



CAT TALES

Summer 2008

www.tricats.org

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Could this be the last TriCATs Newsletter? Hopefully not. As Scott Weinhold notes in the "President's Corner" the club is going through what could be called a 'mid-life crisis'. It is surprising that as enthusiasm and interest in triathlons is increasing in the D.C. area, that the club still relies on a few people to keep things running. How can it be that we now have several top triathlons to choose from—including Savageman and the Nation's Triathlon—but we cannot get enough support to have a tent this year at the Columbia triathlon?

I for one have found the comradeship from being a TriCAT great. Most recently I did Ironman Switzerland and arranged to stay at the same hotel with fellow TriCATs Theresa Urban and Joanne Hopkins. We were joined by Amy Smith and Kirstin McArthur who have moved from the area. It was fun to have them along and we all helped with the logistics and cheered each other along during the race. While triathlon is a sport of individuals, I'm always pleased to wear my TriCAT singlet and identify with the club. And, as Scott notes, the tail always gets comments.

So to repeat Scott's question: "What would you like YOUR club to be?" I hope that we can get a good discussion going and define the role and future of the club. I'd rather keep wearing my TriCAT race singlet than DC or TriRATs. Time to also ensure that all my bikes are equipped with TriCAT tails!



TriCATs and Friends at Ironman Zurich

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Capital Area Triathlon Club

PO Box 2763
 Merrifield, VA 22116
 Editor: Chris Bennett - chris@lpcb.org

Mark Your Calendars: September 8 – Ironman Wisconsin registration opens



President's Corner

Scott Weinhold
scott.weinhold@verizon.net



You may or may not have noticed, but the last board election was a little unusual because we tried to move away from defined roles. We all agreed that we wanted to help keep the club going, but none of us felt like we could commit to taking the helm. I am writing this column on behalf of the board, and hope that I can clearly articulate our concerns for the club.

We have been faced with many difficulties over the last couple of years and we're trying our best to figure out what the next move for the club should be. Our website lost some functionality and gave us some major headaches trying to manage memberships and access information about the club. As a result we lost access to our PayPal account and our credit cards expired. We then lost the meeting location that we've had for years and were left scrambling to find a new location that was going to work within our budget which translates to finding a free location that works for most of the membership.

The question that continues to come up is what do people want from the club? My personal experience with the club has led me to meet a lot of interesting and great people with whom to enjoy training and racing. I really enjoy going to races and running into people I know. It's not just about encouraging each other but it also helps me relax during the race because I know that I'm not just one single stranger among the

crowd of people participating in the race. This happened for me because I made the effort to attend a couple of group rides, attended meetings, and joined a training group. I also wore my TriCATS clothing at races and, of course, had a tail on my bike. The tail single-handedly started more conversations than I can remember, and as a result, helped me meet a lot of interesting people. I can't remember the last time I saw a tail on the trails or at a race...

The club is at a crossroads and we have to decide which way to go. I personally think it would be a shame to see the club discontinue but it's been very hard to see if there's any real interest out there to keep it going. I believe that the strength of a club needs to come from its membership, being driven by their interest in being proactive about the club. A club is not service-based so its value can only be realized by those who are willing to bring themselves to the club.

The question remains: "What would you like YOUR club to be?" We'd love to hear from you so please drop us a line and let us know your answer to that question. Finally, we really need your help and ideas. Events of any kind cannot come-off without the creativity and time of other members.

In my day we had to race 30 miles in the snow ...

Mark Mullen
cyclekiwi@yahoo.com

Virginia Duathlon
Chippokes Plantation State Park
March 30, 2008
5K Run--23 mile Bike--5K Run

One of the first pieces of advice that apprentices to the multisport trade are offered is the importance of having a personal mantra to get you through the tough times out on the course when your body and every shred of common sense are telling you to quit. You know, inspirational sayings like "Run Strong," or, "I am the wind" or "We are as the Gods' privates, they play with us for their sport" (maybe that last one is only for people raised on Blackadder¹). Well, about halfway through the bike leg of this year's Virginia Duathlon I came up with my own inspirational mantra, which I repeated dutifully as the world closed in: Screw Accuweather, Screw Accuweather. . .

The annual Virginia Duathlon has been a peripatetic event in recent years, remaining in the vicinity of Virginia Beach but moving from its

¹ *Editor's note for Americans: Either an excellent rugby player from New Zealand or a TV show starring Rowen Atkinson of Mr. Bean fame. Knowing Mark, probably the latter.*

Creeds Airfield location in 2006 to Fort Story in 2007 and this year to Chippokes Plantation State Park. While the new race venue is a little further away from Virginia Beach (in itself not a bad thing: Virginia Beach is what purgatory would look like had Dante been able to imagine Cheez Whiz and mini golf) the new site offers several advantages: camping at the venue, a variety of run options within the park boundaries, recreational opportunities for athletes' supporters, and a beautiful one-loop bike course around the rural roads of Surrey County.



