

Pre-Race:

Really starts with us leaving central Illinois on Friday, June 12 to drive ½ way across the country with our youngest two boys. Part of the reason for picking this race was to see Mt. Rushmore and Yellowstone. Other than eating out (a lot) and driving, nothing too different in the days leading up to the race. (We did have a long day hiking in Glacier on Tuesday). Weather for the week has been cool, rainy, and windy—not at all what we expected. Oh well, make the best of it. Got into CdA Thursday afternoon, found our hotel (a historic hotel a few blocks from the race venue), and checked in for the race. Sign this, sign this, buy this (No, thanks), buy that (Really?). Thursday, Friday, and Saturday were the usual expo, meet up with online friends, practice swim, and gear obsessions. Beth volunteered for bodymarking, so she set her alarm for 3. I got up with her and ate an English muffin with peanut butter and jelly, some dried fruit and a croissant. Two cups of coffee to wash it down. Waited a while longer, got dressed and headed to the park about 5:30 (no reason to get there real early and just stand in the cold wind). No lines, so I had Beth bodymark me, gave her a kiss, and headed over to air up my tires and drop off special needs bags. One last pit stop and I watched the pros start. Headed back to Beth, pulled on the wetsuit, ate an orange, and found my way onto the beach. Went with the blue goggles and no neoprene hood (just like Saturday).

Swim:

Two loops with a beach start. The swim start had me a little nervous as my usual strategy is to give the wave 15 seconds to clear out before starting at the outside. With 2200 people, it would take minutes for them to clear so I'd be in the thick of things. I started far to the right (outside) but with a few swimmers still further right. My sighting in the practice swims had been terrible, so I wanted at least a few bodies on either side of me. Water temp was 65F, so it was warmer than the air. Winds kicked up pretty good chop that made the outbound swim pretty hard. Stayed with a nice, smooth, easy effort out to the red buoy. Turned wide and moved in as the crowd was thinning. Followed feet and/or bubbles all the way in and stayed fairly close to the yellow buoys. Up the beach, over the mat, and back out for the second uphill swim. We'd pretty well thinned out, so I took the second loop a lot closer to the buoys. Noticed my wetsuit chafing the back of my neck a little on the inbound swim, but it would not bother me. Hit the mat at 1:19:08.

T1:

Took my time as it would be a long day and I didn't want to forget anything. Wetsuit stripper helped peel off the neoprene and I headed into the tent. I dried off a little to make it easier to get dressed, but also to stave off the heat loss from riding while wet on such a cold day. I'd put toe covers on my shoes and opted to skip the arm warmers and knee warmers. Hit the urinal and started out. I watched #1807 drop some endurolyte tablets so I picked them up and tried to catch him. No luck, but it prompted me to check and I realized I didn't have my mini-pump/inflator in my jersey pocket. I head back towards the tent like a salmon swimming upstream, find my pump where I changed and headed back out like a normal triathlete. Walk to the mat and the mount line and take off.

Bike:

Out and back to Higgins Point (15 miles) and then a big loop up to Hayden. Repeat as needed. The first couple of miles are in town with a lot of turns. No reason to hurry, so I start to settle in. Focus on high cadence up the hills and watch my heart rate. I figured 150-155 on the bike would be aggressive yet still leave something for the run. Felt good up the hills (I passed a lot of cyclists of the hills). This early in the ride, there are a lot of people bunched close together, and some really slow athletes were pretty far left going up the hills. Hit the turnaround and start back to town. I'd bumped the "stop" button on my watch, so it was still telling me HR but I had no idea of my time. Oh well, I figure NAS/WTC will keep track of times for me, so I'll focus on HR/effort. We head north and my HR is 145-150. Not bad, I'm not



going to push here because we have a tailwind. Wander out past the country club and hit the hills around Hayden. Saw first pros coming in off of 1st loop. On one of the hills, a group of three women are riding side-by-side. The self-appointed "faster" one is a few feet from the yellow line (it was clear they ride together and this was her "normal" spot in the group) going about 6 mph. I get around them only to be passed on the next downhill. We repeat this for a couple more hills before I stop at the mile 30 aid station for a pee break. I took off the toe warmers and stuffed them into my jersey pockets. I'm right about where I wanted to be with nutrition and hydration. I caught up to the threesome again and put some distance on them in the next couple of hills. Before long, I'm headed back towards town and the hills that looked so bad in the car were behind me on the first loop. Grabbed a bottle of Gatorade

at the mile 50 aid station (my third bottle) and stopped because my aerodrink foam came out when I opened the lid (so I stopped to pick it up). Cruised into town with the headwind and catch the family watching for me a few blocks from our hotel. Unfortunately, they didn't see me. Little up and back and I'm starting the second loop. Cruise out to Higgins Point, skip special needs but hit the porta-pot at mile 65. Made it up the gradual hill (Independence Village?) and got too close to a sandwich-board sign separating us from vehicle traffic. I hit the sign with my right brake lever/bull horn, sending the sign crashing to the right and me crashing to the left. I'd call it a draw, except the sign escaped uninjured. I, on the other hand, had some rash on my knee and elbow and pretty intense pain in my left shoulder. A couple course volunteers help me collect my stuff and ask if I'm OK. Yea, how's the bike? He asked if I hit my head (I didn't think so), starts asking my name and where I'm from. Correct answers plus volunteering info that would be the next question was my "get out of jail" ticket. They put some cream on the rashes and I got back on the bike. Handlebar was a little skewed, but nothing else besides cosmetic damage. My shoulder hurt, but I figured the only thing they'd do for a collarbone is immobilize it. If it didn't hurt to ride, I might as well. It didn't, so I did. My race goals changed from 12ish-13 to "survive." I rode pretty easy, partly because I knew I had another round of hills, but also because I lost my appetite. Each hill was a new challenge. Riding on the aero bars didn't hurt (much). Neither did riding on the bull bars (much). Switching hurt a lot!

