

Sean Farrell - Lough Cúlra 2024 Mixed Relay Race Report

October 26, 2024

The Mixed Relay Club Championships is a relatively new event on the TI calendar and on the World Triathlon schedule. So, when Ciara asked me to be on the team for the event at Cultra Castle last Sat I was delighted to be able to take part.

The team consists of two male and two female triathletes, each would swim 250m, bike 5km and run 1500m and then tag the next team member until all members have completed the same course and cross the finish line.

The team was Ciara Wilson, Myself, Ellen Hynes and John Brady. Myself and Ciara had competed in the National Aquathon Championships earlier in the day (800m swim/5km run), so we were well warmed up by the time the 3pm start time arrived. The weather had deteriorated by the afternoon and we had rain, but this didn't deter us.

The format was male, female, male, female - so I was starting, then Ellen, followed by John, and Ciara would take the last leg. There would be up to 30 teams taking part, made up of 18 senior teams and 12 junior teams.

A deep water start for me, and the start siren blasted off. I sprinted to the first buoy, keeping out of trouble, breathing to the left and keeping the entire field to my left so I could see them. After the first buoy I could see a group of very fast swimmers ahead of me and I settled into a steady stroke turnover. 5mins later (290m course !) I was exiting the water and Coach Danny shouted that I was 11th out of the water.

Quick transition and onto the bike and the first km was on the small road that exits the castle grounds. Onto the main road for 1.5km out to a turnaround and the same 1.5km return to castle. I was passed by two on the bike and I passed one. Back into T2 and runners on and out on that trail run that was well beaten up now that it was raining. I was now 20mins at full gas and feeling it ! On the last 150m of the run I was passed by 3 and when I tagged Ellen in the handover zone I knew I had given it all....

Ellen managed to pass the teams in the water that had overtaken me and with a quick T1 she was out on the bike hard and fast. I was almost recovered when I saw Ellen round the corner for the last 150m to tag John and you could tell, Ellen gave it all ! We knew at this stage that we were well up in the standings, and that the first 4 teams were all juniors (and therefore in a different race).

John was up next, and into the water for a steady swim up to swim exit. Myself and Ellen had now relocated to swim exit/T1 so we could cheer John on as he exited the water. John powered out of T2 on the bike and made great progress to return on the bike with a fantastic bike split and ready for a quick T2. Once through T2 John sprinted up out of transition and onto the trail for the 1500m run. We returned to the tag zone to watch John return and he had made great progress and we were sitting now in 5th as a senior team. John tagged Ciara and our club chairwoman, and Nation Aquathlon Champion from earlier in the day, entered the water to our cheers. Back at swim exit/T2 we were able to cheer Ciara out of the water and onto the bike and in spite of the rain Ciara looked strong. Through T2 and onto the run, Ciara made running look easy as

she cantered to the finish line near the castle. The team was 11th overall and 5th senior team, a mere 2 mins off the podium.



