

**Tri the Creek Sprint Triathlon
Durango, CO
800m swim/22k bike/5k run
June 10, 2006**

Reported by Kirk Nelson, Team Sport Beans/NTTC

After a DNF in the Napa Valley Marathon (Achilles injury), a DNF at USAT collegiate Nationals (flat at mile 11 of bike), and 4 flats at Auburn International Half-Iron Triathlon, I decided to add a nearby sprint triathlon to my schedule in hope of gaining a boost of confidence and finishing the race free of mechanical problems. While my training is geared toward long course triathlon, I knew a sprint triathlon would be a good indicator of my early season fitness. While mechanical problems are out of my control, my race goals for the day were to swim well and stay near the front, to move during the bike and put myself into or near the lead on the bike, and to run 17:30 or better and negative split the run. The race consisted of an 800m swim, 22k bike, and 5k run.



I arrived early on race morning to pick up my packet and chip because I had family in town for the weekend and was not able to go the day before to pick up my packet and drive the bike course (which turned out to be a lesson learned...) After waiting in line at packet pickup, I was forced to rack my bike in the corner of transition area opposite from the entrance and exit. Not being a high-priority race, I really wasn't bothered too much by this and began my warm-up. Not having done any speed work specific to sprint triathlons, I planned to begin each leg of the race conservatively, and build my effort.

The swim turned out to be just the opposite. Everyone began very quickly and closely to one another. This set the stage for a very physical swim. Even by the half-way turnaround buoy, I was still amidst a large group of swimmers fighting for position. While I don't mind this style of swimming, I really didn't expect such a large group to be together at 400m into the swim. During the last half, it thinned out and I came out of the water in 8th. With a 250 meter uphill run into T1, I was able to pass some of those ahead of me who had gone anaerobic in the water. I got out onto the bike course in 6th and had moved into 2nd place 2 miles into the bike leg. It was my first ride and first race on my new ZIPP 808s. They were solid and extremely fast. At about 4 miles into the bike, I came upon a four-way intersection patrolled by police and two volunteers. Without any course markings and receiving no direction from the race volunteers, I assumed the course was straight through the intersection. It was nearly a mile later, when I came upon a four-way traffic light with no volunteers or highway patrol, that I realized I was off the bike course. I proceeded to turnaround and retrace my steps back to the controlled intersection where I turned right and rejoined the race in ~20th. Having added a near 2 miles and 4-5 minutes, I was determined to make my way through the field as best I could. Now racing on adrenaline, my power average went from 290 up to ~330 over the

next 10 minutes. I started to feel the effects of my effort for the last 1-2 miles of the bike but still had a great bike leg, averaging 26 mph and 303 watts. I came into T2 in 8th and about 3 ½ minutes back of the leader, Geoffrey Nenner. Beginning conservatively, I increased my effort slowly to the half-way turnaround. By 2.5k I had moved into 4th and was feeling very strong. I took it up a few notches and at the half-way point and was able to negative split the second half of the run. Over the 5k run, I was able to run down 5 racers and ended up 3rd on the day, 2:25 out of first.

Even with the 1.7 mile detour on the bike, I accomplished my goals for the day – a solid swim, no flats on the bike, and a great second half of the run. Next up for me is Buffalo Springs Ironman 70.3 on June 25 where I'll be competing for a spot at World Ironman 70.3 Championship in Clearwater, FL November 11.

Thanks to all of my wonderful sponsors including the Jelly Belly Candy Company, who provided race packet packages of Sport Beans!

