

2009 St. Anthony's Triathlon

www.satriathlon.com

April 27, 2009

This weekend I was down in St. Petersburg, Florida for my first race of the year at St. Anthony's Triathlon. As always, the hospitality from Race Director Phillip Lahaye and the St. Pete Mad Dogs was phenomenal. I stayed with past Mad Dogs president Bryan McGuire and really enjoyed my time in the area. I was feeling good and excited heading into race day. I have definitely missed the anticipation leading up to a race!

Race morning brought a bit of a surprise as the Age Group swim was cancelled due to high winds and rough waters! I'm sure it was a tough call for the race staff to cancel the swim, but with roughly 4000 people heading into unsafe water, they didn't have too much of a choice! Fortunately, the professionals were allowed to swim and we hit the choppy water just before 7am. I had been feeling strong in the water leading up to the race, but unfortunately I continued my trend of swimming poorly in rough water! I came out of the water just over 19 minutes later exhausted and in 10th place! This is not where I wanted to be!

I stumbled through transition and headed out on the bike trying to find a place in the small groups forming along the course. It took me about 10 miles to get into a good rhythm, so I didn't get into a group until around mile 15 or 20. Instead of sitting in and working with the group, I decided to push ahead and really push the pace. It worked for only a short time and the group reeled me back in before heading into transition with 4 or 5 other guys in around 20th position.

I took off on the run and felt like my legs weren't going to cooperate! I have really been working on my running over the off season, but did not plan to be this spent heading into the first mile. I started out in a 5:22 and then settled in to just over 5:40 pace. I worked on what I learned last week with Danny at Newton to keep moving. This was definitely not pretty, but I managed to maintain some form and I finished with a faster run than I have had in the past years here. I crossed the line in 22nd place with a time of 1 hour and 55 minutes. It was defiantly not the race I was hoping for, but I was encouraged to run even somewhat decently considering how rough I felt coming off the bike. I plan to get my biking legs back in the next three weeks and hopefully the work on the run will really show itself at Columbia in three weeks.

Thank you to the St. Anthony's staff for putting on a great race and to Kathy and Carolyn for arranging transportation and homestays. Thanks to Bryan for sharing his home with me and Phillip for putting on a first class race. Congratulations to all of the great athletes who raced over the weekend, especially Adam Webber on a strong first professional St. Anthony's and the good doctor Monseau for a strong second place in the elite amateur division even with a bike wreck! Of course thank you to the sponsors who help me to travel and race! I'm back to training for the next few weeks until Columbia Triathlon on May 17th. Check the website for updates and pictures to follow shortly! Thanks for your support!

PATCO Triathlon Championships

www.triathlon.org

This weekend, I was in Oklahoma City for the Pan American Triathlon Confederation (PATCO) Championships. It was my first draft legal race in over 9 months and I was looking forward to competing against some of the best athletes on the continent! I ended up with a decent race, but had a very adventurous weekend!

I started the weekend in Dayton with two or three cancelled flights and a drive to Columbus to catch a flight that ultimately put me into Dallas at 1:30 on Friday morning. I finally arrived in Oklahoma City by 4pm after crashing in an airport hotel in Dallas and renting a car. I missed the pre-race meeting, but was able to swim the course and get settled into my hotel room with less than 24 hours until race time. I put the bike together and went for a quick tune-up ride Saturday morning only to get 50 feet down the road and blow a tire! I spent an hour or so replacing the tyre (which I luckily carry a spare), ate lunch, and headed down the race site for the 4pm start time. As I put on my new suit, I realized that my name was misspelled! Not a big deal, but it went along with the weekend's troubles!

Despite the pre-race adventures, I felt pretty good on the warm up and hit the water with confidence. I swam steadily with the leaders for the whole course and came out feeling fresh with eventual winner Matt Reed. After the run up to transition, I had lost a few places and was 10th heading out onto the bike. A group of 7 guys with speedy transitions got away and unfortunately I wasn't quick enough to catch on. I settled into the first chase pack and started to find my rhythm. I felt great on the bike and had hopes of reeling in the first group until about half way through the 2nd loop of the 4 loop bike I hit a pretty nice size pot hole while on my aero bars. My right bar immediately pointed straight down and I had to really work to stay on the bike! I lost contact with the group and waited for the next group to come along while I tried to recover and find a way to keep my bars in working order. Luckily, when I connected with the next group I was able to work with a few of the stronger cyclists to bridge the gap to the chase pack and form one big group heading into transition. I was a bit tired, but still on the bike and in one piece.

