

# RACE SHORTS

THE RACES AND FACES THAT MAKE UP THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF TRI

↓ Zakaria recovered from a tumble on his borrowed bike to put in a solid run and take third in Ghana's first triathlon



## HISTORY MAKER

**25-YEAR-OLD GHANAIAN ZAKARIA ABDUL-RAUF TALKS US THROUGH HIS - AND GHANA'S - FIRST-EVER TRIATHLON EXPERIENCE**

### GHANA TRIATHLON

Accra » 15 March 2015

**I**'m a competitive runner from Damongo in the northern region of Ghana, and I was excited for my country's first official triathlon - in fact I didn't even know what a triathlon was until the Ghana Triathlon Federation started last year! I decided to race because I wanted to be part of history and I thought to myself, I can breaststroke 600 metres, I can borrow a bike and I know I can run... so why not? My expectations for the race were high, but I was still nervous as I knew there would be some good athletes.

My race morning ritual is simple and I follow what I do for my 5k runs: I get up early and skip breakfast, because I can't run with food in my stomach, I remain calm and when the race finally starts, I give it my all!

The swim is a real struggle. All the other athletes are swimming freestyle and I can only breaststroke. I keep calm and think 'just get through it and you'll be faster on the bike, and faster still on the run'.

I finally exit the water and get on my bike. I've never ridden a proper bike before, so it's challenging and unfortunately I crash as I take a wrong turn at a roundabout. But I don't let it get to me and I'm eager for the run as that's my strong point.

I'm a competitive long-distance and cross-country runner with a 5k PB of 17 minutes, so I wasn't expecting the run to be quite so tough! When I find a rhythm I push hard all the way to the finish line, which I find at the second time of asking after taking a wrong turn!

I finish third, closely behind two experienced racers who had their own bikes. I'm very happy with the result and would love to come back and win the race in the future.

It was great to be part of Ghana's first official triathlon, maybe even the first in West Africa! The race was well organised, and the support from marshals and the federation was fantastic. I definitely want to

do this race again. The crash and my wrong turn at the end were unfortunate, so I'm eager to improve for next time.

I will now work on my front crawl swimming and get my own bike to improve my cycling, on top of the running I do already. As I'm now familiar with the course, hopefully that will give me an advantage next time!

### RESULTS

600m swim | 18.9km bike | 5.6km run

#### MEN

<b>1</b> Andy Brennan	<b>1:15:26</b>
<b>2</b> Peter Kervennal	<b>1:18:26</b>
<b>3</b> Zakaria Abdul-Rauf	<b>1:18:27</b>

#### WOMEN

<b>1</b> Genevieve Grandadam	<b>1:34:23</b>
<b>2</b> Rhona Polonsky	<b>1:55:35</b>



**MEET THE WINNER** »

**MEGAN HOLMES**

Tynemouth Aquathlon, 22 March 2015

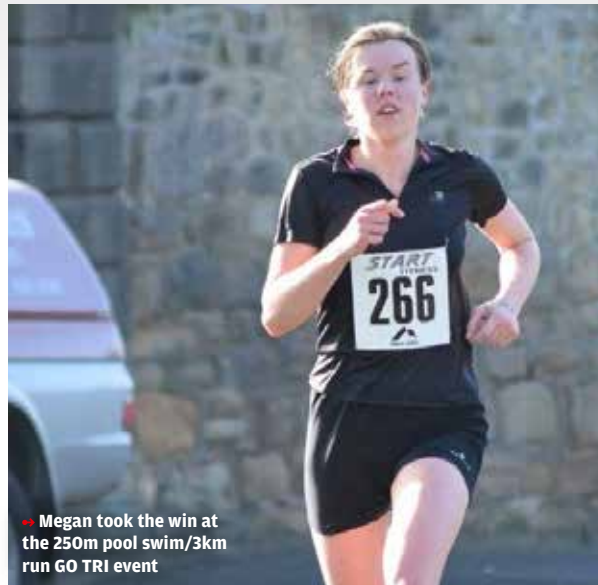
**22-year-old medical student Meg Holmes is new to multisport, and is looking to build her race CV off the back of this win.**

I entered this race to gain more race experience. I had a bit of a nightmare before it even started, though - my swimming cap ripped when I went to put it on, but thankfully a teammate lent me one. The actual swim was fine though. With it being short I'd only just settled into a rhythm when it was time to get out!