I'd have the occasional stabbing pain when I'd move to remind me of my shoulder. Knowing I couldn't put much effort into climbing gave me a chance to relax, spin, and coast on the downhill. It was no longer about time. Hit the porta-pot around mile 90 knowing I had about 6-8 more miles of hills before a relatively flat return downtown. The headwind wasn't bothering me much, the sun was shining, and I almost felt warm. As I got to the corner where I'd seen my family, I started watching for my boys. Beth was in the finish area catching the first pros, so I knew she wouldn't be there at the corner. I see my son, so I stop and give him the least amount of info I could...(I crashed; I'm OK, it'll be a slow run, tell Mom). Make the last few miles and roll into the park.

T2:

The volunteers take my bike and grab my run bag. I head into the tent glad to be done with the bike. I unzip my jersey (it was a full-zip), and gingerly take it and my cycling bibs off my wrecked shoulder. I pull my shorts on with my good arm, switch socks, pull on my shoes, and sit there for a minute. Pulling a singlet/tri-top on is going to hurt because I have to use my left shoulder. I finally screw up the courage to wrestle my tri-top on (it's going to be too cold for the singlet) and the one remaining task is to tie my shoes. Yup, that hurt too!!! I pack up my bike stuff and head for the "run."

Run:

Two loops along the lake. A little up-n-back to the West and then through town and up-n-back toward Higgins Point. I start the run holding my left arm against my stomach. The clouds have returned and the wind has picked up. I thought about trying to find my T1 bag for the warmers that I didn't use for the



bike. The first mile or two is to the West along the lake. I start looking for friendly faces, but without luck. I'm running next to a young woman with a sling on her left arm. Sounds like she'd crashed at mile 2 of the bike. How I envied her sling... Hit the

turnaround and know I'll be running right past my special needs bag and some aspirin. I decide to pass on the aspirin for now. Since I had quit eating after the wreck, I knew I needed to start getting some calories, so I eat a cookie or a handful of pretzels at the aid stations. As I pass transition area, the rain starts. It's just a light drizzle, but with it <60F and windy, I'm not real excited. I know I'm not moving fast enough to generate a lot of heat, but I keep moving as fast as practical. I know the sooner I finish, the sooner I can get my shoulder checked. (Yea, there was the obvious "get it checked before you finish"). Wind through town and back along the lake. I'm eating mostly pretzels and drinking either a water or Gatorade. Hit the porta-pot on the way out. Every time I'd go into one, my glasses would fog. I'm seeing runners with mylar blankets so I keep looking for the aid station where they have them. I see them on the return leg, so I figure I've got about 3 miles 'til I have one of my own. The rain is still a drizzle and the winds continue to howl. I hit the turn and start back towards my intermediate goal (a blanket). More pretzels and when I get to the aid station, I wrap one end of the blanket under my left arm, drape it over my shoulders, and anchor it with my right arm. What a difference! I don't have to hold my left arm steady, and I'm sheltered a little from the wind and rain. Back through town and I'm half done. Motor on past transition and I'm walking as much as running, but I know I can finish.

More people around me are walking, but there are a few just coming off the bike and moving quickly. I hit the turn around and I'm about a mile from the aspirin. I opt to skip food for the two miles prior to special needs so I'm ready for the aspirin. Call out for my bag, bust open the package and take 4 (1300 mg). Water at the next aid station, and a mile further I have a few more pretzels. I start with the chicken broth and keep walking. I walked most of the way through town and out to the last turn. I commit to run from the inspiration message to the finish except for up-hills. Since the inspiration board is half-way up the hill, I run some of the downhills between the turn around and the board. Somewhere in here I realize it has quit raining and the winds have died down. I have no idea what time it is, but it doesn't matter, I'm a few miles from finishing. I start running again and head back into town. I high-five people celebrating on the corner and motor towards Sherman. I'm running more and passing people walking. As I turn the corner onto Sherman, people are cheering, hands out for high-fives (always on my right, sorry folks on the left). I pull off the blanket, sunglasses, and stuff them in my running hat (so I look good for the finish line photo don't cha know?!) I start looking around to make sure there isn't anyone close for the pics and I see my boys (thankfully on the right) so I high-five them and everyone else lining the right side of the chute. I never hear Mike Reilly call my name, but the others did. Beth has come back into the finish chute to catch me, and she does. I'm happy to be done, but I need to get to medical. My finish time is 13:38:05, and those extra 6 seconds were worth it!





I get a medal, shirt, hat, and another blanket and Beth holds me while they remove my chip. She gets me over to medical and the place is a furnace. The paramedic checks my shoulder and goes to get another EMT who then calls over the doctor. They confirm my suspicion of a broken collarbone and suggest I go get it x-rayed. They get me back out to Beth and we go back to get my finisher's picture taken, collect the boys, and collect me gear. We walk the 6 blocks back to the hotel and I get a quick, 1-armed shower and we go for some burgers. X-rays the next morning showed two ends and two large fragments.

People are amazed I finished. I figured it hurt and it would hurt just to stand around. If it didn't hurt more than standing around, I might as well ride (and I did). If running didn't hurt more than standing around, I might as well run (and I did). Was it smart? Don't know. I may not know for weeks (or years) whether I did any long-term damage. A couple months post-race, and the collarbone appears to be healing well. I tell people "It wasn't the race of my dreams, but it was the race of my lifetime!" I'll do another Ironman-distance race after my youngest boys graduate from High School.

