

Ah...it must be spring 'cuz here's the first race report of the year.

I'll keep this short and sweet, but to start I have to give a big thanks to my supporters.

- To the family at Eco Rez (www.ecorez.com), you guys have given me the boost I needed this year to reach for and achieve my goals – many thanks.
- To Heath, Lorne, Henry and Tony at LaBicicletta (www.labicicletta.com), cheers for keeping my bike in shape (and clean) and my tank full with the right fuel!
- Drs. Scotty, Dr. Jason and Rolland at Sports Performance Centres (www.sportsperformancecentres.com), you guys have golden hands, those last few treatments really got my shoulder in place!
- To coach SoB (www.bentleycoaching.com) – that would be Steve Bentley - you kept my body and my mind on track, lets keep up the good work.
- And to my good friends Maureen, Ellen, Kim, Tara (www.taranorton.com), and Dave. You guys are my backbone! Thanks for your support, kick in the ass, and Tara, for showing me the true nature of tenacity.

Half Ironman Florida 2005

Overall the Florida Half Ironman was a super race this year. Improvements to the race-course made it more enjoyable and improvements to my health made it easier to race!

At this race I wanted to bring all aspects of my training into play. My plan was to have a fast swim, a solid paced bike, and then to work as hard as I could for the run.

Swim:

The race started in 'waves', meaning each age-group (AG) of competitors started together, as opposed to a 'mass start' where all competitors begin at the same time. As such, 95 women in my AG all ran into the water together. I lead the pack into the water and had a clean start, in that no one was in my way (I even got a couple of dolphin strokes in!). I was able to gauge the 'traffic' around me and was sure that I lead my AG through the entire swim. Making my way through the other AG that left ahead of me was not too difficult and upon exiting the water I looked at my watch and saw that my swim time was 30 minutes" - last year at this race I was 32:12" - so knowing that I had improved my time was a good boost.

Bike:

The bike course at this race is fairly flat for the first half, and then gets into some rolling hills. I was working with a good group of 3 other riders for the first 20 miles. We had a strong pace going, but I slowly drifted away from them...just not as strong. Once the hills came and I stood up on the pedals I experienced pain in my left knee. Recently I'd been having some problems with my knee during my run, but with new shoes the problem went away. I decided to hold back on my effort on the bike, not knowing how much pain my knee would have, and not wanting to injure myself for the run. I decided that if I could keep my pace that I would still improve on my bike time from last year. In total, my bike was 2hr:42min for the 90km, so an improvement of only 1" from 2004.

EEKKKS

Run:

My legs felt great right from the beginning of the run (hummm, slow bike – fresh legs)! I was easily passing people and was having a good time as I caught and ran with a few guys with fast feet. I was really happy that I felt so strong as this has been my main focus since Christmas. Having 'speedy' legs is a new sensation for me. Four miles from the finish I passed a woman in my AG who had gone by me on the bike (two girls had passed me during the bike, so I was sure I was in 2nd place.). I worked hard for the full run, I did experience a slow down at one point, but was able to refocus and bring my speed up again.

Seeing Adam (thnks for almost knocking me off my feet with that high-5), and Rhys, kept my spirits up. I held a strong pace through the entire run, and finished the run in 1hr 38– a 10 minute improvement from last year!

I finished the race in 4hrs and 58 minutes. Breaking the 5hr mark is a good indication that my fitness level is advanced from years past. I also had the fastest swim and run in my AG! Woo hoo!!!

The Aftermath:

Unfortunately I received a 4-minute penalty for a dismount line (from the bike) violation. I don't recall missing it, but sometimes the little white line on the road is easy to miss if there is no one there (i.e. volunteers) yelling at you to get off your bike – OK, the huge inflatable archway should have been a good indicator.... I talked to the marshal who assigned the penalty, and he said I glided over the dismount line with both my legs on one side of the cross bar, and that I only jumped off my bike once under the arch – so about a bike length past the line. With the penalty I was dropped from 2nd to 3rd place in my AG. The learning here for me is that I focus on where I'm going, and not so much on where I'm at. I need to remember to be 'present' and not thinking about my next move at this critical point in the race.

So, unofficial time 4:58, 2nd /95
Official time 5:02, 3rd/95

Next stop – Denmark – ITU World Long Course Championship, August 7th, 2005

Thanks again everyone!

linnea