

## 2007 RACE REPORTS

### St. Anthony's Triathlon- April 29th, 2007

[www.satriathlon.com](http://www.satriathlon.com)

The 2007 season officially kicked off yesterday in Florida with the St. Anthony's Triathlon. It was my first time racing as a professional and it was a good start to the season! The race started great as I pushed the pace and led the swim from start to finish. My new Kiwami suit fit well and helped me to be within ten seconds of my wetsuit swim last year. I won the swim prime and led out of the water ahead of some of the biggest names in the sport with a time of 17:20. The lead lasted to about half way through transition as Matt Reed (the eventual winner) flew by me and led convincingly the rest of the way. I headed out on the bike and settled in with the lead group of riders. The pro non-draft rules are very different from amateur rules and it took me about half way through the ride to get comfortable with the group dynamics. The BMC rode great and the new HED wheels handled perfectly on the somewhat technical course. I finished the bike with a split of 56:45 for the 40k course and headed into the run with a group that included multiple World Champions. I left transition in 10th place and knew I needed to hold my place or move up to stay in the money. I passed two runners in the first half of the run and was in 8th until I was passed by David Thompson at the 5 mile mark. I tried to go with him, but the legs were not there (something I hope to change in future races). I finished the 10k run with a 35:40 and an overall time of 1:51.40 which was good enough for 9th place. It was a 5 minute improvement over last year's race and roughly two minutes faster than my best time on any Olympic course! It was great to place in the top ten in such a strong pro field! I am hoping to build on this race and improve (especially my transitions and running) for the rest of the year. My next race will be my first draft legal ITU race in two weeks down in Ixtapa, Mexico.

I want to thank Carolyn and Kathy for organizing my homestay and airport transfer for the race. Tony, Donna and the rest of the Stroud family provided the best homestay I've ever had really made life easy (except for Tony trying to drop me on the training rides!). While in Florida, I became an official member of the St. Pete's Mad Dog Triathlon Club and look forward to seeing everyone next year for the race! The Mad Dogs and race organizer Philip LaHaye put really do put on one of the best olympic distance races in the world. Congratulations to everyone who raced this weekend! See you in two weeks!

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## **Ixtapa, Mexico ITU Pan American Cup- May 12th, 2007**

<http://www.triathlon.org/?call=TVRFdw==&id=OTE2&keep=sh>

On Saturday, I completed my second race as a professional and first draft-legal ITU triathlon. I flew down to Mexico with Mr. Charles Clark and walked into a whole new race experience. Only knowing a small amount of Spanish and a small amount about the race (website in Spanish...), I was out of my comfort level compared to the USAT races that I am used to. After driving around the Mexican country side for a few hours looking for a bike pump (which I didn't pack) and adapting to the heat, I was ready to go for race day. The field was relatively strong as the race served as Mexico's Pan-Am games qualifier. I stuck with my game-plan of swimming strong and staying on the front as long as possible.

We started off with a 2 lap swim in the ocean. I had a decent swim and was first out of the water by roughly 20 seconds with a 18:45. Next came a ½ mile beach run that ended up going through a hotel lobby and into transition. I headed out onto the bike with a pack of 4 other guys and together we stayed away from the main pack heading into the run. It was a different bike race than I'm used to, but the group came in together with a 1:30 lead on the main pack and a bike split of roughly 58:43. Riding in a constantly accelerating pack on a road bike in a pack is much different than a steady, individual effort on the TT bike! Heading into the run, it was just under 90 degrees and I knew I would have a bunch of guys chasing me down from the main pack. As it ended up, two guys caught me and I ended up placing 7<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> American) with a time of 1:57.21. My run split was a 35:58 and is my weakness at this point in the season. I feel that I can swim/bike with almost anyone, but I will keep running to compete with the big boys.

My next race is the Columbia Triathlon in Columbia, Maryland next week. Thank you to everyone who helped me through the race and congratulations to everyone I met who competed! I look forward to hearing stories from the race!

