumpy.

These conditions carried on for over ten minutes all the time around the back of the island until we hit the second corner and turned left into calmer waters.

Very soon after turning the first sign of home, the red house (aka Rock House) came into view and it was heads down for the final sprint.

As we neared the finish I could make out the final orange buoy and after a thoroughly enjoyable swim the final stretch to the finish mat and the sound of that satisfying finishing "beep".

After seeing the last man home it was off to the B&B for a quick shower and down to Kinsale for some food and liquid refreshment prior to the presentations. On the way we received texts for our finishing times, sadly no medal this year but I did finish 6th overall in my age group and improved my last year's time by a massive 3 seconds.

As to why Ned chose not to go through the infamous gap at the first corner which would have saved at least 30 seconds on his time it was probably down to the weather.

A number of swimmers did go through and managed to scratch themselves on the rocks including one who got caught by a wave and hit the rocks resulting in sixteen stitches in his leg, but not before he completed the swim as did a further 248 swimmers with only 2 retirees the first swimmer finishing in just over 20 minutes and the last just under 55 minutes.

Attached are a few photos and before you ask, the dog didn't beat me !!

Kevin





