

# Brad Kelley 2013 Florida Double IRON Race Report

I came into this event not knowing anything or what to expect on race day. I could have never done it without my awesome support crew. This is my 281.2 mile story!

## **Pre-Race and Swim**

I awoke at 4:30 so that I could be at swim start by 6am. Because there are much fewer people in this event the transition area went very smooth. The nerves are racing but it is now time to buck up and get ready for the race to start. After a quick group photo the race begin and we were all off on a 4.8 swimming mile journey. Swimming is definitely not my strong point and I went into this event hoping I could do a three hour swim. I kept pushing harder as the swim progressed and before I knew it I was done and out of the water. Total time 2hrs 43minutes and I am already ahead of schedule I had hoped for. WOW.

I ran into transition to change clothes and I was out in 13 minutes. A bit longer than I wanted to take, however I was still way ahead of my initial schedule. The weather was a bit colder than expected, so I had to put on an extra layer on top.

## **Bike**

The first part of the biking portion was going well, and normally this is my strongest sport so I knew I would be okay. I kept pushing on the bike and I was told that I made it all the way up to eighth place. My goal going in was to just finish this thing in less than 36 hours so that really didn't matter, however I am all about the competition. Keep in mind it was colder than I had expected it would be for this race so I had two layers on bottom and three layers on top plus a beanie that covered my entire face. A mere 143 miles into the bike portion I was getting sleepy. I pulled over and I took a nap. I told my older brother to wake me up in 15 minutes. That 15 minutes rest felt like about 15 seconds. I still say he cheated me on the time. I had just 81 miles to go on the bike before starting my double marathon. I got up and pushed onward towards another 30 miles and had to take another quick 20 minute nap. I finished up the last 51 miles slowly and decided that I needed to take an additional nap before starting my 52.4 mile run. I knew when the sunrise came through I would be totally fine for the remainder of the race. The 30 minute nap was done and I was in slow motion as I put on my run clothes in layers.

## **Run**

At about 4:30am with night lights attached to my hat and I started out on the 52.4 mile run slowly but I knew once sunrise came I could make it through the entire race if my body holds out or the pain factor is not too great. Most of you know "I Love Pain" and often I refer back to the days in the hospital bed in 2003 when I experienced "real pain" with all the tests and medical procedures that were done. It makes the pain, tingling, or numbness I have during endurance events so much less painful. Finally, a few hours later the sun came through the clouds and I was picking up the pace. At this point I was doing a run walk

procedure and enjoying the ultra athletes that surrounded me. After finishing the first marathon I was starting to cramp slightly so I had some chicken broth and two aspirin. Still moving forward on the run course it took about 30 minutes to take effect. It was at this time I also realized I would make the 36 hour cutoff if I stayed at the pace I was going. I was going to complete a Double IRON Distance!!! Unbelievable!!! I felt surprisingly good and I was really enjoying this now despite the distance I have traveled already. With less than two miles left I wanted to try and finish in less than 35 hours. I took off on a 5k pace and those that were there were so great in cheering me on. At this point it was pure adrenaline and I was finishing strong. Less than a half mile to go I could see the finish line, my family and my friends. I heard the USA National Anthem, grabbed the US Flag, pointed to the sky thanking God and my awesome mother for watching over me. I crossed the finish line crying; knowing I had went way beyond what was ever expected of a Guillain Barre patient. I had just finished 281.2 miles.

It was an incredible experience I will never forget. Ten years ago I was lying in a hospital bed uncertain if I would walk again. Today I swim, bike and run for those who can't and try to inspire those who can. As for my next adventure or event.....421.8 sounds really cool but for now I will enjoy this one.

I have a great desire to help those in Special Olympics. These athletes are the ones who inspire me. So far I have received nearly \$3000 in donations to this wonderful organization. Thank you to all of those that donated.