The Virginia Duathlon is the season opener for many local duathletes and serves as an early season warm-up for triathletes so it is typically well attended. This year it was especially gratifying to see so many younger athletes there, including a sizable contingent from the Georgetown University triathlon team. But as with many early season races in this region, you never quite know what you are going to get in terms of weather. For that reason I was assiduous—some would even say obsessive—in checking Accuweather prior to the race. I knew that it would be chilly (in the low 40s) but thankfully there didn't appear to be any chance of rain. The day prior to the race I ran into another duathlete camping near us who had an updated forecast that indicated showers moving in later in the day, so there was still nothing to worry about.

It was a pleasure to be able to bike to the race site, and I took a bit of extra time scoping out the transition area. The race used a completely different style of rack that sat low on the ground

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and gripped the bike wheel. On the one hand this made getting the bike in and out a breeze. On the other hand, the bikes were closer together than on the more traditional rack which meant that things were a little tight.

I was in the middle of my warm up run when I felt the first raindrops. The site is pretty close to the James River so I assumed we were getting some kind of coastal weather pattern that would dissipate in short order. By the time I had finished my warm up it was raining steadily. As we lined up at the start the rain turned to sleet.

And stayed that way. For the better part of three hours.

At first it was mildly amusing, and even in the midst of the typically blistering pace for the first run some people were cracking jokes. The joke was wearing thin by T1, however. My bike shoes were already drenched, there was a layer of what looked like snow on my transition towel and I had to empty ice out of my helmet before I put it on. I was deeply regretting my decision not to wear tights.

By mile 5 on the bike leg I could no longer feel my feet. The roads were treacherously slick but I tried to ignore that, knowing that tightening up would only make things worse. I nearly came a cropper on one corner but was leaning so far over against the turn that I was able to haul the bike upright with nothing worse than some spectacular fishtailing. I tried to ignore the outside world, to retreat inside myself and concentrate on my form, on making clean passes, and this worked for a while. But even this became impossible. There is a point where the glockenspiel tinkle and its tympanic accompaniment of sleet hitting your bike frame and helmet respectively start to lose their charm. At times, it is true, there were breaks in the weather...but that was only to allow the hail to have a go at us. The difference between hail and sleet? They both sting, but only one of them bounces.

By the halfway point I was passing people who had clearly given up on the race and were just trying to survive: riding upright, their cadence slow, and who could blame them? My own thinking was that I wanted to ride as fast as possible to get out of that weather. But about 5 miles from the finish I cracked. My cyclometer was working only intermittently (and when it was, it was giving me insanely optimistic guesstimates as to how fast I was going) so I had little idea of exactly how far I had left to



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ride. My legs were bright pink from the ice lashing and I was the coldest I have ever been.

At this point I passed a couple of people walking their bikes by the side of the road, and up ahead, about half a mile or so, saw another group of riders. I remember thinking to myself: "This is ridiculous. Those guys have to be suffering as much as you are. You can probably catch them." And suddenly I was filled with this absurd burst of energy. Nothing dramatic, and it was a slow haul to catch them, but I passed another 7 people before the end of the bike leg.

T2 was an event in itself. Water had worked its way into the clasp of one of my bike shoes and frozen solid (and matters weren't helped by the fact that I couldn't feel my fingers). So I sat there in the transition area beating one shoe with the other until the clasp released. Then I couldn't get my running shoes on. Or rather I could, but I couldn't convince myself that they were on. My feet felt enormous, as if I was wearing those gigantic wedge shoes from the 1970s (er, at least, that is, what I imagine wearing them would have been like, if one were into wearing such a thing...). As I began to run (well, what was actually something between a run and a hobble, a robble, if you like) I was convinced that I was running with my heels on the backs of my shoes and kept looking down to see if my shoes were still on. Feeling began to return to my feet after about a mile and that was a whole other kind of pain.

The finish line was the loneliest one I have ever crossed. I was far from being the last person out there, but at the line there were only a couple of race officials, my partner Mary, and a couple of disoriented athletes staggering around. Most people immediately headed for the cars, cranked up the heating and began to change. As a couple people commented, the scene looked like a drive-in movie arena, with lots of writhing pinkness glimpsed dimly through misted glass. The food at the finish line was some of the best I've had at a race, as the organizers had managed to slow roast a pig despite the conditions. Unfortunately I was shivering so much that Mary had to help me eat it.

Ironically, however, this race was my best finish in a duathlon. My overall time was a little over two hours and three minutes, which translated into 43rd place out of 151 finishers (gender

place 38) and fourth out of ten finishers in my age group. I felt even more satisfied with the result because almost a quarter of the starters never finished the race.



I also learned a couple of important things. I'd always heard people say that in multisport events it's not always the strongest and fittest who succeed. And to be honest that had always sounded like a bunch of crap, the kind of thing that people who win a lot typically say to people who don't. But I now believe it. I knew that I wasn't faster or fitter than a lot of people out there, including a lot of people who never finished (one of the guys in my age group who never finished slaughtered everyone by a country mile on the first run). But I think that for whatever reason, on this particular day, I was mentally tough, tapping into a reservoir of strength and focus that I would never up until that point believed that I had. It's hard to say that without it coming across as bragging or affecting a kind of macho posturing, and I don't mean it like that. I also definitely feel that I

owed a huge debt of gratitude to my coaches and friends at the Potomac River Running club. They hold their practices in all weathers and I've made a concerted effort to be there in all weathers, and races like the Virginia Duathlon are the reason why. You can't really train your body to cope with those kinds of extreme conditions. It will do what it will do: hurt, cramp, go numb, cry uncle over and over and over. . . But you can train your mind.

