



## ITU Post Event Reporting Document for Technical Delegates (TD) and ITU Staff

✓ Indicates satisfactory or well done

x indicates improvement required

A combined ✓ x indicates that some elements were satisfactory and some needs improvement. A comment will be made in this instance.

Once this Report is finalized please forward to for approval:

Americas, Asia, Oceania – Leslie Buchanan ([leslie.buchanan@triathlon.org](mailto:leslie.buchanan@triathlon.org))

Africa, Europe – Gergely Markus ([gergely.markus@triathlon.org](mailto:gergely.markus@triathlon.org))

Once the Report is approved, the relevant ITU Director will forward a copy to the ITU Technical Committee, the Host NF and the LOC

The report is intended to assist LOC and ITU in the ever challenging job of improving our events and presenting the sport at the best possible level for athletes, media, television, sponsors and spectators.

<b>Event:</b>	<b><u>Austrian Half Iron – National Championships, Regional Championships</u></b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b><u>SchwarzlSee - Graz</u></b>
<b>Date</b>	<b><u>09/05/2009</u></b>
<b>LOC:</b>	<b><u>Multisport Austria</u></b>
<b>Technical Delegate:</b>	<b><u>Paul GROVES</u></b>
<b>Race Referee:</b>	<b><u>Didi HIERZER</u></b>
<b>Chief Technical Official:</b>	

### GENERAL

1. General Overview	✓	x	Comments...
1.1 Safe and fair	✓		
1.2 Spectator friendly	✓		
1.3 Media friendly	✓		
1.4 Sponsor services	✓		
1.5 Event 'Look and Feel'	✓		
1.6 Legacy for community	✓		

2. LOC Documents	✓	x	Comments...
2.1 ITU/LOC Contract			
2.2 Event Organiser's Manual			
2.3 Competition Rules and Regulation Manual			
2.4 Uniform Guidelines			
2.5 Medal Ceremony Protocol			

3. LOC Strengths	✓	x	Comments...
3.1 LOC Contacts / Resources in community	✓		
3.2 LOC Commitment	✓		

3.3 <b>Professional Staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Event General Manager</li> <li>➤ Event Operations staff</li> <li>➤ Competition Manager</li> <li>➤ Media Services staff</li> <li>➤ Athlete Services staff</li> <li>➤ Accounts Manager</li> <li>➤ Sponsor and Protocol Director</li> </ul>	✓		
3.4 Event office/headquarters – professional office with adequate equipment provided by LOC	N/A		
3.5 ITU office – Internet, phone, fax, photocopy facilities provided for week of competition	N/A		
3.6 Adequate, Trained volunteers	✓		

4. Course Design Overview	✓	✘	Comments...
4.1 Clover leaf design	N/A		
4.2 Medical facilities and access		✘	<b>Although there was one emergency doctor present, he was the commentator. No visible medical services in finish area. Good medical cover on course – ambulances and mobiles.</b>
4.3 Spectator viewing areas	✓		
4.4 Spectator flow		✘	<b>Spectators regard the barrier tape as an invitation to intrude onto the course. The worst offenders were athletes who had finished and had no regard for other, slower athletes. Massive re-education needed here for the Austrian Federation.</b>
4.5 FOP Media areas	✓		
4.6 FOP Media access / control	✓		
4.7 VIP facility / access and viewing		✘	<b>VIPs went where they wanted. No evident segregated area.</b>

## TECHNICAL COURSE OPERATIONS

5. Swim Course/Start	✓	✘	Comments...
5.1 GPS / Laser measurement	✓		
5.2 Distance to first buoy – 300m	✓		
5.3 Turn angles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- greater than 90°</li> <li>- buoy construction</li> </ul>	N/A		
5.4 Water temperature posted 3 days prior to event and updated daily	✓		
5.5 Swim exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– width</li> <li>– surface condition</li> <li>– carpeted</li> <li>– exit visibility</li> </ul>	✓		
5.6 Pontoon/Platform start <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– width</li> <li>– spacing</li> </ul>	N/A		