I took off on the run roughly in 12th and felt pretty good for the first lap. I stayed in contact with most of the group until just after the 2nd mile where I started having sharp pain on my right side and couldn't catch my breath! Looking back, it's probably a result of my biking incident, but regardless of the cause it was pretty rough! I pushed through it, but ended up losing ground with the group and ended up finishing 26th in the race. This is exactly where I ended up last year in Mazatlan, but the competition here was arguably quite a bit tougher.

I was pleased with the race overall and happy to have my swim back where it should be. I definitely need to make sure I take care of the little things that can really impact the race!!! I'm heading to Austin, TX this weekend for another ITU race and hopefully I can fix a few of my mistakes! Thank you to everyone for your support! BlueSeventy, Kiwami, Newton, CSE Corporation, and Wheelie Fun are the great companies that help me go out and race with the best. I'll have pictures posted on the website sometime this week. Until next week...

Capital of Texas Triathlon
Austin ITU Pan American Cup
www.captextri.com

This past weekend I was down south once again for my second ITU race in as many weeks. This time, I was in Austin Texas for the Capital of Texas Triathlon. I flew down Saturday with Ashley and met up with our awesome homestay hosts, Christina and Hootie. We settled in, ate dinner at a great local restaurant and went to bed nice and early. This was quite a bit different than last week's travels and I was feeling confident while I rode the course and attended the race meeting the next day. I still felt prepared and ready even as race day came and the forecast called for 90+ temperatures at the 12:20pm start time!

The race started with a deep-water start. At the sound of a horn, a rope was lifted and we were off. I didn't get too far as my arm got tangled in the rope and I managed to loop it around my shoulder twice in my rush to get moving! I lost a few seconds, but worse I was now stuck in the middle of the pack and the first half of the swim felt more like a fight than a race! I was able to swim up to the first group and came out of the water in 10th place heading into the bike. I settled into a steady pace and worked to bring the main group together to try to chase three guys that broke away just after the swim. The 5 loop bike was fast and flat and in the end the main group came into transition about a minute behind the breakaway. I felt strong on the bike and probably pulled the group a bit too much, but headed off on to the run right in the middle of the main pack.

The heat was immediately taking its toll on the field as a few athlete dropped out after the first of three loops on the run. Every aid station was a chance to pour as many bottles as possible on my head, but I would be dry just a few minutes later! It was brutal, but I found a groove for the first time this year and was able to pick up the pace each of the three laps. In the end, I crossed the finish line in 13th place and was able to produce a sub 34 minute run! I was even able to catch one of the three men in the breakaway. It was an encouraging result and I'm looking forward to improving each time I race!

The finish was good enough for me to earn a few more ITU points and move up to #234 on the world points ranking. My goal is to move up to the top 100 by the end of the year, so I've got some work to do! It was a great trip and a solid race. I have a few weeks off before I head North to Canada for another ITU race on June 20th. Until then, I'm back to training hard and preparing to race fast. Thank you to Christina for letting us stay at her place in Austin and the race directors who took good care of the athletes. Also, thank you to Andre with Kiwami who was able to send me a new suit on very short notice for the race! Of course, thank you to all of my sponsors who allow me to race and improve. Until next race...

Coteau-du-Lac ITU Triathlon
June 20, 2009

This weekend I was just outside of Montreal for the Coteau-de-Lac Pan American Cup. This is my third draft-legal race for the season and another chance to score a few points before moving to non-drafting racing next weekend in Philly. I flew into Burlington, VT and met up with Zach Winchester for the drive to the race. We made it with 10 minutes to spare for the pre-race meeting and met up with the rest of the US athletes. After the race, we ran a lap of the run course and took a brisk swim in the 66 degree water for a bit of a preview of the swim course. After we regained feeling in our limbs, we climbed back in the car and drove to a college buddy of Zach's and prepared for the race the next day at 3:30pm.

