

# Ultra Daddy Steve Fullard

Wednesday, January 28, 2015

## Oregon Double Anvil July 2014, 281.2 miles of fun - Race Report

### The Journey - Getting to the start line



The day before race day

After finishing my 3rd full distance triathlon, Vineman in 2013, and probably mid post race blues, I started as we all do to look for the next challenge. I thought it would be possible to do a longer swim and even a longer bike, but could I do a longer run? I had never ran longer than a marathon, but heh if you train for something then anything is possible right? After some quick Googling I found [USA Ultra Tri](#), who offer ultra distance triathlons in Florida, Virginia and Oregon. The seed was planted and it wasn't long before I had sent my application and entry fee off for Oregon Double Anvil in July 2014.

The next question I asked, as I am sure everyone would, was 'is there a training plan for a Double'? Steve Kirby the Race Director pointed me in the direction of Wayne Kurtz and his book '[Beyond the Iron](#)'. Wayne is the real ultra daddy of ultra racing having completed several, Double, Triple, Quintuple, Deca, Double Deca and the first ever Triple Deca, an Ironman a day for 30 days. His book talks you through everything you need to know and lays out a 20 week plan to train for a Double.

I had everything I needed, a race and a training plan, now to get to work! It was the off season, Oct 2013 when I started working towards my race scheduled for July 2014. Normally my off season really is off until the start of the year when guilt makes me sign up for another race and I start training again. This time I was determined, mostly due to fear, to get to the start of my training plan in good shape.

### 20 Weeks to go

March 3rd came around very quickly and boom it was Day 1: Swim 0:45 easy, Bike 0:45 easy and a strength training workout, tick, I can do this. Wayne has laid out the plan in the normal triathlon format of several short sessions during the week, maxing out at 3hrs on a weekday and leaves the longer rides and



The day before race day

runs to the weekend. It averages at around 20hrs a week, so is not considerably more than a regular Ironman training plan, however there are some twists!

Doubles normally start at 7am with your 4.8 mile swim, so you're out the water mid morning, on the bike for 12-18hrs, then put on your running shoes at some early hour of the morning and run for 10-16hrs. Hence one of the 'add ons' is learning to deal with sleep deprivation. I did several of these workouts, normally on a Friday night with my longest session being a 2 mile swim in the evening, followed by a bike ride until

dawn, doing a 9 mile loop around my house which I used as an aid station. I got several funny looks from the local police force on their night watch as I'd pass by lit up like a Christmas tree, again and again. Once the sun was up I ran 50km finishing at noon. I had covered around 160 miles, only another 121 miles to go on race day, it was virtually 'in the bag'. That was a joke FYI, but these all nighters, riding alone, were the best training sessions I think to prepare for race day and I went into the race confident that I would not need to take a nap.

Another recommended training session is to do a 4hr ride followed by a 2-4hr run and the next day race an Ironman. I wasn't keen to drop 750\$ on a training session and actually ended up only racing once



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before Oregon at Auburnman, a tough half iron up in the Sierra foothills. I finished in the top 20, 4th in my age group, an hour quicker than the previous year and without tapering. This gave me confidence that the plan was working and making me stronger.

20 weeks goes really fast when you are trying to pack all the training in, keep up with your social life and raise a one year old, Blake. Poor Blake thinks it is normal to be bounced around on the Los Gatos Creek Trail in a stroller on a daily

basis and is probably one of very few kids to have been pulled up all the big climbs in the San Francisco Bay area including the highest, Mt Hamilton, a 39 mile round trip with 5000ft of climbing, we took a picnic!

And so it was time to pack the car and make the journey up to Portland. The car was full to busting, I was racing twice the normal distance but geez, had 10 times the amount of gear. Tents, camping stoves, sleeping bags, chairs, a shelter, multiply changes of clothes, enough Gatorade to take a bath in and enough power bars and gels to get you to the moon. I was prepared and ready. We picked up my poor Mother in Law (Sue) on the way, who had just arrived in San Francisco from England to come and help out with Blake during the race and the birth of our second child some 9 days after the race. Oh, had I not mentioned that Claire, my wife, fell pregnant during my training and was now 2 weeks from her due date. After listening to me bang on about this race everyday for 10 months she was now adamant that she would see me cross the finish line. Have you ever heard of anyone checking out the nearest birthing units as part of their race day plan, we had it covered just in case.



We arrived in Portland and met the rest of my support team who had also travelled up from the Bay area, Marc, Michelle, Sophie (age 1), Geoff, Allana and Evelyn (age 2). I definitely had the biggest crew, 9 in total including 3 toddlers! Arriving 2 days before the race my first priority was to get on my bike and do a lap around the 10.6 mile loop to confirm the elevation gain. I had checked out the course on Strava and Map My Ride and had various figures from 300-700ft per lap, I measured it at around 660, ouch it was going to be a 14000ft day of climbing on the bike. The road was wide though with a good hard shoulder and well sheltered by trees for the most

part and everyone was on the same course, so it was what it was.