– numbering			
– carpeted			
5.7 Depth measurements (whole course)	✓		
5.8 Start procedures	✓		
5.9 Introduction of athletes	N/A		
5.10 Officials boat(s)	✓		
5.11 Media boat(s)	✓		
5.12 Video: start, turns, exit	N/A		
5.13 Water safety personnel	✓		
5.14 Water quality results	✓		
5.15 Marine Life / Hazards removed or marked	✓		

6. Transition	✓	✘	Comments...
6.1 Final bike and uniform check	N/A		
6.2 Racks and spacing	✓		
6.3 Athlete name/number/country flag	N/A		
6.4 Corners	N/A		
6.5 Boxes– for race gear – everything else to athlete storage area	✓		<b>New boxes purchased by LOC to ensure that colours matched – overall look very clean – until the athletes arrived and then made the entire TA look like a beach scene – education needed.</b>
6.6 Mount, Dismount Line / Zone clearly marked	✓		
6.7 Carpeted	✓		

7. Bike Course	✓	✘	Comments...
7.1 Road surface, topography, technical challenges	✓		
7.2 Traffic controlled and road closure safety			
7.3 Wheel stops	N/A		
7.4 Whistles and flags – caution areas for pedestrians, media, officials	✓		
7.5 Motorcycles “lens drafting” – closeness	N/A		
7.6 Lap counting boards	N/A		
7.7 Lapped athletes – officials	N/A		
7.8 Lap Auditors-officials	✓		
7.9 Number of motorcycles available	7		
7.10 Course swept and clear	✓		

8. Run Course	✓	✘	Comments...
8.1 Road surface, topography, technical challenges	✓		
8.2 Aid Stations (locations, distance between, equipment)	✓		
8.3 Km markers	N/A		
8.4 Lap counting boards	N/A		

9. Finish Area	✓	✘	Comments...
9.1 Gantry position and width (5m)	✓		
9.2 Distance from gantry to media stand (min 15m)		✘	<b>No media stand provided – all shots from ground level.</b>

9.3 Finish line markings	✓		
9.4 Photo finish camera		✘	<b>None provided but none was needed. At this level such technology would be unnecessarily costly to LOC.</b>
9.5 Position of timing equipment		✘	<b>Timing van in finish area – completely unacceptable. See photo.</b>
9.6 Media stand and Mixed zone		✘	<b>None provided – a shame given the presence of Austrian TV and associated media.</b>
9.7 Post race interview set up	✓		
9.8 Medal presentation set up/location	✓		
9.9 Timing of medal presentation	✓		
9.10 Professional and clean look		✘	<b>Finish area was open and not to the usual high standard associated with this LOC – I understand that at the last minute various changes were made by sponsors that conflicted with LOC agreements.</b>

<b>10. Recovery Area</b>	✓	✘	<b>Comments...</b>
10.1 Sufficient water, replacement fluids, fruit available		✘	No refreshment available in Finish Area. Athletes were advised to walk a very short distance to feed station. This avoided any potential problems but is quite unacceptable. I am advised that despite pre-race planning the LOC requirements were not adhered to by the major sponsors who re-located their drinks station without any regard for the suffering athletes. The sponsors should listen to the experienced LOC. This year the sponsors may well realise that they have devalued this event by their failure to listen to the LOC. Hopefully they will have learned.
10.2 Sufficient shade available and cool down equipment (cool baths)		✘	None available. Open water would suffice but is not acceptable as a replacement for supervised cool baths. The trade tent was used by some but there was no provision within for adequate post-race recovery. Consider constructing a specific "Recovery Area" for next year.
10.3 Professional and clean look	✓	✘	Many aspects of this race were highly professional – the infrastructure made the event look very good. The aimless wanderings of the spectators and athletes who had finished – coupled with the total lack of food outlets made it look somewhat surreal. The owner of the entire site had closed all nearby food outlets in an attempt to lure crowds to the main venue – this was a sly and unprofessional move that ultimately failed simply because the Triathlon-related crowds did not bother to walk the 2 – 3 km to pay the exorbitant prices. Consider – well, against the venue owner there appears to be little room for manoeuvre. Change of venue ?
10.4 Near the finish area		✘	See above.
10.5 Appropriately staffed		✘	Not really visible and those who were there worked extremely well to manage the athletes away from the Finish Area towards the feed station. Consider more staff for next year.

