



## Sam Appleton Triathlete

Karlovy Vary ITU European Cup served up some of the most brutal elements in a Triathlon in what was perhaps the hardest course I have competed in. The swim was somewhat of a novelty, with three 500m laps. After each lap we swam under a bridge and exited the water up a steep embankment which had us on all fours. We were required to run along this pier for 30 meters and dive back into the water. We were getting some serious hangtime here, with some dives less graceful than others! It took place in a water park with big water slides, pedal boats, canoes and jet ski's. It was a place where the locals would go on a hot weekend, this weekend was exactly that. By the time 3pm rolled around, the mercury had well and truly risen to mid thirties.

We started our first of three laps, and with only 200m to the first buoy, and 80 athletes trying to get there first, carnage is the only word for it. The first 3 hundred meters there was a lot of fighting and unfortunately I was in the thick of it. I worked my way through the field in the next 2 laps and managed to exit the water in a surprising 10<sup>th</sup> place.

The bike took us from the lake on a 5km road into town where we would finish our next 35km in 7 x 5km laps. Each lap had a brutal 21 percent climb which went for 500m. This however wasn't the problem for me. The fact that there was nowhere on the course to recover really took its toll on me. Each lap consisted of 3 climbs and 3 u turns. I think I would have spent about 50 percent of the ride out of the saddle and in the little chain ring! Our group of 14 managed to stay away for the ride but onto the run my legs were well and truly cooked.

The run also incorporated some of Karlovy Vary's finest hills including a staircase each lap, but unfortunately I spent most of the run just trying to get through it. The ride really blew me apart and I wasn't able to run as well as I would have hoped. I got to the finished line in 26<sup>th</sup> place, smoked!

I am now travelling to Paris, where I will stay in Versailles for the next few days before my 4<sup>th</sup> French Grand Prix this weekend. Check out some of the pics of the race attached below.





You can just make me out in the picture above. I am about 6 people up with the bluish – purple goggles breathing this way