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## **Columbia Triathlon- May 20th, 2007**

[www.tricolumbia.org/ct.asp](http://www.tricolumbia.org/ct.asp)

This race did not go as planned. I arrived in Maryland Friday evening just starting to feel recovered from Ixtapa last weekend. I met up with Ronna and Vinny Monseau and spent the next day getting ready and mingling with the good people at Elite Bicycles. Race day came early with the Pro wave going off at 6:45am.

I started off strong on the swim, feeling good in the BlueSeventy wetsuit for the first race this season. After the first two buoys, I made the turn and felt great. Sadly, no one else made the turn with me. I had turned one buoy too early and had to do a 150 meter U turn to catch back up with the group! It took me a few minutes, but I pulled back into the lead and opened up a 30 second lead heading into the bike. I won the swim prime with a time of 16:47. It was raining and cold as I started out of transition. As I jumped on the bike, the saddle tilted downward and stayed that way the rest of the ride. A bit flustered, I worked hard and maintained my lead until around mile 5 where I dropped my chain going up one of the many hills on the course. I tried to keep spinning and pull the chain back up, but no luck! I had to dismount and manually put the chain back on. As I started to get back on the bike, I was passed by the eventual winner Greg Remaly. Frustrated, I hopped back on the bike (saddle still tilted) and resumed the race. The rest of the ride was wet and uneventful except for me gracefully dropping my only water bottle at mile 15. I ended up coming into transition in 3rd place behind Remaly and last year's duathlon world champion Leon Griffin. I felt pretty strong on the whole run and maintained my position to finish 3rd with a time of 1:57.57. I improved on last years time by roughly a minute despite all of the problems on the swim and bike. Hopefully next time I'll avoid some of my rookie mistakes! I am looking forward to a few weeks off of racing before I head to Puerto Rico on June 10th.

Congratulations to Beth Shutt who won the Amateur Elite women's race. She would have been 5th in the pro field! Congratulations also go out to the Monseaus and everyone who completed the race. Thanks to Vigo and George for putting on a good race!

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## **Rincon ITU Pan American Cup- June 10th, 2007**

[www.puertoricotriathlon.com](http://www.puertoricotriathlon.com)

This past weekend I was in Rincon, Puerto Rico for my second attempt at a draft legal ITU triathlon. Due to a few travel delays, I reached San Juan around midnight Thursday and checked in to a local hotel. A bus came to pick a bunch of us up at the airport around 5pm Friday to drive us to Rincon. After a long, hot ride, we finally made it to the race city around 11pm and got settled into the hotel. After a day to prepare and check over my equipment the race started Sunday at 9:30am. It was incredibly hot as we started the two loop swim. I swam toward the front of the pack, but let one person take it out very fast in front of me. I figured he was going too hard to keep it up the whole time, but he ended up staying in front and finishing 30 seconds ahead of me! I later realized it was Benjamin Sanson, a Frenchman with a 15:20 LCM 1500 time! Next time I'll make sure to know who is racing next to me! I headed out to the bike in second place with a 19:10 swim split and teamed up with a group of 4 other guys to try to catch him. The BMC rode great in it's triathlon debut and I felt comfortable the whole ride despite the heat. My group stayed ahead of the main pack with just over 58 minutes for the 40k but could not reel in Sanson heading into the run. It was scorching hot as I headed into the run in 6<sup>th</sup> place. I started off feeling pretty bad and was passed by a few runners, but built into the run and felt pretty good by the second lap. I passed two people in the back half of the run (including Sanson) and finished in 8<sup>th</sup> place. I maintained my goal to finish in the top 10 in each of my races this year and earned a few more ITU points. After the race, we piled into a few hotel rooms and got some rest before heading back on the airport shuttle at 2am! Thank you to Sean and everyone at Riptide Multisport for letting me borrow a set of wheels when I found out I had a flat! My next race is June 24<sup>th</sup> in Philadelphia before heading back to ITU racing in Geneva, NY on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

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## **Philadelphia Triathlon- June 24th, 2007**