## **EVENT PRESENTATION**

<b>11. Sport Presentation</b>	✓	✘	<b>Comments...</b>
11.1 Athlete introduction and opening ceremony			
11.2 Commentary to spectators and VIPs	✓		
11.3 PA System/speaker placement and sound levels			
11.4 Music selection and sound levels	✓		
11.5 Language – English and host			

<b>12. Medal Ceremony Presentation</b>	✓	✘	<b>Comments...</b>
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12.1 Set-up and location	✓		
12.2 Branded backdrop as per guidelines	✓		
12.3 Presentation rehearsed			
12.4 Announcer / Presenter protocol	✓		
12.5 Presentation music available for ceremony introduction			
12.6 Flags and anthems available			
12.7 Timeliness	✓		

## **EVENT OPERATIONS/ADMINISTRATION**

<b>13. Athlete Services</b>	✓	✘	Comments...
13.1 Event Information distribution to athletes, media and sponsors	✓		
13.2 Website accuracy	✓		
13.3 Hotel Athlete Information Booth and athlete hospitality area			
13.4 Language and translation services			
13.5 Timing of briefing	✓		
13.6 Suitability of briefing venue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PA system</li> <li>- Seating</li> <li>- Refreshments and bottled water</li> </ul>		✘	<b>Small bar – limited visibility – sound restricted and with the Police Helicopter above the presentation was not heard by many – also took rather too long and quite a few athletes left. Consideration for an indoor venue next time with adequate sound system – aim to reduce the length of briefing.</b>
13.7 On site 'Athlete Lounge' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location</li> <li>- Furnishings</li> <li>- Food service</li> <li>- Volunteers</li> </ul>	N/A		
13.8 Check in Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adequate volunteers and officials</li> <li>- timing appropriate</li> </ul>	✓		
13.9 Clothing storage area	✓		
13.10 Access to toilets and adequate number of toilets	✓		

<b>14. Medical Services</b>	✓	✘	Comments...
14.1 Emergency evacuation plan	✓		
14.2 Local hospital notified	✓		
14.3 Ambulances on site and on course	✓		<b>One on bike course, another in main venue and dedicated to the event.</b>
14.4 Cooperation with Technical Delegate	✓		
14.5 Medical facility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tent size</li> <li>- number of cots and blankets</li> <li>- Ice and fridge</li> <li>- Wading cool down pools (in hot weather)</li> </ul>			
14.6 Medical equipment and supplies			
14.7 Qualified Personnel			
14.8 Communication system			

14.9 Medical access to finish area			
14.10 Medical access and exit from course			
14.11 Medical services on course			
14.12 Transportation for medical personnel			
14.13 Medical personnel clearly identified			

<b>15. Volunteer Services</b>	✓	✘	<b>Comments...</b>
15.1 Field of Play: look of the event – Uniform etc.	✓		
15.2 Understand responsibilities	✓		
15.3 Assertive to control the situation, proactive, prepared	✓		
15.4 No Cheering or getting in the way	✓		
15.5 Trained and informed about the big picture – all Level 1 minimum	✓		
15.6 Food services for volunteers	✓		
15.7 Separate Toilets for volunteers	N/A		
15.8 Adequate numbers	✓		

<b>16. Spectator Services</b>	✓	✘	<b>Comments...</b>
16.1 Spectator viewing areas	✓		
16.2 Control, flow and location		✘	<b>Spectators regarded the entire race course as somewhere they could walk, cycle and drive.</b>
16.3 Spectator directional signage		✘	<b>With the above attitude so strong it is likely that any signage would be ignored. Talking to many it is obvious that they do not like being told where they can and where they cannot walk. Massive re-education needed here – the worst offenders were athletes who had finished and had no regard for slower athletes.</b>
16.4 Vendors and merchandise		✘	<b>Limited but not over-priced. No race-specific merchandise – surprisingly no Austrian Tri Fed stand – where they might have been able to sign up new members.</b>
16.5 Sport Expo	✓		
16.6 Spectator Food services		✘	<b>See above. Venue owner closed all nearby food outlets.</b>
16.7 Spectator transportation to venue	N/A		
16.8 Toilets	✓		

