

# Ultramax Triathlon Smithville, Missouri September 25, 2004

## General comments

- Regardless of how this year's Ultramax turned out for me, it just wouldn't mean the same as it did last year. Last year's Ultramax was my first iron-distance finish, giving me the lifelong right to call myself an "Ironman". It was also held here at the Lake of the Ozarks, giving me a chance to participate in a race where I live. So when the race organizers announced in January 2004 that the event was moving to Smithville Lake near Kansas City, I was crushed. I had been planning to do the race for years to come here at the Lake, but now it was gone. Since I had already paid my entry fee, I figured that I would go ahead and participate this year. I didn't get nearly as excited about it as I would have if it had still been at the Lake.
- I was remarkably calm about the whole event. I never got nervous before the race. I didn't know if this was good or bad. I knew what I was in for, and that my training was sufficient to get me to the finish line if everything went OK.
- Like last year, my overriding goal was simply to finish. However, I was hoping to beat last year's time (14:45:39) by at least an hour. I knew that the way to do so was to cut a significant amount of time off of last year's bike split (7:47), so this year's training included many more miles on the bike, and less on the stationary bike. I swam about the same number of yards as in the previous year, and ran just a little bit less. I showed up on race day feeling well-rested, pain-free and confident that I could beat last year's time.

## Thursday

- I left for Kansas City at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday and arrived at around 11:30 a.m. I immediately went to visit Larry and Donna Franz (their boat is kept near ours on Dock C at The Moorings) just across the Kansas border in south Kansas City. They took me to their daughter's (Debbie) and son-in-law's (Mike) steak restaurant in nearby Martin City, Missouri. Afterward, they took me for a tour of the area in which they live. I had a great time.
- I arrived at the Fairfield Inn near the Kansas City International Airport around 4:00 p.m. I moved all of my stuff inside to my room, relaxed for a while, then went to eat dinner at Applebee's.
- I figured that I might not be able to sleep well on Friday night, so I took a Tylenol PM on Thursday night to get a good night's sleep that evening. I slept well, but was occasionally interrupted by the roar of the jet engines at the airport.

## Friday

- On Friday morning, I went out to the race site to pick up my registration materials and drop off my bike. I left around noon and ate lunch at Burger King in Smithville before returning to the hotel.

- On Friday afternoon, I prepared my gear/transition bags. While doing so, I loaded up on carbohydrates (pretzels, bananas, canned fruit, etc.) and drank lots of Gatorade and orange juice.
- Late Friday afternoon, I returned to the race site to attend the racers' meeting, do a little shopping and eat at the pasta dinner.
- I returned to the hotel about 8:00 p.m. and climbed in bed around 9:30, but didn't fall asleep until 10:30 or so. I knew that taking a Tylenol PM might leave me a bit sleepy the next morning, but I took one anyway just to try to get some quality sleep. I slept off and on, but I felt rested when I awoke at 4:45 a.m.

### **Saturday (pre-race)**

- When I awoke, I started eating and drinking immediately. I ate cereal, a banana, and some breakfast bars. I drank orange juice and Gatorade.
- I took two Aleve and my nutritional supplements. I filled up my Gatorade and water bottles with CarboPro.
- I left for the race around 5:45-6:00 a.m. It only takes about 20 minutes to reach the race site.

### **Clothes/Transition bags**

- For the swim, I wore a sleeveless wetsuit top. The water temperature was reportedly around 74 degrees, and the sleeveless top was just right.
- For the bike, I wore a short sleeve cycling jersey and cycling shorts. I brought a whole complement of food and supplements (Endurolytes and Lava Salts) in my jersey pocket. I ended up not eating some of the food. My bike special needs bag included more food and supplements, but I ended up discarding some of it.
- For the run, I wore my "Go Jim!" jersey, Ultramax mesh hat, blue running shorts, knee supports, a small towell and thick cotton socks. (I wanted the thicker socks because of the pain that I had been experiencing over the last several months in my left foot. This gave me plenty of cushioning with the Dr. Scholl's foam pad that I also placed inside my left shoe.) My run special needs bag included a light long-sleeve shirt (which I put on after two laps), a heavier long-sleeve shirt and a sweatshirt. The heavier shirts were just in case the temperatures fell sharply.