Race day started out well with a quick spin on the bike and getting checked in with the race organization. I felt great during the warm-up and I think I'm starting to figure out a solid routine for afternoon races. I pulled on my wetsuit and got ready for the race. When the race started, roughly 40 guys jumped into the chilly water and fought for position. After the first 100 yards of chaos, I settled in to a solid pace. This was my first race in a wetsuit this year and I had forgotten how nice the Blue Seventy Helix makes me feel in the water! I felt smooth and comfortable as I came out of the water in 4th position and solidly in the front pack. A group of 9 of us headed out on the six loop bike course and tried to push the pace. We held a pretty fast tempo for the first two laps, but were eventually caught by the first chase group. The number of riders swelled to about 18 and we settled in for the rest of the ride. The course had a few 180 degree turns that varied from few times when my pedals were clipping the ground on the turn to a few times where the group almost stopped from being too cautious!

We all came in to transition together and it was a bit congested. I felt strong running in from the bike until someone hit my bike and pushed my front skewer solidly into my right knee! It sent an electric shock through my right leg, but adrenaline kicked in and I took off on the run. The first of four laps went quickly and I ran my way up to 5th position at one point. As I rounded the turn heading into my second lap, I stepped wrong on some gravel and my right leg finally had enough. My hamstring and quad cramped simultaneously and I had to do a bit of a dance to get the leg to cooperate. From then on, I was able to run, but not at full speed since I was constantly on the verge of cramping. I moved back a bit each lap and eventually ended up in 13th place. While I feel I had a top 10 in me, I was pleased with the race and know that the fitness is there. I earned a few more ITU points and should now be ranked in the top 200 in the world. I still have a way to go, but I'm making progress! My run split was just over 35 minutes even with the cramping and I'm looking to run another 33 next weekend in Philly. I'm going to keep focusing on the run and hopefully see the times drop regularly in the coming months.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this race possible and welcome to a few new friends. BlueSeventy Wetsuits, Newton Running, Kiwami Triathlon, ISM Saddles, Veritas Bicycles, and the CSE Corporation. Also, I'd like to welcome Great Clips to my group of supporters! Great Clips is the place to go for a great hair cut. They can even make me look

presentable! I'm back to training this week and trying to find a way to soothe a sore right leg.
Until the Philly Tri next week...

2009 Philadelphia Triathlon

www.phillytri.com

June 28, 2009

I was in the city of brotherly love this weekend for the 5th annual Philly Tri. It was my first non-drafting race since April and I was looking forward to comparing my race to my results from years past. I flew in town on Saturday morning and went for a quick jog before picking up Ashley from the airport. We loaded up the bike (which she was good enough to fly with for me!) and dove to our homestay with the fantastic Trainer Family. After attending the pre-race meeting, I went for a quick spin and swim with my host Kevin and Veteran Canadian Jamie Stephenson before eating a good meal and heading to bed nice and early.

Race day morning started early with a 4:30am alarm! I've been spoiled by the afternoon ITU start times, but was ready to go by the time I set up my transition area at 5:30. The swim is a point-to-point swim, so all of the athletes had to load on to school buses and drive to the start. There was time to warm-up in the river and it was clear that it was going to be a fast swim from the strength of the current. The pro field started at 6:55am with a pretty physical first 200 meters. I tried to settle into a solid rhythm, but had to fight through the crowd to get clean water. In the process, I managed to catch an elbow to the eye that was hard enough to cut my eye even with padded goggles! I eventually fell into second position behind swim winner John Kenny and led a group of about 5 guys out of the water and on to the bike.

I took off on the bike and was immediately passed by the extremely fast biker Andrew Yoder. I felt good on the Veritas TT bike and quickly found a good rhythm. David Thompson and a few others passed me as I completed the two loop course in 7th place. It was a pretty uneventful ride, but my legs were more fatigued than I would have liked as I came into transition for the second time. I took off on the run and felt strong through the first 2 miles. I was caught by Jamie and tried to stay with him as long as possible. It helped me to push the pace and pass another racer to maintain my 7th position as Jamie pulled away. I felt stronger as the race went on and came across the line in exactly 1:55.00 in 7th place. I felt like I had put together a solid race, but finished just out of the money. My times were all faster than last year and I was able to move up relative to all other racers who I had raced against in previous races, but I still think there is more in the tank!

