

Ironman Coeur d'Alene 2008 Race Report

By Dan Beaver

As Mary and I stood on the beach counting down to the swim start, I was determined to give it all out there, especially on the swim, which I sometimes feel like I let myself get too comfortable, instead of getting out of my comfort zone and going for it.

The cannon went off and 2000 of us ran into the balmy 59 degree water to start the first of two loops equaling 2.4 miles. On the way out I could see Mary next to me for about 200 or so meters and then it got congested and it was all about survival. All in all I felt like I swam really well, it wasn't my fastest clocking, but based on the chop and the slower than usual times for even the top pros I guess I can't complain much, not to mention I still had about 9 hours still ahead of me, after a 1:08 swim time. I flew into the changing tent and off to get my bike.

I was feeling pretty good about myself through the first loop of the two loop bike course, averaging 21 mph for the first loop. As I started the 2nd loop I noticed the wind conditions had changed and not for the better. I felt ok through about mile 75 or so and then just about ended my day after taking a sharp down hill corner to fast and running off course and up the side of a big hill. All was good with the bike so off I went, but within about 15 minutes my right knee started aching something terrible, and this became problematic as there were lots of hills still to be climbed. Also at this point I heard a noise, looked back and it was the remaining two hours of my bike nutrition falling and rolling down one of those big ass hills. SHIT!!! I am not going back down to get it, I will just go with plan B, use Powerbars. (That decision would come back to bite me in the ass). So I finished up the bike in 5:35, 10 minutes slower than Ironman Arizona 10 weeks ago, but on a MUCH tougher course, so not bad!

I did some real fast and not fully accurate math, and reasoned that I needed to run sub 3:15 to get that Kona slot. I decided to go for it!! I would either run 3:15 or I would blow up and run 4:15. I didn't care what my time was if I couldn't go fast enough to qualify. In other words in my mind 10:15:00 was where I needed to finish, 10:25:00 was no better than 10:52:00.

So off I went flying by hundreds of people, and feeling great, (I hit the half at 1:37:02) that is until about the 14 mile mark when I started to feel a little off, but I gathered myself and pushed on. Once again at about 18 miles it all came to a head. Come to find out, that last bottle I lost on the bike was vital, and my stomach had not been absorbing anything I had put into it from mile 90 of the bike to mile 18 of the run, so I had basically had taken in zero calories, zero sodium, and very little water. Even though I had put it into my mouth, my stomach did nothing with any of it. So there were two big problems. One, no power left and two, horrible bloating and stomach cramps.

So there I sat at mile 18 or so, for almost 21 minutes, trying to get my stomach to work again, and when the EMT started talking like she was going to pull me from the course I jumped up and started running again, no way in hell I wasn't getting that medal at the finish line. So I put one foot in front of the other and was actually a lot better, not 100%, but at least I was able to keep about an 8:30 or so pace most of the way to the final turn and as usual when you finally see that finish line everything feels better. I was able to pick up the pace and pass 3 more guys in the last

half mile, running the last mile at 7:04 pace, and having that medal placed around my neck felt just as good as every other race I have done!!! Even if I did end up short of my goal, with a 10:52:00 finish, by far my slowest Ironman ever, but I will sit down and dissect the day and take the positives and negatives out of the day and move forward.

Thanks to all the well wishers and I will be back, look out Ironman Arizona in NOVEMBER!!!