

Mal #425 First Ironman (Busso 07)

I decided to take up the ironman challenge after competing as a team in 2006 where after finishing the bike I felt that id only done part of the job. I decided if I was going to attempt the Ironman I wasn't going in half cocked and after chatting to a few people I called Andrew budge to organize a program which would get me Ironman ready. Having moved from Busselton to Perth in the last year i knew the course and i was keen to head home for the training runs where possible.

With program organized the next issue was a bike, I had two road bikes but was after a triathlon bike and some race wheels. The Scott Plasma team edition, full Duraace and Zipp 606's were purchased. To complete the training schedule I needed to determine my heartrate zones, through budgie we organized the max heartrate testing for cycling and running. All that was left to do was begin the 21 week program and enter the race.

The training involved some early morning starts to get it all complete before work some as early as 3.30 with an attempt to catch up with my cycling mates before work for the obligatory coffee to finish. I also had to join a swimming group to obtain some technique in my swimming, currently I could swim ok but resembled more of a bulldozer than a swimmer. Joining the guys and girls down at the Wesley college pool was one of the best moves i made as I slowly progressed from the slow lane to the middle lane then to the fast lane. I think my progression to the fast lane at times just gave the fast guys confidence as I certainly made them look good. Running had been a part of my life prior to my 3 knee operations from hockey injuries so I knew I could get back to form here with some training.

Training went well with plenty of hills for bike power, solo trips down the freeway on the bike, swimming squad sessions and long runs. The long runs also helped drop a few kg's and that in turn helped on all the other legs. Most of my training was done on my own but when I had others join, many of them thought I was doing too much which made me confident that I'd be able to get through the Ironman. As training progressed my swimming improved remarkably, bike riding seemed to get easier to the point where I felt I was only starting to warm up after 2 hours and my running speed was picking up and after 10 weeks I found I was averaging 40 secs per k faster than when I had started.

The best training day was fathers day, My wife was 9 months pregnant (with our first) and we were waiting for the bundle of joy to arrive to no avail so I headed out on my 5hr bike ride with mobile phone. Checked the phone regularly with no news. Had ridden fairly well and came across Wardo anther mate training for the ironman with about 10k to go (Wardo broke a collarbone 7 weeks out from IM and never made it, pretty sad after his training). After a quick chat we parted ways. 2k from home my tyre exploded there was a gash in my sidewall so I called my wife to pick me up as if I changed it I'd have to do it again at home as the tyre was stuffed. When the wife picked me up about 11am she had a contraction, we were both pretty excited by this. We went home had lunch then at 1pm her waters broke. We called the hospital, wife showered and we arrived there at 1.30. Nurse seemed non plussed and commented I may make fathers day. 10 mins later the

nurse was saying I'll be a father within the hour, a call was made to the doctor and he was given the hurry up and at 3pm the baby was born. All natural baby girl, too quick for drugs and the name of Sydney was decided. What a day, 150k on the bike in the morning, Baby in the arvo so I took the evening off to text the world of the new arrival.

The initial goal of 12 hours was looking easy and I started to dream of 11. In one of my big weekends I rode down to Bunbury on the Saturday and completed the Olympic distance event the next day to see how I was travelling. With the 175k ride Saturday I thought I'd be a bit jaded on Sunday but kept a 35kph avg on the bike and finished with a 45 min 10k which really picked up my confidence as I seemed to be going faster all day when I thought I should be slowing down.

Plenty of massages and chiro visits kept me relatively injury free and raring to go. The niggles when tapering and trying to believe in my training were hard to control over the last two weeks.