The run was good, though it was hard to tell how well I was running because people were quite spread out after being started off at minute intervals.

It was also hard to tell how well I was doing overall because everyone seemed to know what they were doing, and it didn't get any easier because we were all spread across the course.

I'm quite a novice when it comes to triathlon really. This



→ Megan took the win at the 250m pool swim/3km run GO TRI event

was my second-ever event, the first being a (BUCS) university duathlon. I'm looking forward to the triathlon season and getting some more race experience under my belt.

Training's going pretty well for the season ahead. It's starting

to get more enjoyable now the days are getting longer, so you can do more in the light.

The next non-competitive challenge on the horizon for me is a John O'Groats to Lands End cycle, which should be a great test of mind over matter!

**TYNEMOUTH AQUATHLON STATS STARTERS 34 FINISHERS 34**  
**MEN'S WINNER TOM ELMER 15:17 WOMEN'S WINNER MEGAN HOLMES 17:07**

**ROUND-UP**

As summer draws ever closer, the first of the early-season triathlons kicked off on the last weekend in March. The East Leake Triathlon in Leicestershire was won by **Carl Shaw** of TFN Tri Club in 56:38, narrowly ahead of **Angus Smith** in 56:51. In the women's race, **Michelle Willocks** of Newcastle (Staffs) Tri Club won in exactly 1:08hrs. The Harlech Triathlon topped off a 400m swim and 21km bike with a challenging 6km off-road run to finish, and saw **Chris Standidge** of Torq victorious in 1:00:01. **Karen Newby** was first woman across the line in 1:19:59. Elsewhere, the last of the winter duathlons was taking place, with Stirling hosting the Scottish Duathlon Championships and the World Sprint Distance qualifiers simultaneously. The male and female Scottish champions respectively were **Jack Lawson** (2:00:08) and **Mhairi Duff** (2:21:17) in the standard distance, with **David Sloan** (1:14:02) and **Claire Coey** (1:17:09) breaking the tape first in the sprints, bagging world championship places in the process. The other World Duathlon Sprint qualifier took place around Oulton Park motor racing track in Cheshire, with **Carl Avery** winning the men's race in 1:01:49 and **Gwen Kinsey** first woman in 1:16:11.

**FAST AND FURIOUS**

Gareth Thomas retains his title at Wales's biggest du

**MUMBLES DUATHLON**

Mumbles, Swansea » 21 March 2015

In race-perfect conditions, over 400 athletes from around the UK descended on Mumbles for the UK's biggest duathlon. A fast course and picturesque run routes along the Mumbles Bay ensure the event always attracts a large field. Hosted by Activity Wales Events, the race also saw 130 first-time athletes competing.

The long-distance race consisted of a 5km run, 32km bike course and another 5km run to finish. The short course also started with a 5k, but with a 21km bike and 3km run to finish.

Last year's defending long-course champion Gareth Thomas,

from San Domenico Tri Club, managed to regain his title after a difficult battle with Oliver Simon from Five Frogs Triathlon. With just 11secs between them coming into T2 after a hilly bike course, Simon managed to claw back some of those lost seconds, which contributed towards a tense second run in the race for first place. Thomas eventually pulled clear to finish in a time of 1:28:53, with Simon close behind in 1:29:24.

Elaine Ferguson of Cardiff Triathlon Club was victorious in the women's race, crossing the line in 1:45:28. Ferguson was in pole position for the entire race, finishing over 5mins clear of second-placed Celia Boothman in 1:50:47.

The junior category was won by 14-year-old Barney Evans, a



★ Conditions were beautiful for this year's Gower-based race

duathlon debutant, who completed the short-course distance in an impressive 1:39:47.

The pick of the veteran performances was Ben Reid's overall victory in the short-course race, comfortably taking the win in 1:13:49. Lucy Middleton claimed victory in the women's race, finishing in 1:28:38.

**RESULTS (LONG COURSE)**  
 5km run | 32km bike | 5km run

MEN	
1 Gareth Thomas	1:28:53
2 Oliver Simon	1:29:24
3 Richard Wilder	1:32:46
WOMEN	
1 Elaine Ferguson	1:45:28
2 Celia Boothman	1:50:47
3 Sarah Sims	1:53:38

**MUMBLES DUATHLON STATS LAST YEAR'S WINNERS GARETH THOMAS 1:29:37 JESS PARRY WILLIAMS 1:44:45**