

# Doing Britain proud

## European Sprint Championships

Helen R: world class.

Helen D: awesome.

Russel B: held his own with the other old boys.

All: did British quadrathlon proud!

A seven hour drive from Calais or Harwich might seem like a long way to go for a sprint quadrathlon but, if you want the World Cup points, you'll do it and if you love this small friendly sport, well, why not?

Bergsee Ratscher is a small lake, about 1,500 metres across both ways and more or less surrounded by the forested hills of the vast Thuringa Wald. (Germany constantly surprises with its delightful unheralded landscapes.)

Along one side of the lake runs a large campsite with spacious grassy slopes giving every camper a view of the lake. The race was based here. The nearest town, Schleusingen, a couple of kilometres away, is an appealing place with a large castle and pretty houses. The international quadrathlon crowd was out in force with over 60 racing plus relay teams, so nice to see the familiar faces.

The swim was a one lap triangle then off on the bike. (Briefly, does anyone know why German races tend to be bike, paddle whilst ours are more often paddle, bike?)

The bike route started by going along the dam wall then two laps of a tight loop and back along the wall. The roads are perfectly smooth and the whole course is undulating so you are either working hard to go up or enjoying the fast downs. I had overcooked the hill training during the week, being unable to resist the temptations of the High Tatras in Slovakia, so had a shocker on the bike. The wind was getting up, too, at this point.



Russel Breyer photographs

*The Bergsee Ratscher setting for the European championships.*

The kayak leg was 4 laps of a triangular course, one turn being round a cute little island in the middle of the lake, fine but this meant a turn roughly every 400 metres and, with 60 plus boats on the course plus a stiffening breeze, some caution was required. Helen D and I both found ourselves going wide to keep out of trouble. As our Ipswich CC race coach is fond of saying 'You can't paddle fast if you are upside down,' but I made up some time anyway so no complaints.

Then the run... a slightly odd course, twice round a V shaped loop, each lap taking us out and back along the dam wall, then out and back on a parallel path below the wall (on the side without the water in, obviously), nearly all flat, mercifully, and it made the run seem strangely short so I got a move on and made up a few more places and that was it. The presentations, which included World Cup prizes, were almost longer than the race and seemed mostly to involve Helen R smiling gamely from a podium whilst various people showered her with more trophies and prizes than she could reasonably be expected to hold on her own, her second world class performance of the day!

**Russel Breyer**

# King rules yet again

## Shrewsbury Quadrathlon

A lovely warm sunshine day with slight cloud and no wind, what could be better! An excellent day's racing at the 7th Shrewsbury Quadrathlon, the event just gets better each year and has always sold out... a true testament to the event organizers, SYTri and Phil Holden, who took over from Gill Otto as SYTri quad leader!

The start list was looking strong with top quadrathletes and plenty of very good age groupers; as ever there were plenty of newcomers and the familiar faces we see in Shrewsbury every year, so, without a doubt, there was going to be some great racing ahead! We had been told that the water temperature was a chilly 14°C, which was quite a shock after the warm weather and the non wetsuit swim at Box End Quad!

In the men's race Alan Cole (6:17) and Steve King (6:08) soon broke away with Steve moving ahead in the final 100m to exit first. James Block came in 3rd (6:54), followed by strong swimmers from Nigel Unwin, Bryce Dyer and Cliff Odgers.

James Block posted the fastest kayak time of 20:36 with Steve King posting the second fastest time, just 12 seconds slower at 20:48; by this time they were 3 minutes ahead of everyone else in the kayak leg. Nigel Unwin was third in 23:35 and Iain Wood, newcomer, produced an excellent split 23:52 in a barge of a kayak compared with the sleek K1s up front! Alan and Bryce both had strong kayak legs and were still in touch for a podium place.

Steve was holding first place with James, Nigel and Alan chasing him, then Bryce pushing his huge 62 tooth chain ring was flying and posted the fastest bike split by far with a time of 34:46 for the 14 mile course, very fast in anyone's books! So onto the run they went in the position they came off the bikes, Steve, James, Bryce, Nigel and Alan; they were all running well and no-one managed to break up this order so that is how they finished!

Steve King posted the fastest run split of 19:16. His fast swim, super fast kayak and then fast bike and run meant he took the overall win easily for the 7th time in a row! There were some excellent age group performances with three Vet 60 athletes in the top 10, Iain Wood winning his first Vet 60 quadrathlon. Nigel Unwin took Vet 50 (roll



*The swim at Shrewsbury.*

down from James Block in 2nd) and Alan Cole took Vet 40 (roll down from Bryce Dyer in 3rd). It was good to see so many other BQA members flying the flag, racing well and producing some excellent times.

Special mention must go to John MacLeod who won the Vet 70 category; he has raced at 3 quadrathlons this year and is our first ever Vet 70 British quadrathlon trophy winner... Well done, John!

The ladies race was equally exciting, a good field of 15 women. Jacqueline Davies went into the lead after a very fast swim (7:36) and was out of the water ahead of Timea Harris (8:01), closely followed by Natalie Abbott (8:21) and me (8:24).

Jacq was in her kayak first with me and Timea close behind. I moved into second place as Timea was having trouble getting in her kayak. I started to close the gap but was joined by Timea; after the turn buoy we paddled together, chasing down Jacq. Timea (25:48) moved ahead slightly; Jacq (26:14) stayed in second place with me just behind producing the fastest kayak split (25:36).

Jacq and Timea went into transition together, followed by me. Jacq