



Hawaii Ironman
October 16, 2004
Kona, Hawaii

By Megan Gridley.

2.4 mile swim
112 mile bike
26.2 mile run

OK, so I am not a total rookie having completed two previous Ironmans, but on October 16th I sure felt like I was. After a year of anticipation, excitement and dedication, my fears of the Hawaii Ironman resolved or better yet were etched into my body throughout the 11 hour and 50 minute day. And what a day it was!!

The week before the race was like nothing I had ever seen or imagined before. Each morning I would gaze off the balcony of the condo onto Alii drive only to find what looked like a 5k road race. The athletes were not just "jogging" they were running, and running really fast too. I thought we were supposed to taper?? Anyway, the entire week before the race was an event in itself with all the fun free swag at the expo, parades, and running races with people in their underwear! Thankfully, I tried not to get too wrapped up in the fun and actually felt pretty rested on race day.

Which brings me to THAT day... at 6:45am I said my goodbyes and see ya later to my family and friends (my brother, experiencing his first triathlon EVER). I was herded with the rest of the anxious athletes through the archway to the swim start only to find myself not quite sure where the first buoy actually was. I was not too worried because it was indeed a beautiful morning! and it was going to be a great day...I was actually going to race (participate) in the Hawaii Ironman!

The swim conditions were not bad, yet for some reason as I tried to keep my line I kind of ended up drifting a bit (aka Magellan moments as Cutti likes to call them) SO I am pretty sure I didn't take the most direct route on the swim, but exited in one piece with no black eyes or scratches.

At this point, I was still in awe that I was actually doing the race. I hopped on my bike and was off. The fans were amazing and I was having fun. And then I was on Queen K...still having fun and staying within my "plan" Then all of a sudden I felt like I biked into a wall..I was not going anywhere..well almost, about 6mph to be exact. umm "I guess this must be that headwind everyone talks about" No big deal..everyone is in the same boat...except I think a couple of times the wind made me go airborne, unfortunately sideways and not forwards. I figured at the time I just needed to get to Hawaii and then things would be better...oh no..it was still windy on the way back too and



the sun's beaming rays only became more powerful sucking the energy out of my body and mentally, I did not think the wind was so fun anymore. Needless to say Queen K and I had a long bonding moment while biking lasting about 6 hours 45 minutes!! Perhaps a bit longer than I felt I needed to spend with her:) but at least we got The introduction out of the way, in case I have the opportunity again to hang out with her.

I tried to stay positive, however, for the first time ever in a race, I got off the bike and questioned whether or not I was going to be able to finish.. and that was my only true goal of the day, to finish. My legs were cramping, I was not sweating any more (not a good sign) and I had goosebumps in 90 degree weather and my tummy was in schambles. But I manage to put on my little running shoes and forced my body to prove what it might have left. Once I got through the first half of the marathon With about 8 potty stops..the legs kicked into gear and just went. I got to the energy lab right around sunset, perhaps the most beautiful moment of the day not only from the sheer beauty of the sun disappearing into the ocean, but moreover, I knew I was going to finish!

With 10 minutes to spare to the 12hr mark, I crossed the finish line elated having completed for the first time the Hawaii Ironman!! I hope I have the opportunity again, but if not, it was truly an amazing experience, just as much as the journey to get there. And many thanks to all you who provided a wheel for me to sit behind and positive words of encouragement throughout all those long, intense training days those days

So when do we start again..???

cheers!
megan:)