<b>17. Transportation Plan</b>	✓	✘	<b>Comments...</b>
17.1 Airport pick up and drop off for all ITU staff	N/A		
17.2 Airport pick up and drop off for elite athletes	N/A		
17.3 ITU transportation to race venue	N/A		

<b>18. Venue Operations Management</b>	✓	✘	<b>Comments...</b>
18.1 Site Construction Schedule	✓		
18.2 Permits and licenses secured	✓		
18.3 Medical emergency access route planned	✓		
18.4 Officials Lounge provided and serviced	N/A		

18.5 Power system and backup emergency generators	✓		
18.6 Food operations for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Athletes</li> <li>- Volunteers</li> <li>- Spectators</li> <li>- Media</li> <li>- VIP</li> <li>- Officials</li> </ul>			
18.7 Clean up and waste management	✓		
18.8 Environment and recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SO certification</li> <li>- Ecoflag</li> </ul>	✓		

19. Venue Operations: Radio Communications	✓	✘	Comments...
19.1 Communications plan			
19.2 Radio protocol training	N/A		
19.3 Local mobile phone for ITU TD	N/A		
19.4 Contact list of LOC, ITU, printed and provide to all key personnel	N/A		

20. Venue Operations: Security and Accreditation	✓	✘	Comments...
20.1 ITU accreditation plan (utilize ITU accreditation categories)	N/A		
20.2 Access areas clearly signed		✘	<b>The access was managed by security staff employed by the venue owner – these were not local, many did not speak German and had not been given the briefing that the LOC had prepared. Within the race venue LOC staff operated a strong control but this took up valuable resources. LOC again let down by venue owner.</b>
20.3 Site secure areas controlled: (athlete lounge and pre start area/swim start area/transition/field of play)	✓		
20.4 Accreditation list submitted to ITU for approval.	N/A		
20.5 VIPs and Sponsor accredited allows access to VIP areas only (not athlete areas)	N/A		
20.6 Finish Line security and control		✘	<b>Not secure.</b>

## SPONSORS AND EVENT BRANDING

21. Sponsor Satisfaction	✓	✘	Comments...
21.1 Backdrop - skyline, cityscape, population	✓		
21.2 Branding: event materials, signage location, gantries, media backdrops	✓		
21.3 Sponsor hospitality		✘	None visible.
21.5 Gantry, finish-line tape	✓		
21.6 Scripted commentary for sponsor recognition	N/K		
21.7 Local media coverage and sponsor recognition	N/K		
21.8 Marketing and sponsorship (signage)	✓		
21.9 Website, Web cast and sponsor recognition	✓		
21.10 Event report planned for sponsors	N/K		

22. Course Design: ITU Branding Guidelines	✓	✘	Comments...
22.1 Breakdown overall branding as percentage rather than by number of boards	N/A		
22.2 Keep venue clean, less clutter of logos	N/A		
22.3 Branding on swim course - Buoys	N/A		
22.4 Branding on swim start and swim exit - branding on exit ramp - branding on exit carpet	N/A		
22.5 Branding in transition - backdrop branding - x branding of athletes boxes and name cards - branding of corners - x branding of mount and dismount zones - x branding of transition entry and exit towers	N/A		
22.6 Branding on bike course - branding on corners - branding on street poles	N/A		
22.7 Branding on run - branding on corners - branding on aid stations	N/A		
22.8 Branding on finish - branding on gantry - branding in finish chute - branding on ground - title sponsor on finish tape - branding of interview area	N/A		
22.9 Any creative branding	N/A		

## MEDIA SERVICES

23. Media	✓	✘	<u>Comments...</u>
23.1 Media Zones, Media Flow, Media Lanes near or adjacent to swim, start, finish, transition			
23.2 Vest – appropriate dress, accreditation		✘	
23.3 Vest – assigned = returned	N/A		
23.4 Post-race press conference			
23.5 Media Kit: review contents: schedule, start lists	N/A		
23.6 Press Release	✓		
23.7 Results	✓		
23.8 Media Centre	N/A		
23.9 Photos available to ITU	N/A		
24. Television Production	✓	✘	<u>Comments...</u>
24.1 Local camera operators			

