

## **DUECES WILD TRIATHLON FESTIVAL 2008**

### **BY Mary Knott**

Just got back a few hours ago from a long weekend of camping and racing in Show Low. Was a great weekend. Nice to get out of the heat for a couple of days. We arrived on Friday morning, early enough to snag one of the last camping sites. Threw up our tents and then headed down to the lake for a practice swim. The water was a little chilly at first, but with our wetsuits on we warmed up quickly. Afterwards we went over to the venue to pick up our race packets and met up with the gang from the PTC for a pre-race pasta feed. It was a great time. We tried to be in bed close to 8 pm as our alarm was set for a very early 4:15 am.

Would have been nice to sleep till 4:15... damn birds were chirping happily at 3:30! It's barely starting to get light out at 3:30. I wanted them to go back to sleep so I could. But I think I was too nervous for the race so I just lay in bed awake for 45 minutes. You would think that after 2 1/2 years of racing I wouldn't get nervous anymore. Dan was racing the half Ironman distance so we wanted to be over to transition by 5:15 am to get everything set up. My race wasn't starting till 8 am (Olympic distance) so I racked my bike, watched Dan swim (his race started at 6:30 am), ate my Clif Bar and then got my stuff together for the swim start. When the horn sounded to start the swim I took off hard and tried to pull to the outside of the pack to avoid being beaten up. By the time we rounded the first buoy I was close to the front of the women's group and gaining on the men (who had started 4 minutes ahead of us). Between the first and second buoy we had a nice current pulling us so I sailed along quickly and flew by swimmers. We rounded the second buoy and headed back to the cove where the swim exit was. I tried to pick up the pace a little bit. In no time, I was out of the water and running through the wetsuit strippers and then up to grab Trixie (my bike).

Trixie and I had a great ride. 40k + an extra mile for construction. Once outside of the park we had just over 100 feet of "dirt" to ride across which turned out to be more like a gravel pit with potholes. Now, if you've ever ridden a road bike you understand how scary this is. I am NOT an Xterra triathlete. I like my roads paved. But, the race directors felt we'd probably rather ride across 100 feet of "dirt" than tack on extra miles to bypass the construction that was going on outside of the Fool Hollow Lake area. Safely across the dirt, I sailed through the first 12 miles. Nice rolling hills. Winding roads. At mile 12 we met up with the half Ironman riders and had a nice headwind all the way back to camp. It was brutal. I think I was climbing the hill at about 10 mph. With a couple of miles to go, we turned back into the park and flew over the hills back to transition. I hopped off Trixie (who's saddle by the way is currently being held together by duct tape...) and threw my black Transition Girl Skirt on over my PTC racing swim suit and slid into my running shoes and I was off.

The run... lots of hills. Once out of transition we immediately began climbing. We had about a mile and half of climbing and then turned onto the dirt path to go around the lake and then up into the campgrounds. At mile 3, we turned onto another gravel road for 1 1/2 miles of a brutal hill, straight into a headwind. Once past 4 1/2 miles I sailed back around the lake to the finish line. My time was somewhere around 2 hours 37 minutes. Since I hadn't raced in Show Low before (hills and 6500 ft elevation) I didn't know what to expect- so I was only hoping for under 3 hours. I was glad to finish fairly close to my normal Olympic distance time (for a flat/ easy course).

After the race we stuck around for the awards (Dan got 2nd in his age group, 8th overall) and raffle. Then we went back to camp and I crashed. I think I was asleep before 7. Dan came in at one point and told me that he had built a fire and I said I'd be out to sit by it. But I fell back to sleep before I could unzip my cozy sleeping bag (which you could climb Everest with by the way). I woke up at 7 am on Sunday morning, just in time to hear the horn signal the start of the Xterra race. We packed up camp and were on the road to home by 9 am. We made a few stops for photos on the way home. After we unpacked the car and ate a quick lunch, Dan and I headed to the pool for our 3500 yd aerobic swim intervals. It was the bargain for camping an extra night, we'd fit a swim in somewhere on Sunday, so that our regularly scheduled workouts could be pushed off till Monday. So... that means that tomorrow morning I get to look forward to a 5-6 hour ride followed by a 40 minute transition run. Yippee! I haven't decided yet, but I might give myself a break from the hills this week. We'll see. Well, that's all for now. In exactly 3 weeks from this moment, I hope to be crossing the finish line at Coeur d'Alene. A long time coming.