The next day it was the pre race meeting and it was nice to meet the other athletes after previously reading everyone's resumé on the race website. There was a massive amount of experience in the group, Double Irons, Triple Irons, Ultraman winners, 100 mile running races, Marathon Des Sable finishers, Badwater 135 and hundreds of Ironman's. With my 3 Ironman finishes, I was excited to be mixing with

this elite bunch. That evening I had 2 dinners, a beer and a glass of red, then got to work shaving my legs since I had just seen an article on it and was convinced that it would save me a few precious minutes, really Steve over a 30+hr race. But it amused my team and I went to bed happy, slept for a few hours before waking up for tea and toast.

## Race day(s)!

### The Swim



It was decided that Claire would take first shift and come down to the lake in the morning with me. The 4.8 mile swim was 8 laps and she was to wade into the lake every 2 to give me a gel and mouthful of Gatorade, this worked perfectly. My aim was to stay steady in the water and not push the pace, keeping my heart rate low and 'stay in the moment' as my friend Gemma had told me. However, I did find myself drifting off thinking about having to run 2 marathons the next day, I smiled to myself and got back into the moment. I was pleased to get out of the water, a minute under my predicted time at 2h29 and was in 4th. Looking at previous swim times in other events I thought I might have a chance of hitting the top 3 but was happy to be in 4th and moved into 3rd with a quick transition.

### The Bike



224 miles, 21 laps of Henry Hagg Lake, mmmh, my longest ride ever was under way. During an Ironman I come out of the swim in the top 25% and proceed to get overtaken by the stronger bikers, normally riding tri bikes, with long socks and pointy helmets. I was ready for this to happen and was not surprised when I dropped back into 4th and then was overtaken by a few riders that I had one lap over after the swim and presumed over the 200 miles they would catch me also. My plan on the bike was to keep my cadence high, 85-95 rpm and my heart rate at 70% of max around 130 bpm. This proved to be impossible with the amount of climbing involved. I remember being worried that I was working too hard, but did everything I could to keep my legs spinning and was very grateful for the triple cassette.

A routine became established each lap, coming into the aid area, shouting out what I wanted from my crew, turkey sandwiches, cheese quesadillas and bananas for the most part and then off again for another lap. I had asked them to count my caloric intake, thinking that later in the race I would struggle myself and wanted to make sure that I was eating at least 400 cals per hour. As the day went by, no one else seemed to catch me, and I actually moved back into 3rd after someone dropped out. My laps were consistently taking 41 minutes averaging 15.5mph. When it got dark, I made my longest pit stop to wipe the dead flies off my arms and face, put on a warmer jersey and bike lights. I also wore a head torch. My team ordered pizza for dinner and I set off on another lap with a big piece! My last few laps were nearing and Sue very excitedly whispered to me that I had moved into 2nd, wow I thought, but I still had a couple of marathons to run and was expecting the more experienced athletes to be hot on my heels on the run.

## The Run



Meeting Blake at the finish line

the 20 mile marker depending on how I was feeling. I was tired so switched to it and walked 5 mins then ran 20. This worked well, though there were 2 short hills that I also walked up.

Geoff and Mark were on the night shift and they realized that I was not eating enough and each lap they forced me to take something even though I really didn't want to eat any more. Good crew members are the key to a successful race and I will be eternally grateful to all of them.

After a few hours of getting more food in me and the light of day arriving I felt amazingly revitalized. Tim had moved further ahead of me, putting him around 2 miles in front. With a half marathon left I upped the pace to around 9 minute miles and slowly began to catch up, at 10 miles to go I was less than a lap behind. Could I make up this last mile, I dug deep and fueled on orange Gatorade for the last 90 minutes, I kept up the pace and took the lead. Your final lap is done in reverse so the other athletes still out on the course can congratulate you. After 39 laps we knew the course like the back of our hands but in reverse it was totally different and made it one of the hardest. I stumbled several times on the single track before emerging back into the aid area to be met by my training partner Blake and win the race in 27h 51mins.

## Post Race

The next day we celebrated with the other athletes and their teams, ate good food and drank probably a little too much, but we deserved it. After saying our goodbyes we decided our luck was running thin and made a hasty retreat back down to California, 7 days later Bethany was born, the Double Double was complete. I now have 2 training partners for rides with the trailer and runs with the stroller. Check out how we are getting on with our training at [www.ultra-daddy.com](http://www.ultra-daddy.com) or on Facebook [Ultra Daddy](#).

Around 11pm I got off the bike with my 1st ever double century in my legs and quickly changed into running clothes and was off into the darkness. The run course was a 1.3 mile loop, 40 laps to make the distance. The first half on mostly single track, off camber with roots, rocks and holes to negotiate. The route was really well marked though, using flour and glow sticks and the laps slowly started to tick over.

Early on I met Tim the race leader, he was a lap ahead of me and we ran together for the first 15-20 miles, chatting to help the miles go by. My plan was to start a walk/run strategy at around