And develop a catchy little mantra.



Race Report: Ironman Brazil

Taneen Carvell
taneen@earthlink.net

Editor's Note: For those who don't know Taneen, she is small in size but don't underestimate her determination. She ran the Marine Corps Marathon in sub-4h, after breaking a bone in her foot at the starting line. She then trumped that by breaking her knee at mile 22 in the Philadelphia Marathon, but still managed to qualify for Boston. As you will read below, she kept up this tradition in IM Brazil. Well done Taneen. A true Ironwoman!

True to form, in my third Ironman I had a few obstacles to overcome but all the more reason to be happy with the finish.

First let me say that it was an amazing trip. Brazil is quite beautiful and that was only more the case from the vantage point of the bike and the run...okay...and the swim.

We had a beautiful sunrise to start the race and the waters appeared calm and amenable to us. That wasn't so true once we dove in as the current and the course layout proved beyond challenging and sent us all on a wild goose chase for well beyond the 2.4 miles we had signed up for. I had an added benefit of a well placed kick to the chest early in the race but there was no one that exited the water feeling refreshed and ahead of schedule. My 30 minutes lag time from previous races gives proof that I am no match for big feet, currents and wayward buoys. Wow.

So it was off to the bike at last and there I settled into my fairly new bike and was pleased to find it so comfortable—although my chest proved to be a bit less so and the blow had clearly left its mark. I could not 'blow' my nose in fashion as one does on the bike and that was my first indication that perhaps there was an issue. Then came the realization that a deep cleansing breath was not to be as well. A bit of a concern that of course with 112 miles to ride just became something to negotiate—not cater to.

As if that wasn't enough though, I got a flat tire at mile 40 ... as I was half way UP the steepest climb of the ride. This cost me 15 minutes by the time I got road support. The road crew person didn't have the right adapter to pump up my tire so he used my CO2 cartridge.... but clearly not all of it as I set off and could readily tell I was lacking in the benefits of a well aired tire. Still off I went and my negotiations on my injury were balanced with the stunning view of the ride. It was at points breathtaking—if one could take such a breath of course.

So. A bit slower the second loop on the ride in part to greater winds and less air...and well it is the second half of a 112 mile ride. But soon there would be the run. And I had decided it would be okay if I couldn't run but would walk or whatever it took. There was no 'stopping'... I would finish... I knew this...well maybe I knew this but I wasn't quite sure.

Still I hit transition and was laced up before I could think more about it and ventured through to the run course. I was sure I couldn't run...but soon found that in fact I could.

Shallow steady breathing seemed to be doing the trick and somehow after a mile of negotiating with my mind over the fact that I was going to run after allowing myself to consider otherwise—my joy at being able to run and vision the finish line took hold and I ran like never before. The fear turned into determination and I paced to my favorite game of ABC's through the early miles. I walked through the water stops and the one steep hill as strategized before the race. Otherwise there was to be none of that. Hunker down and get it done.

All was well... and just as the sun was setting and offering up the most beautiful sky—I was enjoying the moment and the distance and this race—until I choked on an over zealous sip of Gatorade and was quickly reminded of the pain I had thought was put in it's place. Coughing. Never fun when one's chest is hurting. Okay... easy through it and add that to the list of 'don't do' for the remaining miles. Get a grip and rally on. And I just continued and my pace held true. With no clocks to really tell us otherwise, I used my watch as my guide. According to it, I had recovered time on the run as such to bring my finish time well in range to my Florida time. Wow—I might even beat it! So I ran - and

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smiled and breathed shallow and in rhythm and savored the fact that I was doing what I do best (run that is). And as the sky grew ever darker -- the finish line ever closer I just kept picking up the pace hoping to better my time beyond the challenge.

First mistake? Thinking that 40km was VERY close to the finish.... this is what the mind does after 138 miles. It calculates badly. Seems its two miles away, not one. Okay so I'll not beat Florida's time but I'll be close I thought as my watch had me at about 12:40 with just under a mile to go.

You can imagine my surprise then as I made the final turn into the finish to see the clock with a whole different perspective on my performance. I was thrilled to finish but admit my disappointment to see that it was just beyond the 13 hour mark I thought I had kept under.

But I finished!! And Anne and Nicole who had travelled so far in support of this as a start to their Brazilian travel adventure were right there at the finish waiting for me. And it was in my greeting to them that the pain I had set aside kicked right back into place. Oh.. ouch. Um..hey. Maybe I'll get this little pain looked at. But hey - I finished!!!

And with that I headed into the medical tent and was immediately greeted by Ken, the leader of the Endurance Travel group I stayed with. (and a quick and well earned plug for Endurance Sports Travel—if you ever travel to do a race internationally—he and his team are the best!!) Ken got me well tended to and the physician and medical team there was great!