## ITU ONLINE SERVICES

25. Online Production Support	✓	✘	<u>Comments...</u>
<b>Physical Resources</b>			
25.1 Secure facility close to finish line	N/A		
25.2 High Speed internet connection and router	N/A		
<b>Resources</b>			
25.33 volunteers	N/A		
25.4 Knowledge of general technology	N/A		
25.5 Willingness to assist	N/A		
25.6 Availability and dedication to task	N/A		
25.7 English Language skills	N/A		

## Timing & Results Services

26. Online Production Support	✓	✘	<u>Comments...</u>
26.1 Live Services During Event	N/A		
26.2 Speed of feed (<30 s after recorded locally on site)	N/A		
26.3 Accuracy of data	✓		
26.4 Data Presentation	✓		
26.5 Services post race	✓		
26.6 General adherence to ITU timing standards	N/A		

## ITU PROTOCOLS

27. VIP	✓	✗	Comments...
27.1 ITU Family Airport pick up	N/A		
27.2 ITU Team Airport Drop off	N/A		
27.3 ITU Staff provided with local cell phones	N/A		
27.4 ITU Staff vehicle provided	N/A		
27.5 Medal presenters approved by TD	N/A		
27.6 Athlete Prize Money distribution plan approved	N/A		
27.7 VIP Reception details approved	N/A		
27.8 Tickets to all social events provided to ITU guests and staff	N/A		
27.9 ITU Family Welcome Package	N/A		
27.10 VIP areas accommodated at race site	N/A		

### **SUMMARY:**

The location of this event, in Steiermark, provides a safe swim course, a challenging bike course and a safe run course. In terms of it being safe and fair - with athletes behaving within the rules it is most certainly a safe and fair course. In reality however, due to the behaviour of athletes it was not as safe and fair as it could have been. This is not a reflection on the LOC who have done what they could to provide a good "product" but more a reflection on the behaviour of a significant percentage of the athletes.

As far as the event being spectator friendly - its geography meant that apart from the cycle course, families and friends could easily view the whole swim and run course. Owing to a major event being held on the same site access to and from the venue proved difficult for those who wished to drive out onto the bike course and view. The LOC however provided a loop on the cycle course that brought the athletes back into the venue in spectacular manner and as such, whilst the most scenic parts of the cycle course were not viewable - the families and friends inside the venue still got a "feel" for the event as the athletes returned to SchwarzlSee.

Media friendly - well, the spectacular swim start, swim course, cycle course, long transition area and delightful run course provided the media with great opportunities.

Sponsor services were limited but then the event was supported only by a few sponsors - those that were sponsoring were involved for the most part directly in the event and as such got a great "feel" for the way that their name was being used.

This event was the national and regional double Olympic championships. In the context of a national championship one should consider that this is not an ITU World Cup, or even an ITU Regional Cup event - as such, what appeared to be shortcomings

were in fact for the athletes a considerable improvement on the quality of events they might otherwise be racing at. I shall go into more detail below. Suffice it to say that this event provided, for a reasonable price, athletes with a quality event but one that can still be improved - so long as the athletes are prepared to comply with practises that exist in other countries and on the European and International circuit.

As far as a legacy for the community, Graz is a small but important city. Steiermark is a small but significant region and Austria, whilst not being very big does have a strong and friendly community of triathletes. This event has been running since 2003 and has consistently sought to raise the bar in event standards.

The LOC has been working together for some considerable time and has a dedicated team who know their individual roles. Some within the structure are readily able to transfer their skills from one area to another as was shown during T2 when there was a shortage of Race Officials in the TA. Over the years the LOC has sought to train not only the region's officials but also its workforce in the ways of applying ITU event philosophy so as to seek to provide to the athletes, spectators, sponsors and Austrian Triathlon, a quality event that is fair, safe and with a legacy. This was very much seen on the build up, on race day and on the breakdown.

On this occasion however the LOC was constrained by the venue and the owner of the venue who was staging a massive rock festival over a number of days. I did not meet with this man but it was clear that his notion of making money from the music festival did not include the athletes, spectators, sponsors and officials involved in the triathlon.