[www.phillytri.com](http://www.phillytri.com)

This past weekend I was racing at the Philadelphia Triathlon. I drove out to Philly late Friday evening and spent the night with my excellent homestay with the Fosters. On Saturday, the pre-race meetings and expo went well and a few brave Pitt swimmers competed in the sprint triathlon. I felt pretty good heading into race morning and was glad that the swim did not have to be cancelled like last year! The swim was a non-wetsuit point to point swim in the river where I came out of the water second for the second straight race. John Kenny won the swim with me staying on his feet for half the swim. I had a smooth transition and headed out onto the bike course. I was able to take the lead and maintain it for the first half of the course. Craig Alexander, the eventual winner, passed me at the half way point on the bike and I finally headed into the second transition a few seconds behind second place Andrew Yoder. I headed out onto the run and made it back to second place in the first mile. I was eventually passed by Doug Friman and David Thompson and ended up in fourth place, my second best finish as a pro. It was a perfect day for a triathlon and the race was excellent. Congratulations to AJ on his first ever Olympic distance race! I was satisfied with the race, but I know my training is not where it needs to be due to all the racing/working/packing/moving in the past months. I plan to train hard the next few weeks to prepare for my next race which will be on the 14th of July in New York. In the mean time, my wife and I will be officially moving to Dayton, OH for her to start medical school. For those of you on my regular mailing list, please note that my next email will come from [ericslimkemann@hotmail.com](mailto:ericslimkemann@hotmail.com). Thank you to Lars and his staff for putting on the great race and thank you to the Fosters for opening their home to me.

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### **New York Races:**

**Musselman ITU- July 14th, 2007 [www.musselmantri.com](http://www.musselmantri.com)**

**NYC Triathlon- July 22nd, 2007 [www.nyctri.com](http://www.nyctri.com)**

This past week, I was up in New York racing first in Geneva at the ITU musselman race and then in the Big Apple racing the New York City triathlon.

I headed up to the race and moved in to the great pro lodging offered by the race. It was an awesome experience staying with 17 other athletes in a big fraternity house. The atmosphere was very relaxed heading into the race and most everyone was wrapped up in watching the tour de france coverage on TV. The race started Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m. I am used to morning races and did not know what to do with myself with such a late start. The swim was a two lap swim and it took me a good part of 200 yards to break free of the main group of roughly 60 athletes. A group of us lead through the swim and exited the water within seconds of each other. We were unsuccessful in breaking away from the group and the bike ride formed into a pack of about 20 guys. This was the first ITU race where I was not a part of the break away and the pack dynamics will take some getting used to. The 8 lap course was very technical and actually very fun. We stayed together until the run and I hoped off the bike feeling pretty good and within seconds of the leaders. The race coming down to a run was not the best thing that could have happened to me as the running specialists quickly established themselves. I held a steady pace, but had some stomach issues from my earlier meals. I ended up 16th, which was good enough to score a few more ITU points, but not good enough for me to be pleased about my race. It was my first race out of the top ten this season and it will be my last! Hopefully next draft-legal race, I can use my swim and bike to put more time into the runners and hold on for the run. Aside from my poor placing, the race was very well run and the city of Geneva was very supportive in its first ITU race. Thank you to Jeff and his staff for putting on such a great event!

Next came the New York City triathlon. I had a pretty good week of training after the Musselman race and was excited to see how I would race in back-to-back weekends. I started the swim at 5:50am with some of the top names in the sport including Hunter Kemper, Greg Bennett, and Craig Walton.