### **Weather**

- The weather could hardly have been better. The air temperature was about 55-60 degrees at 7:30 a.m., and climbed to about 80 degrees in mid afternoon. There was no wind to speak of until early afternoon, when a northeast wind of 5-10 mph kicked in. This made it a bit more difficult heading north on Highway 33 on the second lap of the bike course, but as soon as I reached the turnaround at Perrin, I was able to easily cruise at around 18-20 mph.
- I began the marathon at around 4:00 p.m. Because the run course was on asphalt and there was no shade, the first lap was very warm. The second lap was still a bit warm. The sun was setting near the beginning of my third lap and temperatures dropped quickly.

## Swim

- The swim went OK. I placed myself near the back of the mass start. There was some contact with others for the first 5-10 minutes, but the field spread out and contact was rare thereafter. By the time I reached the midpoint of the first lap, there was virtually no more contact.
- I was sighting often to try to stay on course, but there were a few times when I was veering off course or was zigzagging more than I would have liked. I guess I really would have benefited from some open water swims this summer.
- I had a few moments of panic shortly after the start. The contact with the other swimmers and the fatigue caused by swimming before my heart rate reached a commensurate level caused me to become anxious. I turned onto my back for a very brief time to get more air, drain the water out of my goggles and see where everybody else was behind me. Most of all, though, I just told myself to relax and that everything would be fine. Things turned out fine, but I was reminded of why I don't enjoy swimming.
- I was fortunate in that the swim course was clockwise. Since I swim better breathing to my right side, I was easily able to keep an eye on the buoys. I also found another swimmer who was staying close to the buoys and who was also going at my pace, so I was able to use him or her to make sure that I was not veering too far off course.

## Bike

- The bike segment didn't start out well. I had some pain in my right side that felt like a side stitch. I figured it was due to overexertion on the swim. Fortunately the pain disappeared after about 15 minutes. However, my stomach was uncomfortable—a condition that lasted nearly the entire day. It wasn't really painful, but I knew that something wasn't right.
- I started drinking my water/CarboPro mixture shortly after beginning the bike. I really didn't feel like eating, but I took banana halves at nearly every aid station on the course. I ate one package of peanut butter & crackers, a Clif Bar and occasionally a gel. I drank lots of Gatorade and water, and stayed pretty well hydrated. I took two Endurolytes and a salt tablet about every hour. All in all, I don't think I was taking in enough calories, but I did the best I could with an uncooperative stomach. I felt drained of energy for the first 15 miles of the second lap, and I think that is where I was far behind in nutritional needs. There was only one brief period on the bike where my stomach felt fine.
- I finished the first lap in about 3:15, averaging 17.2 mph. My goal was to average 16.5 mph for the entire course, so I felt good about that. It gave me some room to slow down on the second lap.
- On the second lap, I was going much slower for the first 10-15 miles. My speed was dropping to 13-14 mph. I figured it was due to nutrition, but it turns around a slight headwind was kicking up. The balls of my feet were burning, so I stepped off the bike at Plattsburg and at Perrin to massage my feet. A few minutes of massage worked wonders! However, I noticed that my hamstrings were on the verge of cramping as I sat down and got back up.
- When I reached the turnaround at Perrin, the wind was suddenly at my back. I started feeling much better mentally. Prior to Perrin, I wasn't sure that I would be able to finish

the bike segment in under 7 hours. But with the tailwind, I was able to ride faster, and decided to make a sub-7 hour bike split my goal. I passed several riders along the way.

- I was so proud to finish the bike segment in 6:55 or so, according to my bike computer. I had really pushed hard the last 28 miles. However, my official bike split was 6:45 (16.6 mph). To this day, I can't reconcile the time difference between my computer and theirs. A few minutes, maybe, but not 10 minutes.

## **Run**

- The marathon always feels like a death march. My legs were very sore. However, I had my time goal constantly on my mind and kept pushing myself. I would run as much as I could, and only walk on the hills or if I felt that cramping might begin.
- I knew that I started the marathon at around the 8:30 mark of the race, but I wasn't sure of the exact time. I figured a 5:00 marathon was possible and that that would get me a sub-14 hour finish. I knew that I had walked good portions of last year's marathon and still did it in 5:07.
- I was so sick of Gatorade, bananas and gels that I started drinking Coke immediately during the marathon. This helped keep my blood glucose level up, and the caffeine helped keep me alert. I kept taking Endurolytes hourly. The only food I could tolerate was orange slices. My stomach was still uncomfortable, but at least it wasn't the bloated, bowling-ball-in-the-stomach feeling that I had at Half Max.
- My feet were killing me, despite all of the padding. It turned out that I had a large blood blister on the fourth toe on my left foot.
- I really hated the three-lap course. You could see most of the course, most of the time, and you just didn't want to see how much more you were going to have to run/walk.
- There's just something so serene about running in the dark, with no one around you. It doesn't make it easier, though.
- One of the neatest scenes was watching the sun set to the west while the moon was rising over the water to the east as I ran over the dam. It's too bad I didn't have time to stop and enjoy it.

