

Ford Ironman World Championship
Kailua-Kona, HI
2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26.2 mile run
October 11, 2008

Reported by Brad Seng, Team Sport Beans/NTTC

After relaxing for a few days on the beach and taking in some of the local sights, I figured it would be a good time to post a race report.

Swim (59:17 - Kona swim PR) I placed myself towards the middle-right, closer to the pier, and had what felt like my best start at this race. I quickly found some feet and was in the middle of a decent-sized group, which allowed me to limit my sighting. We were swimming right along the buoy line out to the turn-around, and it was feeling quite comfortable. At times, I thought the pace was too comfortable, but did not want to push things and end up swimming solo as I have in the past. My swim fitness has definitely improved, but with a more aggressive start and working things early on, I think I can place myself with a faster group. It was good to exit the water with fifteen or so other athletes, rather than one or two as I had in previous years.

Bike (5:17) Immediately out of transition the effort felt really hard and looking down at my front wheel I saw my brake was off center and rubbing. Fortunately it was an easy fix as I was able to reach down and open the brake lever. Riding along the Queen K I was comfortable and focused on my race plan. About an hour into the ride my container of salt tablets flew out of my side pocket and spilled all over the highway, leaving me with no salt until I reached my special needs bag after the turn around in Hawi. Riding up to Hawi the winds were gaining strength, but I felt stronger than I have in other years. I really began to struggle, though, once back on the Queen K heading back to town, with some cramping in my hamstrings. While my body was not responding as I had hoped, I was able to stay strong mentally and complete the ride with my focus shifting to the run. Note to self...do not use aero helmet on the Big Island, as any gains are minimal with the added wind, heat and humidity.

Run (2:49 - IM run PR) With the cramping I felt during the bike I was very uncertain how my legs would feel once on the run. Exiting T2 and finding my way through the cheers of the crowd gathered at the hot corner, my legs felt good. Running along Ali'i Drive to the first turn around, I felt relaxed, smooth and fluid. My focus was on fueling, hydrating, and keeping cool through each aid station while running down as many athletes as I could. It was like a giant game of Pac-Man. The temperature really seemed to soar once out on the Queen K and into the Natural Energy Lab. Unlike last year, though, where I began to break down at this point, I found myself feeling stronger as the run progressed. Over the final four miles, I was able to run down several more guys and was very happy to make the final turn on Ali'i Drive and run towards the boisterous finish chute and the familiar voice of Mike Reilly.

Total time 9:12

Despite a slow bike this was my best performance in Kona, and I am pleased with the result. Recovery is going well and I am excited about my final race on November 8th at the Foster Grant 70.3 World Championship in Clearwater, FL.

A huge MAHALO to my support team of sponsors (**Team Sport Beans®/NTTC**, INVISTA Coolmax®, TYR, Champion System, Rudy Project, Blue Seventy, Blackwell Research, and Mix 1), family, and friends. I am very grateful for the opportunity to share this experience with you. The support and encouragement has been huge in allowing me to be my best.

(Editor's note: Brad posted the 5th fastest marathon split of the day, 2:49:17. Brad's official splits were as follows: Swim: 59:17, T1: 2:54, Bike: 5:17:55, T2: 2:39, Run: 2:49:17, Total Time: 9:12:02. He placed 78th in the swim, was 74th off the bike, and then began to really move-up on the run. At the 5.2-mile mark of the run, he was 63rd. At 10.3 miles into the run, he was 57th. By 17.6 miles on the run, he was up to 49th. And, he was 40th at the finish. It really was a game of Pac-Man, as he gobbled-up 34 pro men on the run!)