

Double the Challenge: Jen Vogel is 1st Female, 4th OA in Florida Double IRON

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http://thesportfactory.com/site/successstories/Double_the_Challenge.shtml

Give Jen Vogel a challenge and she will jump at it. If it's a challenge that most people would never consider, even better.

Most athletes consider the iron distance triathlon to be the pinnacle of their athletic personal challenges. And it should be --- a 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, and 26.2 mile run is nothing to take lightly.

For Jen Vogel, she's been there and done that. When she learned of a new **Double IRON in Tampa** this year, she knew it was right up her alley.



Double IRON. That's 4.8 miles of swimming (in a pool), 224 miles of biking (around a 6.6 mile loop), and 52.4 miles of running on a 1.7 mile out-and-back course (not even a circled loop!). The race provides hot meals for those who want to stop and eat, but Jen's trusty crew (husband Lane and friend Scott) filled Jen's bottles throughout the night and continued to support her needs throughout the race.

There aren't a lot of people who would either want to take this on, or have the time to train for such an event. Luckily for Jen, ultra distance training and racing is a lifestyle, and one that she and her husband Lane do together and with friends. She won her first 50 miler, the Iron Horse; smashed the course record by four hours in the 2009 Keys 100, and compiled another win the following year, breaking her own record by over 30 minutes. She finished on the podium in the Grand Teton 100, then flew 'across the Pond' a few months later to compete in what many consider to be one of the toughest races on Earth-- The Marathon de Sables. MdS is a self-supported, 150+ mile, seven day stage race across the Sahara Desert in Morocco with endless sand dunes, searing heat, and brutal, near-vertical rocky climbs. She finished 7th overall female out of 1013 competitors.

Jen is the **Team Massage Therapist** and also a **run coach** for The Sport Factory, and works for 1st Choice Health Care both on site at The Sport Factory and at their Decatur, GA location. She has enjoyed the energy of training with the team and the buzz of the athletes around The Sport Factory's USAT Certified Performance Center. In 2010, she approached Coach Brett Daniels with perhaps one of the biggest challenges of his coaching career: train her for a Double IRON Distance Triathlon as well as multiple ultra distance running races. Brett is a USAT Level II Certified Coach, is one of The Sport Factory's most experienced coaches, and has a phenomenal track record in iron distance finishes among his athletes.

Jen is quick to mention that in addition to Brett's coaching, she had the support of the entire team of coaches and athletes at The Sport Factory. Being a USAT Certified Performance Center is more than just another designation and logo; it means that athletes can essentially have all their training

needs addressed under one roof (including but not limited to testing, bike fitting, video analysis, mechanics, sports medicine, swimming, classes, etc.). According to Jen, *"As far as the race this weekend, it was a huge team effort from Sport Factory. Curtis Henry has done all my bike maintenance for the past year. Matt Russ equipped my bike with lights for night riding, and he fit my bike for the long distance riding so that I could comfortably run off the bike. I had NO discomfort (well, no more than a regular Ironman) with the bike. I went to TONS of Grind Stationary Classes and strength classes. I swam in the current pool on site whenever I could. April Gellatly Burkey hooked me up with one of our BlueSeventy wetsuits last minute. Ilanna Katz, the Team Registered Dietitian, helped with nutrition and of course the team at 1st Choice helped keep me injury free. I really took full advantage of EVERYTHING The Sport Factory offers."*

Regarding her relationship with Coach Brett, Jen says, *"I'm sure this was very outside Brett's scope of practice, coupled with the fact that I don't ride with a power meter, and I have never actually uploaded ANY heart rate data. It's 100% based off of perceived exertion for me. Being a seasoned ultra athlete, I think Brett trusted me to tell him EXACTLY how I felt from week to week (the good, the bad, and the ugly) and we chatted almost daily. I always felt that our coaching relationship was about taking on a huge challenge, for both of us, and using every resource available to us."*

"Brett and I had decided on a race plan, and I executed it like it was my job. I swam comfortably and stayed in low zone 2 for the entirety of a windy and hot 6.6 mile bike loop. I then put one leg in front of the other and ran the entirety of the double marathon."

Coach Brett had this to say about Jen, *"Jen approached me last summer about coaching her for Ironman Cozumel and making a run at qualifying for Kona. She was already a very accomplished athlete in the ultra community and had done Ironman Florida a couple of years before so I knew she had a real shot at Kona. Unfortunately there were a few faster girls in Cozumel, and Jen finished 4th in the F25-29 AG and there were only 2 Kona slots. We had generally discussed the possibility of her doing the Double even before Cozumel, but didn't commit to it until afterward, so we had a pretty short window to get ready-- not to mention we were in the dead of winter. Through Jen's perseverance and determination, she was able to prepare for this monumental challenge for the most part indoors (with a few exceptions). Our Coach/Athlete relationship is built on a strong level of trust and communication, and at this level of competition it has to be. We had some problems early on with her HR measuring device not properly downloading so it was imperative that I talk to her almost daily to gauge how she was feeling and recovering from her workouts. Jen has a unique ability to take on a huge training load and recover from it while remaining relatively injury-free. I can honestly say that there isn't anything I would do differently, and I thought that even before Jen's amazing race performance."*

So how fast does one actually "race" a Double IRON distance triathlon? Jen's splits showed that she was the most consistent athlete on the field that day, clicking off lap after lap with little time difference. Her time was 25hrs and 6 seconds, which equates to a 12:30 in each single iron distance. Back to back. She was the first female and 4th overall including the men.

"I really feel like Brett, The Sport Factory, and I broke new ground with this one. There is very little data on Doubles out there, very little on females, and NOTHING about being competitive."

There is, however, a lot out there about focus, determination, and proper planning. Congratulations to Jen, Brett, and the entire Sport Factory community for coming together to help accomplish a big goal.