

Ironman Arizona

Tempe, AZ

2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26.2 mile run

April 13, 2008

Reported by Brad Seng, *Team Sport Beans/NTTC*

Race week highlights - Monday swimming in a snowstorm in Boulder, Thursday getting stitches in my finger, Saturday sorting minor mechanical issue, and Sunday racing IMAZ in some dawg gone hot and windy weather.

While I did not completely tank my race, it was not the performance I wanted.

I came into this race with a goal of maintaining contact with guys throughout the swim and bike to put me in position for a strong marathon. For the swim, I positioned myself towards the inside and found myself swimming with the second main chase pack. The pace was comfortable, and I tucked myself in to take advantage of the draft. Exiting in 56 minutes and change, I was ready to get to work on the bike.

After leaving town and heading out on the long out and back stretch of Beeline Highway, it was obviously going to be a windy day with both strong head and tail winds. I found myself just behind Sergio Marques from Team Timex and figured he would be a good guy to maintain contact through the bike as I know he is a strong runner. Sergio, AJ Johnson, Bernhard Keller and I rode as a "group" exchanging positions through the first 40 miles. Partway through the second loop, my hamstrings began to cramp. This was not a good thing as the winds kicked up dust storms and the mercury kept rising. Every time I made an effort to press the pace, the cramping would return. The winds seemed to calm a bit for the third lap and, approaching T2, I began to focus on a swift transition to the marathon.

Like the bike course, IMAZ serves up a three loop course for the marathon. Despite the relatively flat terrain, I would not describe it as a fast run course with a lot of twists, turns and corners. My legs felt pretty good through the first four miles, but then things got a bit ugly. I really began to feel the effects of the heat and just could not find my fluid running form. Through each aid station I took in what I could to keep me moving forward. Despite how crummy I was feeling, I found myself improving my position throughout the run.

A huge kudos to the volunteers at this event. I found the aid stations on both the bike and run to be on the ball and getting me what I needed. The crowds were energetic and I appreciate the words of encouragement from folks along the course. Congrats to the guys up front for setting up an exciting day of racing with the top four men all being within 1:30 of one another! Thanks to Coach Z and all my sponsors who allow me to be my best. I look forward to a quick recovery and racing Florida 70.3 in May.

(Editor's note: Brad posted the 4th fastest marathon split of the day, 3:03:01. Only the men's race winner, Jozsef Major of Hungary, broke 3 hours on the run. Brad's official splits were as follows: Swim: 56:24, T1: 2:48, Bike: 5:05:11, T2: 1:32, Run: 3:03:01, Total Time: 9:08:56.)