

Tim Davis
July 23, 2015
Oregon Double Anvil Race Report

This was by far my longest and most challenging triathlon ever, and I am so lucky and blessed to have finished. I could not have done this without the support of my crew, our wonderful race directors Teri and Kirby, and all the other support staff and volunteers.

I got to the race site a little after 6am on Friday morning as I felt pretty good about having set up most of my transition area the day before after I checked in. I managed to complete the swim in 2:44 and was 4th out of the water. I predicted I would take between 2 ½ to 3 hrs for this. I took 2 gu's at the halfway of the swim and 2 gu's at the ¾ way mark from my wife Mariah.

This was the first race I ever used a crew for, and I wish I would have more adequately prepared them for everything that was going to happen, but we managed to get through it barely!

It was great meeting and racing with the legend Wayne Kurtz, as it was from reading his book, Beyond the Iron, that provided me with the knowledge and training plan to prepare for this event, which was my first time at this distance. I don't think I could have pulled this off without following Wayne's training plan, which I was able to do most off. I did miss a couple of the long bike rides, due to heavy work schedule this spring working 6 days a week. During the 6 months of my training plan, I completed a 100K race, half-ironman, 2 x 50 mile runs, one 100 mile run, a couple century plus rides and a Double Century ride as my long training day events building towards this. I like running more than cycling, as you can see.

Out of the water, I walked to the bathroom and grabbed my change of clothes in a bag I left right beside the bathroom. I forgot to stash lube in my bag, but Rick van Tuyl who was just a minute ahead of me out of the water was in the bathroom and let me borrow his. My T1 time was about 15 minutes. I was off on the bike by about 10 am exactly.

I refilled my Speedfil every 2 laps on the bike for water and water mixed with CarboPro. I averaged 45-55 minutes on the 10.68 mile loop each lap, except when I took more time at my aid station transition area getting food or other necessary items. I continued to take my electrolyte salt tablet every 2 hrs as I planned, because I have experienced excess cramping and other bothersome issues from taking too much salt tablets in previous races.

I was doing well till it got dark, when I first contemplated taking a 20 minute rest on the air mattress in the tent set up for my crew, which consisted of my wife Mariah and my 2 teen age sons Julian and Gabriel. My poor wife was a super crew, as she was doing the lion's share of the work keeping me fueled and stuff and also tending to our 3 year old daughter Isabel.

I thought my crew had left to go to the hotel for night around 7 pm, so I was surprised to see my wife at my station at 11 pm with a surprise new member of my crew, Sam Goldberg, who is one of my best friends and running partners. She picked him up from the airport that evening and brought him straight to the race to crew me thru the night. We had a promise that if she crewed me to a successful finish, then I would not have to come back and try to do another Double again. The plan was to do this once, and be "one and done"!

Riding through the night was very spiritual, I only really saw people coming thru the aid area, as myself and the other 7 athletes still at it were really spread out on the course. I remember one lap around 2 am where both my lights kept going out, and I was riding in the dark for much of that lap which was very scary as there are no street lights around the lake. Anyway, I came in from that lap and Jean Ho, Eric, and some other great helpers got me fixed up with new lights and a reflective vest which I forgot to bring.

I had thought I was going to be off the bike between 12 – 2 a.m., but I didn't finish till about 5:45 a.m., as I am a very slow cyclist. It took me about 19 hours and 48 minutes to finish the whole bike, which was by far the slowest bike split as only one other rider took a little over 19 hrs, and the fastest bikers did it in 16 hrs, which was 4 hrs ahead of me and I was very frustrated by this, as I couldn't wait to get to my favorite discipline – the run, and I wanted to get well into it before it started to get hot.

Unfortunately, I was only able to get a few miles in the run, before the heat kicked in and started kicking my butt. I was fortunate to have great people in our ultra family loan me a hat and I made much use of the microfiber cloth towel (also called the fancy name Ascots by Teresa Wymetalek) provided us by Kirby. I had to dip these in the ice buckets at the aid station and the turnaround for the run all day.