I am advised that the new leaseholder of the venue had specifically requested that the triathlon be part of the "Seefesttage", this major music festival that took place from May 6 to 10, 2009. The triathlon was to be promoted with the festival and to be co-ordinated together. I saw a lot of Graz and many posters relating to the music festival. I have also seen the website relating to the festival but there were no references at all to the triathlon. The detailed plans for all traffic and parking round the lake was reportedly agreed in 5 meetings with the organising committees of the Seefesttage, the triathlon and police. The plan included parking from the west entrance to the south, then from the bridge on the west side of the lake to the west entrance and finally from the northern roundabout to the bridge. The parking area of the triathlon should only be the last parking option (to be used after the triathlon). This concept would have guaranteed an almost "car free" triathlon. I met with the police chief who was in control during the festival period who seemed very much in control. I am advised that the agreement with the new leaseholder stipulated that from his own security team there would be 5 people positioned on the northern parking lot (triathlon parking lot) during the whole day. However, when they arrived it was clear that they were ill-prepared for the very

important task they should have undertaken. They were not local, or indeed Austrian (they were from Slovenia, Croatia or the far East of Germany) and were uninformed as to their role within the structure. They did not follow at all the agreed levels of service, which resulted in general visitors to the lake driving around the perimeter roads, searching for any spot round the lake they fancied, parking up where they liked and thereby interfering with the progress of the triathlon. The fact that many of these security officials simply left their post midway through the day did not of course help matters.

Another diversion from the agreed plans was that the organisation of the Seefesttage decided to change the parking area for physically challenged people without informing the LOC for the triathlon. This led to further unacceptable congestion, extra work for the LOC, confusion amongst the drivers, frustration amongst the athletes and an overall look of chaos away from the transition area.

Between the excellent work on the part of the police and the very quick and thorough action of the LOC a disaster was avoided.

In previous years a number of excellent food outlets around the run course remained open thereby offering spectators a wide variety of choices for food during the long day. The new leaseholder, however, seeking to optimise profits in the main venue, decided just before the event to close down all food outlets round the lake. The closed outlets were another unexpected problem for the triathlon as spectators had no food or refreshments at all during what was a long and hot day.

Athletes were informed that the Victory Ceremony would take place on the main stage at the music venue. This did not materialise as the person from the festival was not able to be contacted. No reason was given but his mobile telephone, when rang to confirm the athletes were ready, provided the information that it was turned off. The LOC therefore hastily arranged the ceremony at the Finish Area, which was well attended and well-managed.

Whilst these many negative points appear to suggest that the event was on the verge of descending into a farcical situation that was far from the case as the athletes continued to finish, continued to be cheered over the line by the commentators and spectators and continued to be supported by the well-trained team working for the LOC.

There were minor weaknesses (and one major failing) within the LOC and I shall detail these in sequence as I also commend other aspects.

Registration took place at the race venue and was easily managed as the event infrastructure was being built. LOC members were on hand to answer questions, which they did enthusiastically. Despite the fact that most of the questions had been covered in both the

information posted on the website and in the race pack the LOC members patiently responded. I was surprised at the level of questions of a very basic nature - this might be explained by the fact that the event has moved a few hundred metres from its usual location, or might be yet another confirmation that athletes simply do not read anything that is provided to them - an international problem and not one confined to Austria.

Race briefing took place in an open air bar with inadequate seating or viewing positions. It was made all the more difficult by the need to be given in German (as the majority of competitors were Austrian) and English to cover the Italian, Hungarian, Slovenian, Croatian and American athletes present. It was made further problematic by the persistent hovering of a police helicopter that was later found to have been taking aerial shots of crowds - with our event providing the biggest crowd of the day. It was evident that many did not bother to attend and of those who did attend many left before the briefing was finished.



