The transition from the warmer (indoor gym pool) to the colder unfriendly environment of open water swimming

Well besides the crowds of people (not separated by lane ropes swimming clockwise) pushing and shoving and jostling for position, heading towards an unseen (older swimmer) marker /turn buoy and no black lines or end in sight. The water may be murky or brown with limited viz over a sandy silty mushy bottom or if luck gravel..with water hyacinth reeds and grasses

WELCOME TO OPEN WATER SWIMMING

1. Dealing with the build up :

Training should be as realistic as possible?? If possible in a dam supervised or using a swim safety device

Distance of race should have been considered in training and I like to add extra to cope with the currents and wind and of course poor sighting

1. Pre entries are normally a good form of commitment and are easier on race day
2. Dealing with the swim itself a good pair of goggles preferably tinted for open water
3. 2 caps if the sponsors requires you to use theirs then that’s on top (retain warmth)
4. Goggles between caps to prevent accidental loss
5. Earplugs also help retain warmth
6. Water warm up if possible 100 strokes out 100 return 50 backstroke stretches back and lats then 50 breast to warm up legs
7. Land warm up arm swings stretches and shoulder shrugs a little flexing too stretching of calves and quads too
8. Swim slowly to catch your breath and acclimatise to colder water
9. Submerge in the water or get your face in and blow bubbles

Pre-race nutrition and hydration

Although we think that because we are in water we don’t sweat and don’t need to be hydrated this is where we go horribly wrong (thirst is actually a sign of dehydration)

We need to pre-hydrate and I like to use things like Rehydrate and Game lots of water even starting the day before

A light snack pre-race like bananas and peanut butter, jelly babies etc. nothing too salty oily or spicy. No milk or milk products