

REDMAN HALF IRONMAN – Oklahoma City, OK – Sept. 19, 2009

I remember how excited I was when they opened up additional spots for this 70.3 event and I was able to get in. After exactly one year of doing my first sprint triathlon I was ready to do a longer triathlon race since I had completed several more sprints and a few Olympic distance races. My training had been going well and maybe too well or rather too much as I came down with a nasty cold about 4 weeks before the race. No big deal, just take a week off and go get some antibiotics. Well, it turned out to be a very big deal as I could not shake this one off and a trip to the UK with lots of work, stress, and travel did not help. One week of absolutely no workouts turned into 2.5 and after several visits to the doctor and 3 different antibiotics I finally got a prescription for steroids and just did very light workouts the week and a half prior to the race. Friday the day before the race was my first day not to take any kind of medication in 4 weeks!

Saturday – Race Day is here! I of course decided to ditch any time goals and just planned on finishing as this would be my first Half Iron Tri and the longest endurance event I would have completed. The weather called for low 60's in the morning and cloudy with only a very slight chance of rain - YES. I arrived very early to the transition area (5:15AM) and quickly setup my stuff and had plenty of time before the 7:30AM start. Then about 7AM a light rain starts. No problem, cover my stuff and I am sure it will pass. BIG Problem – it stopped for a few minutes then started again with a fury as it started to downpour nice and heavy and steady! Everyone had their wetsuits on and proceeded to wait by the lake as the race director said the start would be delayed due to the needed inspections on the bike course. I tried to stay relaxed with other Tri friends from the Grapevine club but I was so cold that I shivered for 30 mins straight. The race director announced that it may be just a swim and run as parts of the bike course were reportedly un-passable due to high water, but finally announced that at around mile 8 there would be a mandatory dismounting of the bike to walk through or around the high water. So an hour after the original start time the swim starts in several waves.

Swim – 1.2 miles following a counterclockwise loop. We take off or rather mostly walk start as the part of the lake where we started was so low that most people walked through the water for up to 50 yards! I stayed nice and relaxed and with no problems until a guy T boned me half way through but no big deal. I exit the water and cross the timing mat at 41:02! Can this be right for me – a non swimmer? Must be the wetsuit! I leave the ramp area and hear someone yelling for me and can't see who it is as I am a little disoriented. Later found out it was Haley Pollard (Thanks Haley) who was there as Craig was also doing his first half Iron Tri. I enter the transition area and then proceeded to have trouble finding my bike. My bib number was 688 and for some reason I was looking in the 886 racked area even though I had set a landmark of what aisle to turn into. I finally found my bike and was off. My T1 time was really slow 3:50 as everything was wet. Light rain during the first few miles on the bike and then the mandatory dismount around mile 8. The small lake in middle of the road was bigger than I pictured. Picked up the bike and just walked through as my feet were already wet. I started feeling good on the bike and was getting into a good pace when we entered some rough road patches around 18 miles. I quickly came out of the aero position and accidentally veered to the edge of the road. Slight PANIC as I tried to break a little to slow down and then hit the grass and proceeded to flip forward over the front end of the bike

and did a nice tuck and roll into the grass. Popped up quick and did a quick examination of the bike – everything seemed ok with no scratches and then looked at myself – strawberry on my left knee and bruise on my left shoulder but other than that nothing noticeable so back on the bike. Well, about 20 mins later I realize my speedometer/computer is not working so I have no idea what speed I am going and my seat is loose! Again, no panic just stay on the seat and don't move my butt. Finally hit the turnaround and the last 10 miles or so I start to get tired a little and my hamstrings are tight. I get into the Transition and find out later my bike time for the 56 miles was 2:49:55 about a 19.8 mph average. Not bad for the conditions, crash, and loose seat from 18 on! A guy passed me on the bike the last few miles and told me that he saw my crash and said it was the most graceful bike crash he has ever seen. Tuck and roll into grass is better than skidding along the road!

I really take my time in T2 as I try to massage my hamstrings and take a gel. I later find out that I way under eat on the last half of the bike ride. I finally get out T2 at 3:57 (wow slower than T1!). I start running and immediately feel better. Mile 1 – 7:00 min flat and I feel good so I decided to keep going. The 13.1 mile run course is 2 loops on mostly concrete sidewalk around a portion of the lake and through several spots where the water was so high and wide that everyone just ran through them. First loop (6.55 miles) completed at 48:09. Then the bottom falls out and I totally CRATER. I even had to stop a port a potty and I don't mean for No. 1 either – ugh! I then proceeded to do the dreaded stop and walk then go slow then walk.....in an unplanned tribute to the Jeff Galloway marathon running plan. I have never walked so much in a race, not even in any of the many marathons where I struggled in the last few miles and would walk at the aid stations. I was eating everything they handed out – oranges tasted so good. I kept telling myself that I could do this and PAIN is Temporary and PRIDE is forever (a.k.a. the Duncan Stewart) but the pain would not go away! Finally hit the finish line with a second half run loop of 1:00:31 seconds (lost 12 mins over the last 6.55 miles! Ouch!!). Total time of 5:27:24 and placed 258 out of 573 total. I think my body just had enough by mile 6. All in all happy to get this first one under me and considering all the circumstances just happy to be finally healthy again (I think!). I definitely learned a lot from the race and about training – we all need a combination of rest, nutrition and sleep when training for any long distance/endurance event. Maybe a full Ironman in 2010!

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