I will be off of racing for the next month and a half before racing Lake Stevens 70.3 in the Middle of August. In the mean time I'll be spending some quality time on the bike and of course maintaining the run! Thank you to the Philly Tri for putting on a great race and to the Trainer Family for their excellent hospitality. Also, thank you to BlueSeventy, Kiwami Triathlon, ISM Saddles, Veritas Bikes, Newton Shoes, Great Clips, and the CSE Corporation for their tremendous support. Also, big thank you to Dixie Chiropractic for helping me recover from last weekend's race! Until next race...

Lake Stevens 70.3 Race Report

8/16/09

www.lakestevens703.com

This weekend I raced my first Ironman 70.3 race in Lake Stevens, Washington. I came away with a 4th place finish and a qualifying spot for 70.3 World Championships! The weekend started after a week of coaching at Junior National Championship swim meet in Federal Way, WA (great job Jamie and Molly!). After the meet, I met up with UNC Coach Eric Stefanski and we drove an hour north to the race site. I checked in, drove the hilly bike course, and warmed up for the race. We met up with Denise Heuser of Dixie Chiropractic and had a huge dinner at a local restaurant before getting to bed by 8:30pm.

We woke up at 4:30am and drove to the race site by 5am for the 6:30 start. Eric and Denise were a great support team and hopefully will be joining me in the race next year! I set up my transition and braced myself for the 69 degree water and accompanying 55 degree air temp. The race start was delayed 10 minutes due to heavy fog and when the race started there was still only a few meters of visibility. Luckily, a rope marked the entire course underwater! This made it nice as I only sighted on the swim 2-3 times. I felt smooth and the BlueSeventy Wetsuit did its job as I stayed warm and fresh coming out of the 1.2 mile swim. I swam around 23 minutes for the course and came out a minute behind super-swimmer John Flanagan but a minute ahead of the rest of the group.

Jumping on the bike, I fought off the cold and settled into a rhythm. I worked on maintaining a steady pace as a few of the field caught me during the first 30 miles. My hands and feet were numb, but I felt comfortable as I maintained my pace and focused on getting in my nutrition. My recent bike fit with Bob at Veritas did the trick as I maintained a great bike position with my Adamo saddle keeping my rear end feeling good. Despite struggling through bike traffic and a few cars on the second lap, I evenly split the course (1:12/1:12) and came into transition in 9th place and just one place out of the prize money. I realized I still need to keep working on my bike fitness and leg strength at Power Enterprises, but was looking forward to having a strong run.

I took off on the run and knew that my work over the winter is starting to pay off. My first mile was 5:45 and felt smooth and controlled in my Newton Racers. I was encouraged and kept thinking land-lever-lift while I focused on running the hills efficiently over the first few miles. The run was quite hilly and my miles ranged from 5:33 to 6:33 as I slowly reeled in a few more racers. By the end of my first lap, I had run into 5th place and still felt good. The second lap hurt a bit more as I fought off a few minor cramps, but I was able to pass one more person and cross the line in 4th place. My half marathon time was 1:18.56 with an average of 6:01/mile. My total time was 4:09 and I was exhausted!

I was happy with my race and feel like my preparation and race plan were great, especially considering my lack of experience at this distance. With my 4th place finish, I qualified for 70.3 worlds this November, so I've got some work to do! For now, I'm back to Olympic distance racing at USAT Nationals next weekend. Thank you to everyone for your support! BlueSeventy, Kiwami Triathlon, ISM Saddles, HED Wheels, Newton Running, Veritas Cycles, and Great Clips Salons are my great sponsors. Until next week...

