

WINTER HEAT SERIES 2008
TRANSITION HELL – March 8, 2008
by John Lierle

Yes, for those of you who have been keeping track, it has been more than three weeks since the fourth event of the 2008 Phoenix Triathlon Club's Winter Heat Series. Your crack race reporter has, however, been busy on the business and home front trying to convince one employer, one spouse and two teenage daughters that, despite evidence to the contrary, he still wants to remain employed, married and the designated ATM machine for previously mentioned two daughters. With this stated (and fully expecting full and unconditional sympathy) I hereby submit the following.



It was a dark and stormy night...OK, it was a grey and cold Saturday morning that greeted the athletes who came to compete in the PTC's 2008 Transition Hell workout at Tempe Town Lake. For those not familiar with Transition Hell, this competition/workout is part of the PTC's Winter Heat series of events that consists of a five mile road bike course and a one mile run...followed by a five mile road bike course and a one mile run...over and over and over again for a total of 25 miles on the bike and 5 miles running. Finish times are calculated including transition times. It was this reporters opinion that the course we expertly marked by the crack timing crew who arrived early Saturday morning to set up the course.

After the starting gun the small, but elite, field road together for the first five mile bike loop and returned to the first transition area as a pack. Rumors of drafting were rampant, but could not be independently verified. By the end of the first one mile run, a pattern had formed that would continue for the balance of the race. 53 year old Tony "The Flying Chinaman" Chan and 14 year old Eric "The Kid" Yatko arrived at the transition area neck in neck, followed closely by Scott Perrine, Dennis Freeman, Mary Knott, Emily Freeman and Greg Yatko.

The next three legs of the race were carbon copies of the previous with "The Flying Chinaman" entering the transition area a couple of seconds ahead of "The Kid" and then "The Kid" overtaking "The Flying Chinaman" during the run as they both gradually pulled ahead of the rest of field on each successive lap. This pattern continued until the final bike lap when Eric Yatko apparently decided he had enough and decisively slammed home the hammer and pulled ahead by 30 seconds coming into the transition area for the last time and finished the final run just under minute ahead of Tony Chan. In a post race interview Mr. Chan was quoted as saying: "I'd say, 'Wait until next year', but that kid just keeps getting faster." Eric's dad, Greg Yatko, was heard to say: "I told you so!"