

## Sprint to Double IRON?

by [Lisa Taylor](#) on Thursday, March 10, 2011 at 4:49pm

It's long but hey, the race was long too ;)

I suppose the actual journey started two years ago when a friend and I decided that it was only right for my first iron distance race to be a double, so I contacted the RD, Kirby at USAUltraTri.com and told him of my interest. The plan was to build to the race distance with other races but it didn't work out that way, so from sprint to double iron I went...

Living in Michigan makes it a bit difficult to train for a Florida race in March but totally possible. Countless hours and numerous miles in a pool, a handful of 8-10 hour indoor trainer rides and becoming well acquainted with the elliptical and treadmill at the local YMCA more than adequately prepared me for the race. I was bored out of my freaking mind but well prepared.

Race day....my crew chief Betsy and I headed to the race start at the Tampa YMCA and arrived an hour before the start. I was still fairly comfortable and not too nervous, drank a cherry Pepsi, ate a banana, put on my suit and wetsuit, tossed down a cliff shot and met my assigned lane partners. There were five of us in the slow lane and we talked a little strategy, grabbing toes and waiting until the wall to pass, etc...a few pre-race pics and off we went. First few laps we had a pace line but that quickly broke up and we set off on our own paces. I felt awesome. The water was comfortable, my lane mates were kind and we gave each other plenty of space.

The plan was to take in fluid and gels and a banana throughout the swim, roughly every 1000 meters. Betsy and Pete, two of my crew kept right on top of this. They were amazing, warning me when feed times were coming and at times forcing me stop to take in nutrition. I hit the halfway point, 2.4 miles in 1:22:32. Huh? The girl who is afraid of water and can't swim did a sub 1:30 IM distance?? I thought they were lying to me!! I thought they meant 1:42! Brushed it off cause I didn't think it was right, tried to relax as my only goal here was to get out of the water with energy to tackle the remaining 277 or so miles. The second half of the swim was a little tougher, I had to sit at the edge of the pool to eat as the waves were making me dizzy but once I was swimming again I was golden. Exited the pool at 2:52 for my 4.8 mile swim. After transition 2:59. Fifty-six minutes faster than I expected. Happy Trixie.

We had to get in the car and drive a few miles to the bike/run course. I took this time to try and eat a Jimmy Johns sub. Maybe a quarter went down and I drank a Cherry Pepsi. We hit the park, I porta-loo'd and waited for my send off from my buddy Q, but not before I decided to lie down in the grass, relax a bit, right on top of an ant farm....I'm smart. :-)

The bike started, 31 loops to go...it was hot of course and extremely windy down the back stretch. I tried to tuck as much as possible down the back and sit up to stretch when riding with the wind. I didn't have a watch or computer on purpose. I wanted to go by feel, stay comfortable and not worry about speed or placement. I made my way to the timing table and I ride by....no beep. My chip isn't working. Over the next 3 loops and about 10-15 minutes of stops we had the chip repositioned and working again.

The plan for the bike was to stop every 5-6 loops and refill the speedfill with carbo-pro and replace the water and Gatorade bottles on the back, replenish my gels, cheeze-its, uncrustables and cupcake mush. This plan worked well. My first break was a little too long which displeased my crew so I tried to keep them shorter after this. Or I should say Betsy told Wendi to get my ass back on the bike when I was lolligagging...

All seemed to be going according to plan, I was riding slow but comfortably, completing my 7 mile loops in a very consistent pace, 25 min or so until my proverbial wheel fell off. About mile 100 my right IT band blew up. Interesting and very frustrating to me as I've not had any issues with it at all and I had been riding further than 100 miles nearly every weekend for the past 3 months. I did switch out my old seat for a completely different kind of seat just a month before. It is wider and could very well be the cause of the problem but I wont second guess this decision. The old seat may have caused issues as well, I'll never know.

I could no longer ride aero and needed to switch from my tri bike to my back up cyclocross bike. On my next pass I told the crew and they started to get the cross bike ready as I went off for another loop. My poor crew... I had new road tires and had only used the rear wheel, the front didn't have rim tape and they continued to change fill and pop through quite a few tubes before they switched that wheel out completely. My crew was awesome, didn't let me freak, took care of it all, switched bottle cages, timing chip, bento box, I did nothing except lie there and get my hip stretched out.