USAT National Championships

8/22/2009

www.usatriathlon.org

You win some, you lose some! This weekend I drove down to Tuscaloosa, Alabama for my first triathlon national championship. I've never done the race as an amateur or a professional, so I was excited to participate and do another draft-legal race. Thunderstorms dominated the two days leading up to the race and I spent the time relaxing and recovering from a good 70.3 race less than a week ago. Race morning came and I drove to the race course to cheer on the age group athletes competing including Charlie Clark, Dennis Dale, and Beth Shutt. I helped pass out water at an aid station and was inspired by the tremendous athletes that came through that were well into their 60's! I hope that I'm that healthy in 40 years! After a while, I headed back to the hotel to relax and prepare. After a light lunch, I headed down to transition for the 2:15 start. Due to the heavy rain, they had to open the flood gates in the river and the current was strong. Perfect for a strong swimmer! That is unless you make a bad decision to swim in the middle of the current instead of along the shore where the water is slower... To make a long, painful story short, I felt excellent in the water and came out well back of the leaders and with a pack of much weaker swimmers. Matt Reed and Cameron Dye made the same poor decision and I believe that this cost Matt the win and Cameron a chance of scoring ITU points. I guess we're all the wiser for next time!

Heading onto the bike, I was in the third chase pack with 3 other guys. My legs were not prepared for the constant accelerations of draft legal racing and I had trouble keeping the pace up the hill each of the 6 laps. I made it into transition with the group, but we were 3-4 minutes behind the leaders and I was cooked! I took off on the run and gave it my all for the first of the 4 lap course. I honestly believe my first miles were slower than my half marathon last weekend. My body threw up the white flag and started to cramp. I knew I was out of the points and losing ground so I put it into cruise control and just worked to cross the finish line. I hate when pros drop out when they aren't feeling good and I wasn't about to stop given my experience in the morning watching the age groupers! I finished the race and felt like I had just been run over by a truck!

The race was painful, but I'm hoping it was a good speed workout for this weekend's race in Chicago. I already feel better and hopefully a more predictable swim along with a steady effort on the bike will lead to a better race! After that, I'll be focusing the next 11 weeks to preparing for 70.3 world championships. Thanks to everyone for their support and congratulations to everyone who competed this weekend.

Please support the sponsors: Kiwami Triathlon, ISM Saddles, BlueSeventy Wetsuits, Veritas Cycles, Hed Wheels, Newton Running, and Great Clips.

Chicago Triathlon

8/30/2009

www.chicagotriathlon.com

This weekend I was in the windy city my third year at the Chicago Triathlon. It was my third race in three weeks, but I started driving on Friday feeling very good and ready to race. I stopped in Fort Wayne Friday night to visit my family and ended up coming down with a very high fever! I slept less than two hours Friday night and lost five pounds from sweating throughout the night! Saturday morning, I had to decide whether to continue on to the race or head home. I decided to get to Chicago and decide how I felt. I met up with my homestay Travis and his girlfriend Erica Friday afternoon and was still running a bit of a fever, so I took a nap and tried to stay away from everyone at the expo and race meeting. By the time I was ready to turn in for the night, my fever was gone and I slept 11 hours before waking up on race day.

Since I had a good night's sleep, I got ready to race. The 11am start time came quickly and I actually felt pretty good jumping into the 65 degree water. At the start of the swim, I felt pretty weak but was able to establish a good position near the front of the pack. Andy Potts and Cameron Dye broke away from the field, but I was able to hang with the lead group of Matt Reed, Tim O'Donnell, and Matt Charbot (the eventual top three). I came out of the water feeling pretty good and came into transition in the top ten after the 500 meter run to the bikes. I hopped on the bike and felt comfortable as I settled into a steady pace. Unfortunately, my steady pace involved absolutely no power and the 15mph headwinds on Lake Shore Drive were not helping. I slowly lost time to the leaders and really started to feel my body rebel. My bike split was slower than the top girls and many of the top age groupers! Ouch! I knew it was coming but was really hoping it was going to be a bit better!

I made it into the run and was a bit nervous as I left T2. My legs were tired and I cringed as I looked at my first mile split. To my surprise, it was 5:32! I was encouraged despite the way my body felt and continued to work on my form. The next mile was 5:39 and I was still comfortable. I maintained a steady pace until the turn around at 4.5 miles. At the turnaround, the headwind from the bike came into play again! I fought through the last bit of the run to come across the line under two hours with a run split average of 5:51 that was my fastest split in any of the three Chicago races. I believe I can hold this pace for a half ironman so given my health, I was very encouraged! I am happy to have made it through the race and am looking forward to a bit of recovery before my next race at Augusta 70.3 on September 27th.

