

Subaru Ironman Canada 2010

7th – 8:43:21

Swim: 46:40

Bike: 4:51:49

Run: 3:00:04

Wolfgang Sr. – 15:41:32

Swim: 1:29:30

Bike: 7:35:43

Run: 6:20:37

This was my seventh consecutive year racing at Ironman Canada and it was the first time in as many years that it was cold and rainy on race day. It had been cool and windy in the few days leading into the race and on race morning it was only 10 degrees. Thankfully the 35km/h winds that blew all day on Saturday were long gone and the lake was flat and calm.

This year my Dad joined the race; his first Ironman. He turns 60 this year and just got into triathlon three years ago with my mom. My mom started this life-changing trend when she joined Team Diabetes to do the Dublin Marathon. Through a “learn to run” program and two years later successfully completed the Dublin Marathon. This sparked the life-style change that rendered my parents able and excited to race the Muskoka 70.3 together in 2009 and in 2010 my mom racing the Steelhead 70.3 and my dad racing IMC. They are both totally amazing!!

The Swim:

Right off the start the 30 pro men and 21 pro women took off strong, but it only took 500m or so for Kieran Doe to take the lead (he won this race a few years ago by leading the race start to finish). Tom Evans (who has also won this race) was right on his feet. On paper I figured these two would be the fastest swimmers and they both have resumes to prove it. It was my goal to try to keep them in sight if I couldn't stay with them. I have been first out of the water at Ironman Arizona and countless races in Ontario, but never at IMC. Leading the swim at IMC, with this field, would require a swim split sub 47min.

Close to the first big turn (after 1500m), Evans lost the feet of Doe, but I was still with them so I went around Evans and tried my best to get on Doe's feet but his pace was far too rich. As we rounded the second big turn and headed for the 1800m stretch back home I started to close the gap on Doe, but the best I could do is get to within 15-20s of him by the finish... the clock just broke 46min as I ran up the beach and I stopped the swim clock at 46:40, my fastest Ironman swim to date.

The Bike:

Evans somehow managed to beat me out of transition; I didn't even see him go by me (a Ninja move), so I was 3rd onto the bike. The bike is my weakest link and I expected to be caught by most of the pro men before we made it to Osoyoos (65km in). The main field of riders didn't catch me till 110km so I was having a decent day on the bike and to that point my average power was where I wanted it.

I train and race with a power meter and my goal for this race was to try to average between 250 and 255 watts (zeros included, my weight on race day was close to 69-70kg). At 70km my average was 258 and at 120km I was at 255, so things were going well. However, as we left the

“out and back” section of the course (at 130km) it started to turn black outside and the North wind became even stronger than it already was. It was cold and difficult riding into the strong headwind. As the skies grew dark and as we started the final long climb to Yellow Lake it started to pour rain; heavy, cold rain, and it was like that till we crossed over the second mountain pass (Yellow Lake) and headed down back to Penticton. It was in this section where I started to suffer on the bike and my power dropped considerably, down to 245 by the top of Yellow Lake. The long decent to Penticton left me with a final average power of just over 242, nearly 10 watts lower than I had trained for. In this period of stress most of the major players got past me, including the eventually winner. I got off the bike in 9th. Yet again I gave my competition 5-7min on the bike... 5-7min that you just can't afford to give away – Winter Project: become uber-biker.

The Run:

The plan was to run no faster than an average pace of 4:00/km for the first 21.1km, then try to hold that pace for the second half. I got to the turnaround at 22km in 1:25 so nearly right on 4:00/km. By this time I had run into 5th place and could see 4th right in front me. At the time 4th was Stephen Vuckovic (From Germany; won the Silver medal in triathlon in 2000), and behind us was Petr Vabrousek.

As we ran through the 5km section of hills I finally passed Vuckovic as if he was standing still and I ran strong till I could see 3rd just up the road. At the 20mile mark my run average was still down at 4:02/km.