Hmm.. seems that it was a bit of a cracked rib I had suffered but no worries. A good dose of medicine and a few days rest and all will be well. Maybe not a good idea to venture to the Amazon but that can wait for another day. I stayed and was tended to for a good hour and a half before being told to lay low a few days and sent gingerly on my way. All this while Anne and

Nicole tracked down my bike and gear and Ken obtained my coveted medal and finisher shirt. I was taken care of beyond measure and continue to be and can't thank people enough.

The medicine and endorphins of the race kept the pain fairly in check but I am not going to a comedy club anytime soon. I do continue to smile though I promise!



Plug for Boise 70.3

Theresa Urban
theresa_urban@yahoo.com

June 1, 2008 marked the date of the inaugural Boise 70.3. Being the heat wimp that I am, I chose this race for the promise of cooler temperatures as an alternative to the consistently scalding Eagleman (kudos to all of you finishers this year). More importantly, my good friend Rhonda lives in Boise, so I had a race Sherpa ☺. Rhonda also hosted a professional athlete (Mac Brown) for the weekend, which was a totally cool way to elevate my triathlon exposure. Despite the sometimes weird logistics and inconsistent information distribution common to first time events, I think this is a fantastic race—a fast course in an up and coming metropolitan area, with a promising future.

The course had 2 transitions, which meant that gear had to be dropped off at two locations the day before the race. The swim was held in Lucky Peak Reservoir, just outside of Boise to morning temperatures in the high fifties with a water temperature about the same (no joke—I bought a neoprene cap to not die). Consistent with my streak of less than favorable swim conditions, the normally glass-like reservoir was choppy due to wind. This made getting whacked in the head with a wave less than pleasant (it was shockingly cold!) My swim was going reasonably well (meaning I kept my age group's swim caps in sight) until I collided with another swimmer, tensed up, and got a cramp in my calf that compromised my whole race (yikes!).



Conditions during the bike were overcast and rainy (for us mere mortals—I saw Mac and the rest of the pros heading back to town when I was about 10 miles in). We left Barclay Bay, crossed Lucky Peak Dam and headed south on Highway 21 on roads south of the airport, riding up to a bird sanctuary and past a prison (it was barely noticeable, seriously). My bike ride was nothing special, though not as bad as clock time indicated. In addition to the calf thing I had stomach issues. It was just one of those days.

The bike leg finished in downtown Boise, to an unusual amount of traffic; local hero JR Simplot—responsible for the frozen French fry—died that week and the memorial service was held at the convention center on race day, within earshot of the finish line. Not the most serene of circumstances to pay homage, a reality that many athletes felt badly about.

The bike to run transition was in downtown Boise, filled with enthusiastic spectators and helpful, friendly volunteers. The run course was one of the most beautiful that I've seen and we really did have perfect conditions. It was still overcast and the temperatures may have been in the high 60s/low 70s. The half-marathon run course meandered through downtown Boise and on to the tree-lined Boise Greenbelt, along the river. We did two loops on a mostly shaded, extremely scenic route. For me "run" was an exaggeration; my calf and subsequent Achilles issues rendered me to a shuffle, but least it was forward motion. Nevertheless, when I crossed

the finish line I received a finisher medal and a huge hug from Rhonda—a finish line volunteer.



More important than (barely) finishing the race was the experience. My weekend was filled with activities (my favorite was a post race visit to the hot springs in the mountains) and good food; downtown Boise is filled with hip and healthy restaurants. I think Mac and Rhoda would agree that the food highlight was discovering a self service frozen yogurt shop with 12 soft serve flavors and any topping you could imagine! It's the little things in life that matter. I also had the opportunity to meet new people with various interests and backgrounds and to hang with a professional athlete (I was happy that Mac agreed that the swim was cold; it validated my wimpiness). Above all it was great to see many locals as volunteers or attempting their first 70.3 Ironman and potentially developing a passion for the sport of triathlon. Here's hoping that the passion is contagious and that the Boise 70.3 becomes one of the best.

Race Report: National Marathon

Adam Lesser
ajlesser@gmail.com

I'm glad to say I finished the SunTrust National Marathon. I learned a lot from this race, both good and bad. But mostly, I learned that despite being (very) under prepared given a recent knee injury 5 weeks out from the race, I was able to overcome physical issues to mentally pull through.

Miles 1-13.1

I was placed in the 4th corral, which was 7:45 - 8:30 per mile pace (my projected pace I entered when I registered back in October). As the race began, everyone shuffled to the starting line. We crossed the mat, I hit my watch, and began to run.

Despite being in assigned corrals, the usual cast of characters who put themselves at the front of the race but run slower paces were clogging up the roads. I navigated around them and settled

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into my pace. My first mile split was 7:43. Too fast! Must slow down. I slowed down to a pace that (at the time) I felt I could run forever at. This turned out to be right around 8 minute miles, which was my training pace for all my long runs, including my last run - a 20 miler. Everything was going really smoothly, except for one minor thing...fuel.