Into the late morning and afternoon, I was feeling very faint and dizzy from 100 degree heat. My wife used her long sleeve shirt as an ice pack for me, and stuffed ice in each sleeve and tied them off and then tucked them over my shoulders and chest so the ice could slowly melt and drip and keep my torso cool. This was a great trick that I would have never thought of, and she got the idea from another athlete, Mark Blore (legacy Oregon Double Anvil athlete!) who does the same trick with panty hose. The run crawled to mostly walking during the intense heat of the day, and by the time I had completed the first marathon of the run, it had taken me 8hrs and 15 minutes.

And it was 2:15pm!!! At this point, I began crying because I believed there was no way that I could run the second marathon of the run faster than the first, and this is what I would have to do to finish before the time cutoff at 10pm. What proceeded to happen was really a miracle, thanks to God, the Race Directors, crew, and all the volunteers. Since I was in last place, Kirby and Teri allowed me to have pacers the rest of the way.

At first, my friend Sam Goldberg, paced me for several laps, but I was getting more and more hopeless and negative and wanting to quit, because I was convinced I wouldn't make the time cutoff anyway, so what was the point. A DNF is a DNF when you don't make time cut off either. At the halfway mark of the run, I was sitting at my aid station defeated and ready to quit and I was in a very dark place in my head, when Teri came over to me and told me I could finish in time, only if I didn't stop to take anymore sit-down breaks for the rest of the way.

So that's what I did. I dug down deep and listened to my pacers the rest of the way. I still complained a lot. After things weren't getting better with Sam as my pacer, Jean Ho took over for several laps and she saved my ass. Then, Eric paced me for some laps and pushed me great. Then, Jeff paced me. Jean, Eric, and Jeff were angels for me – they were so great, helping keep me cool, reminding me to drink lots of fluids and eat, and take salt tabs every hour for the hot run. My wife and kids kept telling me I could do it. It started to cool down, and I started to average 20 minute laps around our 1.3 mile loop.

I was getting a second wind now. I had a joke with my wife that every time I wanted to quit, her and the kids were supposed to just tell me to take another lap! And I kept taking more laps! It was getting down to the wire, even each of my sons took a couple of laps with me and they don't like running, they are competitive swimmers, but not runners. That was great, because I didn't want them to see me be a quitter.

At this point, Teri, my wife, and several other people were doing calculations at the timing table, trying to figure out what I would need to finish before the 10 p.m. cut off. It came down to having to do the last 3 laps in 15 minutes or less, so I couldn't afford to walk the uphill parts at all anymore. I hustled and was pushed by Eric and Jeff. Then my oldest son and friend Sam and Jeff all ran the last lap with me and I really picked up the pace. Early in that lap, I finally knew I was going to make it.

I was in delirium on and off throughout the day, and said a lot of stupid funny things. One thing I remember saying in the last lap to my good friend Sam (we are both from LA and are huge Laker fans) – I said "It's gonna be a Kobe Bryant buzzer beater!" and he said Black Mamba baby. My last lap was my fastest lap of the day (12:51 and Kirby told me he was pretty sure it was the fastest of all the runners), and I sprinted to the finish line and finished with 7 minutes to spare!

Everybody could relax and breathe now, while I was completely out of breath and more exhausted than I have ever been in my life, but it was all worth it. I remember striking the Anvil twice and giving a short stupid speech; I only remember thanking everyone and talking about how this was my first DFL (did finish last) in a race, but it was also the best finish I ever had, which does seem kind of ironic, oh well.

All I know now is that I am so happy to be part of this ultra family, and I look forward to coming back and volunteering next year and keeping my promise of helping crew Jeff, so I can watch others achieve this amazing victory of finishing the Oregon Double Anvil – the toughest Double Anvil in the world and being Anvilized!!!

As Kirby says it, the Anvilization of America!!!