I started to fatigue but I could see 3rd and I was now only 6 miles from the finish. Then I could hear a loud footrace from behind me; first I thought it was one guy but then realized it was two as both Vuckovic and Vabrousek passed me like they were in a 5k road race. I was still running 4min km's and they went right by. They only got about 800m up the road and you could see their pace drop considerably. Now we were all strung out but right in front of each other; 3rd, 4th, 5th, and now me in 6th, and we were all right there together. We were all running strong but it was as if we couldn't drop or catch each other. Only Scott Neydelyi was able to crack into the mix. Shortly after I fell into 6th, Neydelyi passed me on Main Street with just 4km to go. My pace had now dropped to 4:30/km and I was certainly “feeling it”. I think mentally I ‘let go’ a bit... demoralized by tasting 3rd and falling into 7th within just a few kilometres. It's one thing to be fit in the swim, on the bike, and in the run; but mental strength still needs to be developed utilized appropriately.

With less than 2km to go, you approach the finish line and then head along the beach on an ‘out & back’ stretch with the final stretch being nearly 1200m to the finish. As I approached the final turnaround, 3rd place to 7th place were all together in the final stretch to the line. After 8.5 hours of racing 4 guys were within 2.5mins of each other, and I finished only 11min behind the overall winner; a very close race indeed. A personal best performance, but not the top 3 I came to Penticton for.

THANK YOU

As anyone who has done an Ironman can attest to, it is not a solo journey. My journey to Ironman includes tremendous support from many great people including my athletes, friends, and colleagues from NRG; and from sponsors and supporters. I'd like to offer some extra special thanks to the following:

Mom and Dad (Janet and Wolf Sr.) – really, no one has a better sponsor than their mom and dad. From the “loans” (that I do still keep track of...one day I will pay them back), to the extra help and support... right from being driven to swim practice as a kid, to justifying that first new bike, to them standing at the finish line for all those hours watching... watching the races where you win in style to the races where you walk the marathon with your nutrition plan all over your shirt (or shorts if it's a really bad day). I owe my parents a great deal more than just thanks. I love my parents and I'm very fortunate to have them,

Kelly and Korey – (my sister and brother), they always offer their support, and Korey was awesome this year at IMC, driving us around, helping with bikes and the bike trailer, and being a great spectator,

Nona – you know why... for the goal setting and for filtering out what's important. For not being afraid to set bold goals,

Barb – my “Lady-Friend” (the executive version of “Girl-Friend”), and a wonderful person to have in my life right now. She has offered tremendous support and understanding and she has helped me achieve a sustainable balance between elite-sport, work, family, leisure, and the simple-important things in life. “Response versus reaction”, Jens and Heidi, Pinot Noir (from a cool wet year),... a true friend (and she's “fabulous”),

Andreas – my best friend in the world (no one else gets this description; it says it all)

David Bialkowski – Ontario Trysport (www.ontariotrysport.com). David has been supporting me with equipment, and moral support for years now. He offers tremendous customer service and his knowledge as a seasoned athlete makes for a bike fitter and service provider who truly knows what he's doing. His whole family is passionate about sport and about promoting sport and healthy living. I won't calculate a dollar value for what I owe David... I'm afraid to (are bikes, shoes, wheels, power taps, tires, and tools expensive??); I owe him big-time,

Nigel Gray – mentor, employer, all around nice-guy. Nigel is great at ‘telling it like it is’, and his years of experience and his own abilities as a professional triathlete make for a great coach/mentor. He is also always there to help me with something I need. If I'm ever stuck or need someone to talk to, he's there as a friend too...although subjected to endless teasing, and hilarious jokes at my expense, beneath the tough-guy humour is a caring individual, who I owe a great deal of thanks to,

Dunning Sportswear – www.dunningsportswear.com. This year while at a winter training camp I met Ralph Dunning (founder of Rip & Hammer, Dunning Golf, and Dunning Sportswear). He's a man passionate about his business and his sports, with a wealth of knowledge, experience, and insight. He offered me new opportunities this year and I appreciate all he has, and continues, to do for me. And the Dunning Clothing.... wow... if you're fit and like to wear high-quality, leading design men's wear, you have to visit the Dunning Boutique.

Blue Seventy – www.blueseventy.com – three years in a row now of swimming in the fastest wetsuit in the world. From a guy who can be first out of the water... trust me.

Adidas Canada – Since 2001 Adidas has been consistent in making sure I have the best running gear available. "Impossible is Nothing"!

GURU Bikes – www.gurubikes.com, Supported since 2005, truly Canadian engineering,

NRG Performance Training – www.nrgpt.com, can't leave out my colleagues and athletes who always find time to offer encouragement and support, despite their own schedules.