Race day

Didn't sleep much and got up at 3am for a couple of slices of toast, returned to bed for 45 mins before getting up for more toast and some Gatorade. I knew my bike and nutrition wouldn't take long to set up but wanted to get down to transition and get the job done. We drove down there and checked in at about 4.45 then set the bike up. A couple of quick trips to the porta loos to get the nervous pee taken care of, then on with the wetty. Wandering around transition I saw the Busso crew mingling so I wandered over and words of encouragement were exchanged

SWIM

Wandering over to the start felt nervous but ready, we all had a laugh at the two people dressed as koala's (onya Eloise). The pro's were off before we realized so down to the water we went. I was seeded with an orange cap and it seemed like half the others were as well. The start is a bit of a blur but I remember a cannon and then going. A few kicks to the body, slowing behind some people who must of thought they were faster than they were before I found some open water. Pool swimming makes on lazy as you can follow the black line, my navigational skills need a bit of work but I eventually found some straight swimmers and used them for guidance. I was out the end of the jetty before I knew it which was funny as id lived here for 30 years as a kid but never swam around it only fished off it. The memories of catching a shark off here 2 years back entered my head but he had been quite tasty, much as I may seem to him but he inhabited my freezer for a couple of months and is long gone now. Heading back in I tried to find my own space only to receive a kick to the head. Stopped to pull goggles out as they were trying to extract my eyeball, white caps all around so I thought I was going ok, enough of that I headed left and found open water to swim alone most of the way back in. Round the big yellow buoy then angle across to the line of yellow boys and follow. As I was 25 yards from the last buoy some dude swam at a 45 degree to me straight over my legs, another glance in front and I was heading straight for the final buoy, who knows where he was going. Hitting the beach and standing up was great as the swim was my weakest leg and if you think about a triathlon there are 3 legs, one now complete, I wasn't really 1/3 finished though. Looking at the clock I was a little pissed as it read 1.22, I thought I'd

gone better than that and now thought I had a 10 min downfall to make up. It was only when the dude on the microphone called out that the guys are coming through in 1.07 which is pretty good for an age grouper that I realized there was a 15min addition from the pro's on the clock, feeling better now. Picked up my bag and ran into transition.

I was pretty slow through T1 but was trying to ensure I got everything, even copped a spray from Mick Bray one of the Busso guys as he ran out. This fired me up a little and ensured I was going to head out on the bike with a target in mind which is not the idea in a 10hr plus event. All the gear on, now to find my bike, bike found now onto the course.



BIKE

Out on the bike leg I knew here was my strongest section, questioning how hard to go and still leave some for the marathon. Goal pace was 80% max heart rate which for me was 145, looked down and HR was at 170, I blamed this on the euphoria of the event and just kept going. Settled in to a rhythm and kept overtaking people eventually catching Mick at the Wonnerup bridge on the way out of town (otherwise known as the only hill on the course) and returned the abuse given earlier, smiles were exchanged. Through aide station 1 I heard encouragement for Mick from the crowd and knew he was on my tail, Mick took me back as we turned onto Tuart drive and I settled into a position 7m back as we were doing 36kph which I was happy with at this early stage. The pace slowed and we exchanged pleasantries as I passed and he said "how bout we do this all day" I said "fine by me" and then upped the pace back to 36. Mick was only ever seen going the other way from here on but a grin was always shared. I had a cheer squad at the roundabout in the tuart forrest as they could see me 3 times per lap here and their encouragement was great. I set about keeping a steady pace to last the distance, my training had me thinking of anywhere around the 33avg maybe better, first lap was a 34.7 avg. Nutrition was going well with a gels and some perpetuem on the menu with a Gatorade and saltstick tablets for electrolytes. Feeling good I went through the motions on lap two with a few friends on the course Kym, Andy, Family and Paul happy to hand out advice. The speedo was still averaging 34.5 after lap two which had seen me most of the way on my own picking

the riders off one by one. Nutrition good and picked up a water to keep the fluids up. Feeling good I was torn between smashing lap three or continuing the same, thinking of the run to come I controlled myself, chasing a few down and giving shaggy (another busso boy) some encouragement. Shaggy and I had had a few chats about where we would see each other, wondering if I could get a lap up on him in the run somewhere. Shaggy was at the Wonnerup bridge on the way back of lap two and me the way out in lap 3 so I figured I had a good 20k on him. Should be able to get him on my last run lap if I don't blow up. The things you do to stop the mind thinking of the daunting task at hand. Out the end of the tuart forrest I picked up what was expected to be my last water to find it had less than 1/3 water, now needed another with 20k to go. The last lap was pretty uneventfull and again on my own other than some dude on an azzuri and I kept passing each other, he seemed to be stretching a lot and this encouraged me to get out of the seat each corner to stretch ready for the run. Off the bike according to my speedo in 5.09.28 and a 34.5 avg, the official time is 5.14 looks like T1 was tea and bickies.

