NAAS DUATHLON 17/01/17

The Race season got off to a start today with the first of three races in Punchestown hosted by Naas Triathlon Club. It was well attended with transition jammed with trusty steeds of every variety. For those who do not know the course it is the polar opposite to the Athy course. The run course is on the ambulance track that circles the race horse and has a few sneaky little rises but is a good firm surface to run on. From the off the pace was red hot and the first mile was covered at just under 4 minute kilometer pace and that was from mid pack despite the inevitable bunching. The second mile was a more sedate 4.14 pace with the bunch thinning out. Sean Walker got to transition ahead of me. Conor Tiernan was out of sight. T1 was tidy with no helmet fumbling. As always my cycle shoes were on the bike so no clip clopping for me. Still crowded so had to watch the cloven hooves on the way to the mount line. Little tip here, when you hit the mount line you do not have to mount the bike. The mount line was a frenzy of people trying to clip in so I ran through them to do the mount, flying squirrel style, in clear space 15 meters further on. Next the pedal strokes with feet on top of the shoes before dipping the toes in and getting the straps tight. Target on the back of the head time, or so I thought. The standard has improved since the last time I did this race and it was an arm wrestle with the hills, the wind and other competitors. I was paying for my stronger than intended first run and found it hard to get going. Despite the motocops drafting was prevalent and the bloke admiring my ass on the climb at Km 7/8 rebuked the official with the classic 'not drafting I am climbing'. Cheeky bugger. If he climbed any closer it would have taken an colonscopy to find him. Down the hill to the roundabout and the long climb back up with motocop sitting on the back of a 10 strong group ahead who despite looking suspiciously like a peleton seemed to avoid any cards being brandished. Sour milk I couldn't catch them anyway. Up the last hill and into the racecourse. Time to loosen the straps and slip the feet out before swinging the leg over the top tube. T2 dismount was thankfully clean but my calves were letting me know of their displeasure. Racked and shod with no delay and off I trotted to see if I had the legs to complete. There is a cruel little hill to climb out of transition and it tests the legs at their weakest. Worse still there is a testing descent after circa 250 meters but the calves got the blood into them and registered no further complaints. The first mile was a very pleasant 4.52 per km pace but did not feel it and the fleet of foot were catching and passing. The last mile was 4.30 pace but no one pushed me to the finish line which was a pity (not!). 1.05.43 according to the Garmin. Conor Tiernan was first club member home. Fair play to all who put the race on and took part. Happy out as I have not run since last February. Legs up now. Horses for courses. Hope this wandering missive gets the juices flowing for our own Duathlon Series which starts in 2 weeks time. BRING IT ON