The website had advertised that gels would be available at each of the water/Gatorade stops, which were every 2 miles. The first time I was given any gels was at the half marathon point. Fortunately, being the planner than I am, I brought 2 emergency gels with me. By mile 6 (after the first 2 water stops) I figured there wasn't going to be many gel stations, if any at all. Figuring its better to go with my nutrition

plan as long as I could, and seeing as the lack of gel availability might render my plan useless the longer I waited if I didn't start taking in calories, I took in my 2 emergency gels before I hit the halfway point. Finally, as I approached the half marathon marker, I found a gel station. I picked up a "plain" flavoured gel to keep for later. My split at the half was 1:42. I felt great mentally and physically. Probably too good. Because my next thoughts were about the pace I was on track for and then the math games started in my head. I guess that was my bad. I thought I felt good, and I did, for the first half and change of the race.

Miles 13.1-26.2

As I passed that half way mark, I was still feeling ok, but starting to feel the pain. The next couple of miles, my pace started to slip into the mid 8 minute mile pace and slowly started creeping closer to 9 minutes. By mile 17, I passed Rebecca (who took all these pictures) and the rest of my fan club as I made my way south through the 9th St Tunnel and to the struggle fest for the next 9 miles.



The unanimous reaction of my friends and family watching me was that while I was still running at a good pace, I barely acknowledged them. The only thing I did do was toss my gloves since I didn't want them anymore. I kept plodding along as we passed Nationals Park, and went over the South Capitol Street Bridge into Anacostia for all but the last mile of the race. Once I passed the bridge, I hit the mile 20 marker. At approximately the same time, my right calf cramped up, thus beginning 6 miles of continuous cramping. This was the point when I realized that 5 weeks of not running was getting the best of me. Aerobically, I was fine. My muscles just hadn't been stressed enough lately to handle it.


I'd run a little, cramp up and go into walk mode, then run until I cramped again. At first, I was going 5 minutes of running, followed by 2 minutes of walking. That didn't last long. Before I knew it, I couldn't hold a steady jog for more than 2 minutes without cramping. The cramping moved from both calves to both hamstrings. It was frustrating, but I was moving as fast as my body would let me. Never did I think I wouldn't finish, I just knew it wasn't going to be as fast as I would have liked. Around mile 23, the 3:50 pace group passed me. I kept up with them for

about a minute, but another cramp kept me from maintaining pace. I finally got to the bridge that took us back to RFK Stadium, where the finish was and I knew I only had a mile left. I made my way toward the finish without cramping, which was nice, because I really thought I was going to embarrass myself by doing that in the finish chute. Thankfully, that did not happen.



Final time: 3:57

At the finish, I found my family and friends waiting for me. I was truly thankful that everyone came out despite the cold (for spectators) weather. I posed for cameras and decided it would be best to go home. I was feeling ok, but having some issues walking very well. Fortunately, my dad drove my car home and we enjoyed an excellent celebration brunch put together by Rebecca.



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In all, a fine experience for my first marathon. Knowing what I was able to do, I am definitely intrigued to find out what I could do with a healthy training build up. The biggest lesson learned about this experience is that I need to continue lifting weights with my legs while training to ensure all my lower leg muscles maintain their strength. This would likely have prevented my injury. I'm glad to have been successful in my first marathon, but I'm ready to bring on triathlon season!



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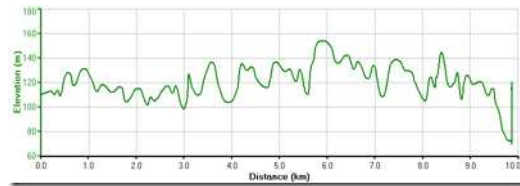
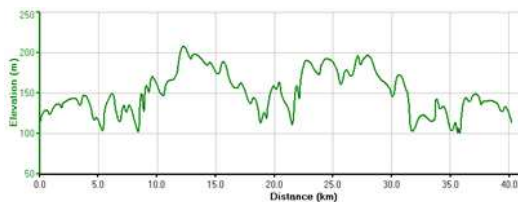
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Race Report: Columbia Triathlon

Chris Bennett
chris@lpcb.org

I know I'll get into trouble from my wife and female friends for this but before the race I reflected that triathlons can be similar to the experiences of some women giving birth. In the immediate aftermath they wonder why on earth they went through it and say they won't do it again. Two years ago I did the Columbia triathlon and, having suffered through the tough conditions, swore that I would never do it again. But here I was in May 2008 about to repeat the race. Go figure ...

Just so that you know I'm not being too much of a wuss, the profiles below show the elevations for the 40 km bike and the 10 km run. Ignore the spike at the end of the run: that was me jumping for joy at actually finishing.



When I was planning my 2008 season I picked my 'A' race as Ironman Switzerland in mid-July. I figured that I should do a warm up race two months earlier to check on my progress and that happened to coincide with Columbia. So in a fit of irrational exuberance I registered with the rationale that since this was a 'B' race I would just take it easy.