Congratulations to Travis, Erica, and everyone who competed at the race this weekend and congratulations to Matt Reed on the win. Also, great job to IM Louisville participants including Kevin, my homestay from Philly. Thank you to Kiwami Triathlon (good to see you Andre), BlueSeventy Wetsuits, ISM Saddles (Thanks for the Kit. Awesome), Newton Running, Hed Wheels, CSE Corporation, and Great Clips for their support. Pictures and race reports will be updated on the website later this week!

Augusta 70.3/Los Angeles Triathlon Race Reports

Last weekend I was down south at the inaugural Augusta 70.3 race. I added this race at the last minute after qualifying for World Championships at Lake Stevens last month. I was excited not only to be racing the distance again, but also to compete against a very strong field looking to secure the last few spots for Worlds in November. I drove down Friday with Ashley and spent the night in Blairsville with Jim and Claudia at their amazing lake house. It would have been much easier to stay all weekend, but we packed up and drove the rest of the way Saturday and I got ready to race.

Sunday morning, I was happy to hear that it would be a non-wetsuit swim since I've been swimming fast, but unfortunately we would be swimming downstream with a very strong current. I lead for about half of the swim then tucked in behind Brian Fleishman for the rest. We came out of the water in under 20 minutes thanks to the current and I came out of transition in the lead and feeling great! My first few miles on the bike felt a bit sluggish and it went downhill from there. I struggled through the bike with a woeful 2:24 bike split and was worried that I wouldn't be able to pull off a strong run that I've been working on for so long. Luckily, my legs came around and I was able to run a respectable 1:17 split to finish in 17th place with a 4:04. This is my fastest time to date, but the swim current may have helped a bit! The bike split needs to come down a lot over the next month or so if I'm going to be competitive in Clearwater! After the race, we drove back to Blairsville and had a great time recovering and relaxing on the lake. My down time didn't last too long though as I packed up the bike and headed out to LA first thing Friday morning...

I arrived in Los Angeles Friday morning and met up with my host for the weekend, Roger Nurnberger. Still a bit fatigued from the previous weekend, I went for a quick swim and bike on the beach to loosen up and get used to the California surf. I was in bed nice and early thanks to the three hour time change. Saturday was a great day of race prep and relaxation capped off a picture perfect pre-race meal and early bed.

Race day came and I was treated to yet another non-wetsuit swim. This week, instead of a current, I was treated to man-eating waves! Given my poor showings in rough water, I was a bit nervous, but managed to have a good swim and come out of the water in the lead pack! (Slowtwitch had a picture of me citing me as first out of the water, but my split time doesn't have it that way... I definitely wasn't first to the timing mat at the entrance to transition!). I jumped on the bike with about a pound of sand in my suit and took off on the bike. I felt better this time on the bike, but still had a less than stellar split time to put me 14th and exhausted heading into the run.

Fortunately, my running has been consistent lately and I was able to hold 5:42 miles which are my goal for the half marathon down in Clearwater. I have no top end speed coming off the bike, I was passed by Simon Thompson and another racer to end up 16th. Definitely not the result I was looking for, but I know what I need to do between now and November.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of my racing over the last two weeks. Thank you to Jim, Claudia, Roger, and Diane for sharing their wonderful homes with me. Also thank you to Brendon of Utopian Coffee for coming out and supporting me in LA. As always, thank you to my sponsors who make it possible for me to race: Newton Running, Kiwami Triathlon, BlueSeventy Wetsuits, ISM Saddles, HED Wheels, Veritas Bikes, and Great Clips Salons. I'm back to training in preparation for 70.3 world championships...Sadly, mostly on the trainer!

Ironman 70.3 World Championships Race Report

<http://ironman.com/events/ironman70.3/worldchampionship70.3>

My 2009 racing season concluded this weekend at the Foster Grant 70.3 Ironman World Championship. The weather conditions were perfect and the racing was incredibly fast on a day that saw both the men's and women's course records broken. I put together the race that I had hoped for and ended up the day in 35th place with a time of 3:47.27. It was a great way to end up the season and I'm motivated to get started on preparing for next year!