## **Finish**

- I was disappointed that there were virtually no spectators lining the finish chute. There was only one guy there to give a "high five" to before crossing the finish line. I was wondering where all of the U.S. Half Iron folks were who had finished their races hours earlier and could have been at the finish line to cheer us on.

## **Physical effects**

- You can't expect to go through an event of this duration without some problem(s). My stomach didn't feel great for most of the day, but that's probably because I was pushing myself to finish faster than last year. However, I had pushed myself hard in training sessions and didn't experience the problem.
- At last year's Ultramax, I had stomach pains right after the swim. Those were gas pains from swallowed air that resolved themselves within an hour. I didn't pass gas at all during the race this year, but did do so shortly after finishing. I assume it was from the orange slices I ate during the marathon.

- I was really wiped out after crossing the finish line. I walked over to the food tent and slowly ate two hamburgers and drank a soda.
- I urinated four times during the race—once at the very start of the run, and once on each lap of the run course. I could see that I wasn't overly hydrated.
- It was nearly impossible to sleep after the race. I went back to the hotel and jumped in the swimming pool and whirlpool. My legs and feet were aching quite bad, and the caffeine in all of the soda I drank during the marathon and after finishing kept me awake. I watched the TV coverage of Hurricane Jeanne as it was coming ashore. I fell asleep around 2:00 a.m. and slept fitfully until 5:00 a.m., when I woke up for good. I laid in bed with my legs and feet elevated, which seemed to help.

## Results

- My finish time was 13:37:16, broken down as follows, with comparisons to last year's results:

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>Change</u>
Swim	1:20:58	1:21:54	(0:56)
T-1	8:26	13:37	(5:11)
Bike	6:45:00 (16.6 mph)	7:47:44 (14.4 mph)	(1:12:44)
T-2	11:29	14:34	(3:05)
Run	5:11:22 (11:53/mi)	5:07:50 (11:45/mi)	3:32
Total	13:37:16	14:45:39	(1:08:23)

- My times placed me as follows:

	<u>All individuals</u>	<u>All male</u>	<u>Male 45-49</u>
Swim	67 of 119	58 of 94	7 of 13
Bike	76 of 119	69 of 94	9 of 13
Run	47 of 119	40 of 94	7 of 13
Finish	68 of 119	61 of 94	8 of 13

- In my age group, I'm pretty average in all three disciplines. Compared to others, though, I'm a slightly worse than average swimmer, a worse cyclist, and a better than average runner.
- My transition times were much slower than average. I was about 2 minutes slower in T-1, and 5 minutes slower in T-2. I know that I was doing a little too much fumbling in transition, but I was never leisurely about it.

## Conclusions

- I did my best. This was a really tough event. I pushed much harder than last year. All of the bike training paid off, but there is still room for improvement on the bike.
- This is a great event, although not as exciting for me as when it was here at the Lake. I plan to continue to do Ultramax. I hope, however, that it gets bigger and better. Its first year at Smithville Lake was smaller and a step down from last year, but hopefully things will turn around.

October 2, 2004

Fellow TNOers at the race:

I saw:

Cheryl Shakespeare (Cheryl in KC)  
Sean McKessy (simplysean)  
Nik (warehouse monkey)—from TriSports.com

I didn't see:

Tim Battles (j3ckyl)  
Jodi Fougeron (tri tri again)  
Mark Maus (Mauich)  
Dennis Noel (Dennis in Missouri)

Other folks I met:

- Ron Ottaway, from Springfield, Illinois. Did the U.S. Half Iron, and will be going to Ironman Hawaii for the 8<sup>th</sup> time. He won his age group at the U.S. Half Iron. He knows Paul McDivitt, who organized the now-defunct Ironhorse Triathlon.