The race was also an opportunity to test my new 'Reach Racer' folding bike. I had bought this bike to take traveling with me, with an eye to using it for Ironman Switzerland if it worked out. It was waiting for me in April when I returned from overseas. I spent the weeks before Columbia riding the bike and getting familiar with it. This included crashing it when the 20" wheels got caught in a crack between concrete pavement slabs in the rain. I managed to only injure my left wrist and thumb by taking most of the impact on my helmet—my father always said that I was hard headed. I got a new helmet the next day, but the wrist and thumb discomfort would be with me for a while: a month later they were still acting up. Still, I tend to crash once every two years and at least it wasn't too serious and I am off the hook now from crashes for a while.

Columbia would be the first test in 'anger' at how it would perform. I had to say that I was impressed with the bike—my crash aside. I was able to set it up to be similar to my Trek 5200 road bike, and when fitted with aero bars, water bottle holders under the seat (nowhere else to put them!) and Speedplay pedals, I was ready to go. The only problem was the embarrassment factor: the bike just didn't look like a serious bike. In fact my wife Lis calls it a "girlie bike". Ouch.

The day before Columbia Lis and I went up to register and drop off my bike. We bumped into Liza Dunham. She said that she had been ill and wasn't certain if she would race the following day. In the end she decided to—and placed third in her age group! Imagine if she felt 100%.

As expected my bike elicited quite a few comments—like "what is it", "how much does it cost", etc. and it looked very funny in the transition area next to the proper triathlon bikes. But that's okay, after all, a proper triathlon bike won't fit in a suitcase.



On the day of the race we were up early to make the transition area by 6:30. The race started shortly afterwards and the transition area would be closed at 7:00. For this first race of the year I was definitely out of the triathlon mind set as I had forgotten a few things – like leaving my water bottles in the car! But fortunately Lis had grabbed one for after the race so it worked out fine in the end.

The swim was in a pond with a water temperature that was quite brisk to put it kindly. There were a few people wearing wet suits without arms, boy they must have suffered. At 7:30 the race started and I immediately found it very hard going. I was quite surprised as I had been putting in a reasonable number of hours in the pool and had been feeling comfortable with my swimming, but I just couldn't get into my rhythm or even catch my breath. I ended up trying what Terry Laughlin from my Total Immersion swim training taught me, going to the 'sweet spot' and basically floating on my back and catching my breath. I had to do this several times and all I could assume in hindsight was that the cold water brought on a bout of exercise induced asthma. I struggled through the swim and didn't really ever get into my rhythm. It didn't help when I got whacked in the face by another swimmer near the turnaround buoy: you expect it at the start but not in open water!



Anyway, not soon enough I was at the end and exiting the water. I was surprised to find that my time at 29:07 was 46 seconds faster than my previous Columbia time and put me in the middle of the pack. I saw Ray from Potomac River Running Club near the exit and said hi as I ran into transition, then fumbled about to get ready for the bike. I was so cold from the swim that I just couldn't get things together quickly and had a horrible transition time of 4:45 - some 1:15 longer than the previous year.

Since this was a 'B' race I even stopped to pose with my fancy bike! Aren't the tiny wheels funny next to the 'real' wheel at the rear?



As we began biking I was quite cold but soon warmed up. The bike felt fine—except for a few creaks and groans as I powered up hills—and it was good to be back on land again in one of my stronger disciplines. I began passing people, one of whom I knew. He said afterwards that it was very demoralizing to be passed by such a funny looking bike. I had to admit that it was extra fun passing another guy with the aero helmet. As they say, it's not what you've got but how you use it.

Ever since I mountain biked the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico along the Continental Divide I don't mind hills. I passed quite a lot of people, with only a few—and usually much younger athletes—passing me. The bike didn't feel noticeably slower than in previous years, and I was more than able to hold my own. I passed people with flat tires, a broken chain, a broken aero bar... but my bike worked like a fine tuned watch.

As I returned to transition Lis said that people were surprised to see a folding bike and several commented on it. Yes, it looked funny but my

Photos

A big thanks to Kyle Yost who provided most of the action photos for this issue.

average speed was 19.2 miles/h, compared with 19.6 miles/h last time I did Columbia on a "real" bike. The difference could be due in part to the bike, but I also was more fit then and the day was warmer which suits me. On balance I can say that there was only a small material disadvantage doing the race on my folding bike—except it looked so funny! However, as Ironman Switzerland was to show, it is not a good idea to try and race 112 miles on a mountainous course with such a bike. But that's another story ...

At the start of the run we had some light rain which was nice and refreshing. I had been injured running some two weeks before so decided to take it relatively easy. Given all the hills in Columbia, injury is a real possibility. I was passed by a few people in my age group, but also managed to pass some as well—especially on the downhills. Ray had taught us to run downhill by leaning forward and increasing the turnover rate, letting gravity do as much of the work as possible. This has served me well in several races and was particularly helpful here with all the hills. Soon I was approaching the finish line and ended up with averaging 7:54 minute miles for the run, and an overall time of 2:43:07. This was 5 minutes slower than previously. Not bad given my pre-race injury and other incompetencies.



Lis was at the finish line after I had got my medal which was a good thing. She still can't bring herself to kiss a hot and sweaty Chris, but it's nice to have her there just the same. It was at this point that I realized I had made my second equipment mistake of the day: I had not brought my asthma inhaler! I usually run with it in my pocket but had forgotten to do so, and the finish was some distance from the transition area where I kept one in my bag.