The weekend started out with the flight down to Tampa and meeting up with Sally, my hostess for the weekend. Sally, Scott, and Murphy shared their home with me for the entire weekend and helped me stay loose and relaxed heading into the race. I unpacked and put the bike together only to find out that my front wheel was damaged during the flight! Luckily, there are a bunch of great people who offered to come to my rescue! Thank you to RaceDay Wheels and Hawk Racing for stepping up and offering their support. I eventually hooked up with Bob from Veritas/Bob Duncan Racing who just happens to travel with an extra race wheel in his suitcase! After I dealt with my first obstacle I learned that for the race all athletes needed to turn in their biking and running gear the day before the race. I only brought one pair of running shoes, so I needed a new pair to use for my warm-up race morning! Again, I was saved by some great people. This time it was Jerry with Newton Running. I was able to get a new pair of trainers to use with no problems. Finally equipped and ready to go, I met up with the Mad Dogs for a pre-race dinner and relaxation.

Race morning came early with a 4:45am wake-up. I made a quick walk to transition to get the bike ready, had a quick breakfast with my First Endurance Pre-Race and started my warm-up. I pulled on the BlueSeventy Wetsuit and waited for the cannon to go off. The swim was moved from the bay to the inter-coastal waterway due to poor weather the two days leading up to the race, so it was an in-water start with perfectly smooth water. With 80+ guys starting out, it was a hectic start for the first 800 meters. Just as everyone was settling into a rhythm, we hit a sandbar and suddenly there were athletes running and dolphin diving through the swim!!! I was hit by a dolphin diver and my cap/goggles were knocked off, but luckily I was able to stand up and quickly put them back on! About that time I put my hand through a patch of barnacles on the bottom and sliced open a few of my fingers! It was definitely an interesting swim, but I was able to keep it together and come out in just under 22 minutes in 10th place and only 30 seconds back of the leader.

I had a smooth transition and hopped on the bike ready to go. I have worked very hard on my cycling lately with Bob Duncan Racing and was anxious to see if it would pay off. The first 5-10 miles were chaotic and crowded as the pro field resembled a cycling peloton! Things settled down and we did our best to form a legal line, but congestion on the course made it difficult. I focused on a consistent pace and regularly drinking water/using my EFS Shot and the ride went quickly. With no wind and little heat, I felt good 40 miles in and really pushed hard the last 16 miles to try to stay in contact with the leaders. I came into transition about 5 minutes back from the first cyclist and way under my goal time with a 2:03 bike split.

Heading out on the run, I was relying on my consistent training to get me through after leaving all of my effort on the bike. I started clicking off 5:55 miles, but could not pick it up without fighting off cramping legs that were trying to recover from the last two hours. I stayed steady and focused on maintaining my form as I made my way through the two lap course. The spectators were great and I was able to finish strong and pass one last person in the last quarter

mile with a 1:17.55 run split. I did not hit my goal of a 1:15 run, but was very happy with the split given my effort on the bike. The overall time was faster than I expected and put me in 35th overall and the 7th fastest American. It was a good day!

After the race I enjoyed the race atmosphere and had a great time with the Mad Dogs. I met up with Sally and Scott and had a relaxing evening thinking I was now officially in the off season... Of course that would have been too easy, so Sunday morning I woke up at 6:30 and signed up to ride a 100k ride with Scott to support MDA. The 65 miles were great to enjoy the beautiful Florida weather and support a great cause, and I was the only one on the ride with a disc wheel and aero helmet!

70.3 World Championships was a great way to wrap up the season and I'm happy to take a few weeks off and relax before starting preparation for 2010. Thank you to everyone who has made 2009 a great year! Newton Running, BlueSeventy Wetsuits, ISM Saddles, HED Wheels, Kiwami Triathlon, Veritas Cycles, Great Clips Salons, and recently First Endurance have been my great sponsors. Thank you to Carolyn and the Mad Dogs for their hospitality this weekend and to Sally and Scott for sharing their home with me. Congratulations to everyone who participated in the race and the MDS ride!

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS SEASON POSSIBLE!!!!
SEE YOU IN 2010!!!**