We were unfortunately not allowed to wear wetsuits, but my Kiwami suit felt great in the Hudson River as I exited the water around 15 seconds back of Walton and a few seconds up on the rest of the field. I headed onto the bike in 6th or 7th after being passed by many of the good runners in the field during the 1/3 mile barefoot run into the transition area. I had a strong ride and enjoyed the constant effort of time trialing versus the constant accelerations of group riding. I was very fortunate to be riding my sturdy HED wheels as I hit bump after bump on the Henry Hudson Parkway. I headed into transition in fourth place, just ahead of Victor Plata who won the Musselman race last weekend! I felt great heading into the run and didn't have any of the stomach problems from the last race. At the half way point, I actually caught three-time ITU world champion Peter Robertson who had passed me earlier in the run. I could not keep the pace and ended up finishing in 6th place just 8 seconds behind Robertson with a run time of 34:30 and a final time of 1:54.03. I feel good about my back to back performances and I'm looking forward to some steady training as I settle in to my new home in Dayton, OH. Many thanks to Manny Bello for his help while up in New York!

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## **Chicago Triathlon- August 26, 2007**

[www.chicagotriathlon.com](http://www.chicagotriathlon.com)

This past weekend I was in the Windy City competing in the Chicago Triathlon. I arrived in Chicago Saturday and met up with my homestay Jeff. He lived only a block or so from Wrigley Field and a few miles from the race course, so it was a great place to stay! I went through the race meeting and knew it was going to be a pretty strong field for the race. We started at 11am on Sunday with a wetsuit swim in the chilly 66 degree marina. The race actually started with a false start, the first one I've ever seen in triathlon. We were lined up for the start and inching forward waiting for the horn. Someone decided to start swimming, so most everyone took off before the race officially started! 200 yards later, they had to put a boat in front of the group to get them to stop. Once everyone was back to the starting line, we officially took off and I established myself near the front of the pack. Craig Walton and a racer from Brazil broke away and I missed staying on their feet. I was forced to lead the main group out of the water in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The swim time included a 500+ yard run to transition, and 6 people passed me on the way! It was frustrating to start the bike that far back, so I knew I had my work cut out for me. Unfortunately, I struggled to maintain a steady tempo on the bike and spent most of the ride hoping for it to end soon. I came into transition with a solid 25mph average, but was in 17<sup>th</sup> place. When the run started, I felt great for the first time all day. I have been working on improving my run and I feel like it is starting to pay off. I passed three people and finished strong for 14<sup>th</sup> place and a time of 1:56...I was disappointed in the finish, but excited about my improving run and decent time despite feeling less than perfect in the swim and on the bike. Another month of steady training and I should have a great race at Westchester. Thank you to Jeff for letting me stay at his house and thank you to Anita, the Pro coordinator for setting things up. I look forward to next year's race and making a push to compete with the big guys.

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Westchester Triathlon Race Report  
[www.westchestertriathlon.com](http://www.westchestertriathlon.com)  
9/23/07

I was just north of NYC this weekend racing at the Westchester Triathlon. I won amateur race last year and came in looking to defend my win even though I'm now racing pro. I flew in Friday and met up with my homestay, the Avatars. Martin is a multiple Ironman finisher and his son Lucas completed his first triathlon on Saturday's kids' triathlon where he was first out of the water! On Sunday, I was first out of the water as well with a wetsuit legal time of 13:45. My Blue-Seventy wetsuit is definitely fast, but I think the course may have been a bit short! I came out just ahead of Holden Comeau and women's national team member Sara McLarty. I headed out onto the bike feeling very strong and with a solid lead. I pushed hard and saw that I had at least a two minute lead at the turn around. The bike had its fair share of hills and I did my best to attack each one of them. By the time I finished the bike, I had built up a 4 minute and knew that I was having a great race! I took off on the run and knew that I could win if everything went well. I was cheered on by the crowd and finished with a personal best run split of 34.22 and a winning time of 1:51.55. It was a minute and a half improvement from last year's race and good enough for my first professional victory! It was a great day to race and a great way to finish up the season! Thank you to the race organizers for putting on such a great race and thank you to Martin and his family for taking great care of my while I was in New York. This is my last planned race of the year. I'll be sending out a season re-cap once I'm sure that I'm done racing until next year. Thank you to everyone who has been following along and giving me support! Check out the website for any news or updates. [www.ericlimkemantriathlon.com](http://www.ericlimkemantriathlon.com)

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