

“Super Bad”

Superfrog Triathlon Review

By Jenifer Garner

If you are interested in an early season half ironman distance race and want to avoid the crowds associated with a 70.3 race, I have the race for you – SUPERFROG. Superfrog takes place in San Diego on Coronado Island. This year it was held the weekend before California 70.3. If the half ironman distance sounds like too much, they also offer an Olympic distance race – SuperSeal. Another benefit to the SuperSeal race is that the swim takes place in a bay vs. the ocean as Superfrog does.

The race is a 1.2 mile two loop ocean swim, 56 mile 4 loop bike ride (flat) and a 13.1 mile two loop run. The swim starts with a quick run from shore into the surf. I don't think the waves were all that bad as I made it through them relatively easily. I would, however, recommend non-tinted goggles if it happens to be overcast as I did have a hard time sighting. There was one large buoy you swam straight towards, and then turned right to the next buoy, where you turned right again and headed to shore for a 200 yard run to start your second loop. The second loop for me was better than the first as I just stuck close to another athlete who seemed to be sighting much better than I was. Once you exit the swim, you run straight up the beach to T1. It was nice as they had a play pool you could run through to clean the sand off of your feet. Perfect!

At T1 I had some issues getting my wetsuit completely off. Very frustrating! My feet were also numb from the swim. Oh, I should say that the water temperature was in the upper 50's. That being said, it didn't seem bad. Please note that the day was overcast and cool, so that could have been why. Otherwise, once I got the wetsuit off I was again moving. I got my bike and proceeded out of transition area and onto the bike course.

The bike course itself is probably one of the flattest bike courses you will encounter. Yes, there is a gradual incline going one direction and gradual decline the other direction, but it was quite minimal. Aside from the “hill” that was the overpass, it is flat. It was windy, but nothing so bad that I was frustrated by the wind. I actually just noticed that I felt cooler going one direction and slightly faster than I did the other. Due to the timing of the two different races (Superfrog starts at 7am, SuperSeal starts at 9am) most Superfrog athletes are able to finish two loops of the bike before the Superseal athletes appear on the bike course. The bike course is four loops for Superfrog (two for SuperSeal). The only aid station is at one turnaround. I had two bottles on my bike and grabbed one bottle from them and that seemed to work just fine. Once you finish your fourth loop, you veer right just before the overpass and turn into the entrance for Silver Strand State Beach. You then ride back to transition.

Into T2 all seemed well. Once I got my bike racked I noticed my hands were numb as I was having issues getting my helmet unclipped. So once again, a little longer than usual transition took place. Oh well, time to run.

The race website (kozenterprises.com) states that the run is mostly on sand. Although this is true, it wasn't horrific. The run starts with a short run through beach sand to the shore where you run on hard packed sand for a couple miles until you turn onto soft sand again, then onto gravel, then onto a dirt path made by vehicles. Here you hit somewhat soft sand again, but not nearly as bad as the deep stuff to and from the beach. After you finish that portion it is asphalt until you return back to the gravel, then soft sand, and ultimately the hard packed sand along the shore to finish your first loop. I'd say the only downfall to the run is that once you the dirt path/asphalt there is a little loop so people aren't coming back straight at you so you can't gauge where you are in relation to your competition. Of note was that there were NOT aid stations every mile, but since it was an overcast day their separation, probably every 2 miles or so, wasn't a problem. However, if you are someone that needs water all of the time, you may consider carrying your own.

After completing the first loop, I planned to push the non-soft sand areas as best I could as I knew I would be unable to gain any time in the soft sand. This worked well.

Overall, it was a tough race in that I've never ridden a bike course that was so flat that I was aero 95% of time. Also as there are no downhill, there is no time to not pedal and coast – if you were so inclined to do so. In addition, the run took me out of my comfort zone. I like asphalt. I don't have much experience on trails, much less sand so those muscles that are rarely used will definitely be sore.

Finally, the course is not USAT sanctioned although USAT rules (like no drafting, no headphones, etc) do apply. The reason I note this is because the Superfrog awards are for age groups of 10 years (i.e. 40-49) vs. 5 years (i.e. 40-44) as is customary in USAT certified courses.

Overall, I enjoyed the race as I do tend to look for different races that push me as an athlete. Any course that takes me out of my comfort zone is always up for a try.