While I am competing my asthma is for some reason under control, but as soon as I stop I start coughing and have trouble breathing. Lis went over to the ambulance to see if they had anything while I followed slowly so as not to aggravate the coughing fits. I think they overreacted as they bundled me into the ambulance and put me on oxygen with a blood pressure monitor etc. This was even more

embarrassing than the folding bike! Before long it was under control and they asked if I wanted to go to the hospital. Must have been a very quiet race for them. Of course I declined and they had me sign a form that I did so—must be afraid of being sued (this is America).

So ended a very memorable triathlon. I placed 499th overall out of some 2,000, and 63rd in my age group. My typical 33 percentile finish. Not bad at all.

Lots of lessons to reflect on for the next race, such as always have an asthma inhaler at hand, and practice your transitions! Finally, it's great to have a 'Race Sherpa' on hand as Theresa Urban calls our support crews and families.

Top 5 Training Myths for Endurance Athletes: The Alternative Truths

Fiona Lockhart

<http://www.powerbar.com/NutritionResource/TrainingTips/Tips.aspx?id=35F138CC-CBDA-4AB7-A434-E04F3DAE0B1C&source=10075808>

An abundance of information exists for endurance athletes; sometimes too much. It can become quite difficult to figure out exactly what you should and shouldn't do in training because many sources have conflicting information. Below are some of the myths that seem to be perpetuated over and over again, even though the scientific research doesn't back it up.

1. **There's no point in doing high-intensity workouts if you're training for a long-distance event, like a marathon, since you'll never be going that hard during the event.**

No matter what the event you are training for, it's useful to change up the intensity of your workouts to make sure you work all your physiological systems, as well as to prevent physical and mental staleness. Research has shown that athletes who perform sprint workouts were able to improve their longer-term endurance performance. That doesn't mean that you do high-intensity intervals, like sprints or hill repeats, all the time, but adding them to your total training mix will make you a better athlete.

2. **If you want to lose weight, go out and ride or run for long periods of time without eating. If you train in the morning, don't eat beforehand.**

No, no, no, no, no. Your body needs fuel in order to perform at its best. If you try to train without sufficient fuel stores, not only

will you wear yourself out in the long run, but your immediate workout will have only a fraction of the quality it should have. Consume gels, sports drinks and/or bars to maintain a steady supply of carbohydrate during your workout. Make sure you also take advantage of recovery nutrition, like the [POWERBAR® Recovery shake](#), within 30 minutes of the end of your training bout; this will maximize those glycogen stores so you can come back and train hard the next day.



If you train in the morning, have something to eat before you start out. Your body burns through glycogen while you are sleeping; and your training will suffer from reduced fuel stores in the morning if you don't refuel. If your body doesn't tolerate solid foods before early-morning workouts, try a [POWERBAR® Endurance sport drink](#).

If you are trying to lose weight, think about cutting calories at times away from your training, not near to or during it.

3. **Losing weight will always improve your performance.**

While a light, lean body is certainly a benefit for endurance events, don't overdo it. Just because someone else can perform effectively at a given weight doesn't mean you should be at that same weight. If you're trying to lose weight, do it slowly and gradually so that you can continue to fuel your body sufficiently to support your training. If your weight is going down, but

your power output and performance are diminishing as well, you may very well be too lean for your own good.

4. **When doing strength training, always do lots of repetitions so that you don't bulk up.**

In order to reap the most gains from a strength training program, you need to lift a significant amount of weight in a relatively short period of time. After you have done a few weeks of light weight, moderate repetitions (i.e. 12-15 reps) to allow your tendons, ligaments, and muscles to adapt to the rigors of strength training, you will need to raise the amount of weight and lower the number of repetitions in order to maximize your strength gains. Don't worry; unless you're spending 5 days a week, 4+ hours in the gym (and you shouldn't be, if you're an endurance athlete), you won't get "muscle-bound"!

5. **To really be competitive, you need to train more than 15 hours a week.**

If this were the case, there would be very few competitive athletes over the age of 30. Let's face it, with work, family, and other obligations we contend with as we get older, it can be difficult to find many hours of training time during the week. But that's okay, because you can still train effectively with limited time.

With fewer hours available to work out, establishing a structured training program becomes of paramount importance. Figure out how many hours and days you can train, and then set specific goals for each training day (i.e. lactate threshold workouts, sprint intervals). Then be consistent with that schedule. Not only will you continue to get stronger and faster, but you may also find that your performance gains are even greater than when you had more training time, because you are now forced to work with a specific plan.

Fiona Lockhart is a Pro Coach for Carmichael Training Systems, Inc. and an accomplished endurance competitor who has several Leadville 100 Mountain Bike race finishes to her credit.