The transition area was a long one, wide, fair, carpeted and with individual boxes for each athlete. With four positions to each rack there was a good amount of room for each competitor. The boxes were all of the same design and for 90% of the competitors, the same colour. Any odd colours were blocked and placed at the far end of

the TA so as to afford a uniform and clean image. This was of course ruined by athletes placing towels as far away from their box to indicate their position and this turned a neat TA into something more like a beach scene. The before and after shots are very revealing. With the proximity of the car park (about 50m from the TA) there is absolutely no reason for this TA not to be as "clean" as a World Cup event.



The swim course was clearly marked with 2m yellow buoys. As the course has a large bridge over the centre part, it was easy for athletes and spectators to clearly see the swim course before the race. The water in the lake was exceptionally clean and on race day was 17.5<sup>c</sup> as a result of warm weather over a period of days prior to the event.

Entry to the lake was from a beach start. There were divers from fire brigade Graz in attendance. I spoke to them and was advised that the depth of the lake was about 10m, was a naturally filled lake and that the only thing to know about was a few catfish. The swim-start from a clearly marked rubberised mat that stretched the length of the start. Both starts were clean and for this part of the race the athletes were very well behaved. Both starts were prompt.



Safety crews out on the water were alerted to one athlete who knew that she would experience difficulties on the swim and without compromising the rest of the athletes they ensured that she was properly supervised.

Swim exit was clearly marked by two large Giga Sport flags and a very easy to discern blue carpet taking the athletes to T1.

Once in T1 the athletes for the most part complied with the briefing instruction not to discard swim hats, goggles etc.. Many chose to sit down on the central carpet and remove their wetsuits rather than to do so at their own clearly marked transition sport. This was done with complete disregard to other athletes and drew heavily on the resources of the referee team who, working zones, had to constantly shepherd athletes off the carpet.

Mounting their bikes on the tarmac the athletes had an 8km ride out to the start of the hills. It was considered that this initial 8km would not prove to be too problematic with regards to drafting and on race day there were no reports from the 7-strong motorcycle team of any drafting in this section. The remainder of the course was very technical and with some substantial climbs. It is the sort of course that does not allow the athlete to get into a rhythm and athletes were reminded that drafting was not permitted on this course both at the briefing and by regular reminders from the commentary team. What was reported back was that there were packs forming on the course on the hills where athletes were effectively working together. This is something that gave an unfair advantage to some and which has to be addressed next year - I would suggest by sending out skilled referees on the bikes to monitor this practice.

There were no reports of any incidents out on the bike course, which was not closed but which covered roads that were not frequently used. Road markings, as used in previous years, were not permitted now by the local authorities and so directional boards were used by the LOC to great effect. One small group went off course but that might have had more to do with the determination to avoid a small queue of cars than a lack of suitable signage.

Coming back into T2 and again the race referees were placed in zones to cover the inevitable helmet violations. Refereeing for this point was pro-active with athletes being stopped, requested to re-fasten their helmets and being then allowed to proceed. I was present for the majority of time that athletes were returning to T2 and witnessed many (over 50) cases of athletes being stopped. Of these only three became vocal - one later undid his helmet, was identified and received a 15-second "stop and go" standing count (rather than a DQ). Another fumbled with his running shoes for almost 2 minutes and thereby lost any advantage he might have thought he had gained. Of the numerous female athletes who transgressed only one objected - she received a brief but effective lecture before she set off on the run.

Out on the run, which was designed to bring the athletes back through the TA on each lap apart from the finish lap - they were well looked after by a very fulsome aid station near to the TA and another two, one at the western part of the lake and the other at the back of the wooded area behind the venue. Both aid stations I visited were well-staffed and kept the area clean. All around the course were clean and well-



supplied toilets where further drinking water could be obtained. Our sport is often one where the supply of toilet facilities is poor. Here the toilets were plentiful, clean and well looked after.

The athletes were briefed about "Outside Assistance" yet despite this I witnessed many people either running with their friend to support them, cycling alongside them away from the TZ and in one case, on in-line skates, carrying drinks bottle. This is quite unacceptable and it is fortunate that the podium places were not influenced by this cheating. With the plentiful provision of aid stations there was no need for this behaviour and it was unfair for those athletes who completed the course under their own steam.