The switch in bikes helped my pain level but from this point on I had to stop and get stretched out nearly every 7 miles. I was still able to ride but only in a completely upright position, think PeeWee Herman on his cruiser... Surprisingly my loop times only dropped to 27 min but add the stretching stops and I was starting to waste some major time...oh well, one loop at a time, keeping forward motion was my only goal now.

Riding in the dark alone after racing the entire day is quite an experience. A little scary, a little lonely and a lot beautiful. You, the breeze, the trees, the stars and the occasional creature out there alone. Liberating in a 'damn my leg doesn't work- my undercarriage is raw-what's this stickiness on my arm-are there still ants crawling on me-what's the second line to that song" kinda way.

And yes, I sang, out loud. Thank you Cee-Lo Green.

Done with 224 miles. Finally. I quickly changed my clothes and set off to the run course. I was walking ok, stretching as I went as it was going to be close. I had just enough time to finish if I could walk a pretty decent clip and maybe, just maybe throw a little running in the mix if the hip allowed it.

I don't remember too much of the first part of the run leg, I just remember thinking and telling Wendi that I would feel better when the sun turned back on. I was starting to get very very sleepy. I walked the first 5 loops of the 30 pretty well, stopping only to use the bathroom and grab gels, no sitting, no stretching as I did on the bike. The sun came up and I started to feel a little better but soon hit a wall. I was walking and sleeping. I woke myself up a few times snoring! I knew my time was limited but thought if I could take a quick 10 min nap I would feel better. Damn. That 10 min nap was the best of my life. As I slept in the back of Wendi's truck she and Gina massaged my legs and hips and they made fun, made faces and took pics with a passed out Trixie....thanks guys, love you! I set back off on the course and felt I should try and run just a little to make up as much time as I could. The run was painful but not that much more than walking. I ran a hundred yards or so and would walk a half mile to stretch it out. I continued this until the IT band wouldn't allow that any longer. I walked the best I could until the math worked against me. My last 3.5 miles took over 2 hours to walk, the last 1.75 lasting 1:16. Yes, you can walk that slowly. My crew graciously pulled me, or allowed me to drop after 28 miles.

I did not finish the Florida double iron but did earn the iron plus finishers certificate as I completed an iron distance race plus an additional 2.4 mile swim, 112 miles biking, and two extra walking miles! Am I satisfied? No. I'm not. But I know staying on the course the remaining 6 hours would have possibly injured me more and I would've still been short the distance.

Would I have done anything different? No. I trained perfectly, pre- race couldn't have been better, my crew was amazing and my nutrition was better than I had hoped. No, woulda shoulda coulda's here. I may not have completed the final goal but I tried.-)

Sixteen people from all over the globe toed the line early Friday morning. Twelve were lucky enough to finish. With such a small field and a loop course you get to know everyone racing. While there were many different languages spoken everyone supported each other regardless of the language boundaries. Whether it was a wink, a smile, a thumb's up or a goofy look, we all knew we were in it together and you could feel the support from each and every competitor. Sometimes races aren't to teach you who's fastest, who's in better shape, who's tougher, sometimes it starts out a race but becomes much much more. Someone told me some months ago that I was about to embark on something pretty amazing. I thought she was referring to the race. I know now that she wasn't.

I want to thank Betsy, Pete, Wendi (and little G8R) Gina and Aaron for killing their weekend to spend it catering to my every need. I couldn't have gone a mile without your help and support. And thank you to all you kids out there in my computer for following me and for all the encouragement. It means more than you know.

And those of you who were curious about nutrition...

- 1 rice Krispy treat (thanks Wendi!)
- 2 bananas
- 3 cupcakes
- 4 cups of chicken noodle soup
- Half a box of white cheddar Cheez Its
- 1800 cals of carbo pro
- 5 Uncrustables
- 1 Gatorade
- 1 rock star
- 1 Fanta
- 1/3 Jimmy Johns sub
- 1 bar of taffy
- 1 honey wafer
- 13 cans of cherry Pepsi
- 52 cliff shots

Btw, SPF 100 works. I've no color from the race. None! I'm just as white now as when I arrived. :-)