

## Copenhagen Challenge 2010

The 15<sup>th</sup> of August the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of Challenge Copenhagen took place and I was part of it. This was my first attempt on the long distance and I was certain that it was also the last.

### The swim part:

Took part in the Lagoon of the artificial island Amager Strandpark. It was a beach start with waves of app. 300 people, divided according to estimated finish time. It had been raining heavily all morning, but the water was calm. Only one round. The swim went amazingly well with absolutely no fighting. Also, we swam under three bridges and could use those as navigation points. I came out of the water in 1:09, which was very good for my standard. In T1 we had to find our bike bag and put all our swim gear in it, since the finish line was in the centre of Copenhagen. T1 therefore took over 5 minutes.



### The bike part:

Once on the bike, the race really started for me. It was still raining heavily and the roads were slippery. First we drove into Copenhagen with a lot of sharp turns. After 20 km we started riding along the coast line up to the north of Zealand. The bike course was a mix of long straights and rolling hills with sharp turns with turns that you could not overlook and you constantly needed to get out of your saddle to accelerate. Overall, however, it was a fast course – just as I like it. I found a small group where we kept pushing each other taking the lead and it worked quite well, since we passed 90 km in app. 2:25. On the second loop I took out some of the speed, but not much and came through in 5:03. Was not really aware that I was this close to going below 5:00 at this point, but that did not matter much, since my brain at this point started telling me that I still had to do a marathon....

### The run part:

In T2, I did some quick calculation and could see that I now had been out there app. 6:15 and I still had not been to the toilet! Even if I would do 4:30 on the run, I would finish below 11:00. I took a quick decision and basically just wanted to get through the run around 4:00. This was not the time to take chances and my worse nightmare would be to be at km 25 with cramps in both legs unable to continue. The run was 3\*14 km in the centre of Copenhagen and there were many spectators along the course. I just enjoyed it – at least until km 30. Here I got a cramp in my left leg, but not so severe that I needed to stop. There were water stations at every 2 km and I basically ran from station to station focusing on the next cold cola. The last 5 km were hard, but when you are so close to finish your first long distance, you just do not care. I have never experienced such a relief when I crossed the finish line in 10:28 (marathon time in 4:06). Gone were all



those training days where you just did not want to do it, but you knew you had to. All these long days, sitting 5-6 hours alone on the bike in rainy conditions. After the finish line, suddenly all that made sense.

Copenhagen was a great event and an event that I would like to recommend to first-timers, since the course is very easy. The only bad things are that start and finish is not the same place, which creates a lot of unnecessary stress about logistics before, under and after the race. Also the event is in mid August, which basically will ruin the whole summer. They are already accepting applications for next year by the way.

In the beginning, I said that I will never do this again. I now had time to revise my position and plan to do Barcelona Challenge next year in October. The plan is clear: sub 5:00 on the bike and sub 10 overall. Anyone wants to join me?

Kim