The laps on the run were quite obvious from the pre-race literature (which each athlete received twice in pre-race mailings) yet despite this and it seemed at every opportunity there were athletes who took the presence of barrier tape as an

invitation to practice jumping. Despite other athletes in front of them and despite vocal volunteers many, many athletes jumped the separation tape. They did not appear to be doing so in order to gain places as there was no marked acceptance on their part or gesture that they had gained any advantage over the athletes they had passed (who in some cases regained ground on the long run in to the finish). It appeared that those who did not follow the route did so just because it is what seemed natural to them. Rather than barrier the entire course (which on such a budget is entirely impractical and from the point of view of image entirely undesirable) the LOC adopted a simple course layout. That this was abused by so many athletes was shocking. Their response when called back to the course was in many cases not a positive one.



The finish area was clearly defined by a massive arch. However the presence of a transit van in the finish chute, albeit the timing van, made it look less than professional. After this was pointed out they did move the van back a little but the fact that it remained in the finish area was not satisfactory. It did not however impede any athletes.

There was no provision of refreshment in the Finish Area. I pointed this out to the LOC who explained that their plan had included it in the Finish Area but the major sponsors, Giga Sport had insisted that both their large tents would be outside on the run course. Admittedly there was a very good supply of refreshments only 50m from the Finish Area but this is not the point. It was hot. Athletes expect refreshments immediately at the finish and there was not. This was a negative point that many, many athletes referred to.



There was no visible medical support at the finish although I am aware that there were doctors present at the venue. With temperatures up in the mid to high 20's this was not acceptable. Fortunately there were no cases requiring medical attention.

After the event athletes wandered around over the run to finish with utter disregard for those who were coming to the end of their race. When viewed alongside the general lack of discipline it would appear that a significant educational programme needs to be put in place for the triathletes of Austria. The sort of behaviour witnessed at this event is acceptable from a "rookie" but not for a National Championship. Were these athletes to behave in such a manner at a Continental Championship then penalties would have been handed out at a far higher rate.

Results were provided by Pentek Timing and available soon after the event and in easy to read format. They were posted on the side of the registration tent / expo.

The awards ceremony took place just after the last competitor crossed the line and used a professional, branded backdrop that provided excellent photo opportunities. By this time the breakdown crew had dismantled most of the TA, which might have been rather disheartening to the final athlete. However the tremendous and very noisy support she received from a large crowd was worthy of one of the commercial long distance events and I am sure this more than made up for coming back to an almost bare TA.

There were many awards, presented by the President of Austrian Triathlon, much to the clear delight of many of the athletes. There were also special prizes to the fastest competitors and the fastest swimmers. It is a shame that so few remained until the prize-giving ceremony was concluded. The very close proximity of the car park for athletes (less than 50m from the finish area) might have tempted them away.

The referee team had all previously been inculcated into the way that ITU / International events should be run and were throughout the competition pro-active and professional. They were on site in time, remained until the very end and behaved just as you would expect a well-managed team to behave. They are a credit to the Styrian Federation and their work ethic is one that should be held up as an example for the rest of Austria to follow.

To conclude:

An excellent course.

Tight organisation.

Dedicated LOC.

Shocking let-down by the venue leaseholder.

Poor behaviour by selfish athletes.

Glorious weather.

Superb racing.

Many positive comments (especially from the Slovenian and American athletes who raced in the open competition.)

None of the flaws noted above that are organisational are impossible to resolve.

All of the flaws caused by athletes can be remedied but only if there is a concerted effort on the part of the Austrian Triathlon Federation to educate their members - this of course relies upon the athletes not behaving in such a selfish manner and by them realising that the rules in force are there to ensure their own safety and not simply to give referees something to do.

Without doubt the LOC is a very strong organisation and has repeatedly staged excellent events, which have delivered fair, safe and exciting racing. When allowed to do what they do best it is clear that they can deliver the best. When outside forces, such as venue owners and sponsors attempt to enforce their operational styles then the "product" is devalued. At this event it was very evident that the LOC was seriously let down by the venue owner (and not only the LOC but all the spectators and athletes) but also, sadly, by the sponsors Giga Sport who whilst they gave great support, should really listen to the LOC and accept that their experience in setting up a race course is superior to theirs.

I have attached a schematic of the venue as a separate document.