E-Nutrition: Resources for Athletes on the Web

Nancy Clark MS, RD CSSD
For Active.com

http://www.active.com/nutrition/Articles/E-Nutrition_Resources_for_Athletes_on_the_Web.htm

Whether you want to analyze your sports diet, get an answer to your questions about creatine, or find a new recipe for chicken, you can get an

amazing amount of high-quality food, nutrition and health information on the Web. The trick is, what's quality information and what's hokum? Here are some of my favorite websites; perhaps this information will be a helpful resource for you, as well.

www.ais.org.au

If you have questions about fueling for exercise, The Australian Institute of Sport (whose mission is to help educate Olympic athletes and coaches) offers abundant sports nutrition information. Click on Sport Science/Sport Medicine and you can find out how to fuel for your particular sport (triathlon, running, rugby, rowing, etc.), as well as fact sheets and articles that offer answers to your questions about sports supplements, including antioxidants, bovine, colostrum, glutamine and more.

www.fitday.com

Wonder how your sports diet stacks up? This website lets you analyze the protein, carbohydrate and fat content of your diet, and helps tract your food, exercise and weight goals. Just enter into their nutrition calculator what you typically eat in a day, and you'll learn how well you eat. Note: The key to getting accurate nutrition information is to measure the true portion sizes of what you eat. That is, how much granola do you actually consume--one cup? Two cups? Measure food; don't guess!

www.ific.org

Wonder about caffeine? Aspartame? Chocolate? You'll find the answers to your food questions on this site sponsored by the International Food Information Council Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to communicate reliable information about food, food safety and nutrition. Just go to "search", enter the topic and enjoy articles that answer your questions.

www.americanheart.org

Do you have questions or concerns about how to eat to lower your cholesterol? Either search for information about your food of interest (soy, fish, eggs etc.) or click on Healthy Lifestyle. Also explore Delicious Decisions for abundant heart-healthy recipes.

www.usda.gov

Wonder about the nutritional needs of infants? Your grandparents? Your children? Yourself? The National Agricultural Library's Food and Nutrition Information Center provides abundant information about nutrition throughout the lifecycle, food safety, the Food Pyramid, a search tool to look at the nutritional value of the foods you eat, plus a wealth of nutrition information.

www.findingbalance.com

If you are struggling to find the right balance of

food and exercise, this site offers helpful information as well as videos of professionals who can help you find peace with food. There's no need to struggle on your own; this site can help you develop a better relationship with food and your body.



www.ConsumerLab.com

Are you really getting what you pay for when you buy nutritional supplements? ConsumerLab.com monitors the quality of vitamin and mineral supplements, herbs, nutrition bars, protein powders and numerous other health products so you can learn which brands offer you the best for your money. Some of the information is free; some comes with a fee. An annual subscription is \$29.95; a single product review is \$12. The site could likely save you that much money...

www.cancernutritioninfo.com

Just about everyone knows someone who is afflicted with cancer. This website helps translate the latest research into healing food suggestions to help cure or prevent cancer.

www.nlm.nih.gov

The National Library of Medicine offers easy-to-understand medical information for the general public (click on Medline Plus) as well as access to the latest research published in medical journals (click on PubMed). If you want the latest news on creatine, vitamin C, and exercise

or carbohydrate-loading, simply search the topic of interest and wade through the abstracts.



www.mealsforyou.com

Have no idea what's for dinner but want something tasty? You'll find lots of food ideas on this website--not only 8,000 recipes but also nutrition information about each recipe and a customized food shopping list. You can look for recipes according to health needs (low cholesterol, diabetes), time available to cook, nutrition and taste (that is, are you hankering for comfort food, gourmet food, holiday foods, taste of the world, chocolate?). You can also choose from the list of the most popular recipes. The Spinach Stuffed Chicken Breasts (preparation time: 10 minutes; cooking time: 35 minutes) sounds good to me!

www.vegweb.com

If you are thinking about a vegetarian lifestyle, this website, sponsored by Vegetarians Unite!, was designed to create an Internet vegetarian community. It offers over 4,300 recipes including kid-friendly foods, plus chat rooms, articles, books, even veggie poems. A fun site!

www.SCANdpg.org

Looking for a local sports dietitian who can help answer your personal nutrition questions? This site, sponsored by SCAN, the American Dietetic Association's dietary practice group of Sports & Cardio-vascular Nutritionists, offers a referral

network. Just click on your state, and you'll get a list of sports nutrition professionals who can give you personalized attention. Don't let nutrition be your missing link.

Nancy Clark, MS RD CSSD (Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics) counsels casual and competitive athletes in her private practice at Healthworks, the premier fitness center in Chestnut Hill MA (617-383-6100). Her Sports Nutrition Guidebook, new Food Guide for Marathoners, and Cyclist's Food Guide are available at www.nancyclarkrd.com. Also see www.sportsnutritionworkshop.com for information about her online workshop.

http://www.active.com/nutrition/Articles/E-Nutrition_Resources_for_Athletes_on_the_Web.htm



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Transitions Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork Circle Towers Office Building 9401 Lee Highway, Suite 102 Fairfax, VA 22042 (703) 385-4785 www.transitionsmassage.com barb@transitionsmassage.com	10% off each therapeutic massage session with TriCATs ID card (Please be aware that you will need to schedule in advance as I am often booked out 2-6 weeks depending on the time of year.) <i>Geared toward injury prevention, rehabilitation and recovery of the endurance athlete and chronic pain client</i>

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