T2

Jogged on in and took off my helmet, gloves etc and on with my running gear. Out the door and proceeded to drop a gel bottle. Picked it up and my old man told me it had been 6.25 since the start (pre race instruction) and I set my watch going now the brain ticks over and I'm sure I can do a marathon in under 4.5 hrs to break 11 hrs but my training and the way I was feeling I didn't think a 3.35 would be on the cards so the goal turned to running and seeing what eventuated.



RUN

The run felt horrible to start and I ejected my gel bottle as I went onto the road after the equinox, looking over my shoulder I saw it skid under the railing and thought that I was glad I put some safety stuff in special needs. Feeling horrible I looked at my watch to see I was travelling at 4.30 k's so feeling bad and travelling bad were different things. The guy in front of me ducked into the bushes just prior to the yacht club for a pee, what a great idea and followed suit 30m further up the track (been holding since end lap 2 on the bike). This was the one and only pee for the day, how funny is it that I calculated that I put in 1.5L water on the bike, 1.25l Perpetuem, 750ml Gatorade then about 1.5l coke and 2l water on the run for a total of 7L of fluid not counting the ocean water swallowed all for 1 pee.

The goal of keeping the feet moving and setting mini targets was keeping the run on

track. Feelin horrible early I remembered the jelly beans I'd grabbed from my bike and put in my tri top pockets, mmmm nice, then I hit the coke at aide station at 6km hoping that would help. Help it did each time I had coke it sent me flying out towards the next station, just runnin out as I hit the next one. I felt like Ben Cousins coke and ice albeit in a different variety, coca cola and water. First was to run lap 1, on the way out and back had the support of quite a few yacht club members at the watering station at the yacht club as I used to be a member here and a few familiar faces at the equinox station next to which my cheer squad had set up camp. All cheering was keeping the head up at this point, A friend at 10k asked how I was going and my reply was rather negative but I pushed on. Lap 1 was 1.12 happy with that after how I was feeling, got scrunchie number 1 now to set the goal to run out to the end, get to the 20k point. Pushed again on the way out watching the heart rate, sitting around 145 to 150 but goal was 155 just couldn't get it there thought best to keep it steady as not to explode. Picked up my lost gel container on way out, thanks to everyone else for not picking up, nutrition well and truly on track. Put in gel before yacht club aide station and washed down. Once out the end the coal was reassessed to run the complete lap, was still unsure if I'd be able to run a marathon. Came back fairly good and picked up scrunchie 2. Lap time of 1.17. Ok now for the end lap, lets see if I can do it. Caught my mate shaggy as we came through the equinox carpark and onto the road went to pinch him on the arm for a little pick me up but the sunburn cream was lathered on too much, we exchanged words of encouragement before I continued on. As I crossed the bridge the stereo was blaring at a house with the Living ends "who's going to save us" playing, I was beginning to think the same thing but knowing it was the last lap gave me confidence. Halfway out lap three I cam across another competitor, Guy who was here trying to better last years time. We chatted and motivated each other driving on and on passing others who were struggling and had been reduced to a slow jog or walk. The extra push to run to the next aid station drink and then get running again I'm sure drove us both to better times. I asked Guy at one stage how we were going and if we were going to break 10.30 and his reply of "we'll smash that and if we keep moving we'll break 10.15 " drove us on. Past my family for the last time and an old sailing mate Mozzie had cut up an old sail and attached it to a tree with words of encouragement on it. I said "you've wrecked a good sail" and he replied "save your breath you will need it" and on we went. Guy had a time to beat of 10.13 as a friend had this record and upped the pace with 1.5 k's to go and I told him I'd see him at the finish. Guy made his goal. I fuelled up at the last aide station knowing there was only a k to go and set about catching a few more. Just before entering the finish shoot I overtook a few more to try to get ahead for a good photo. This speed increase got the legs going and they didn't stop finally finishing in 10.13.42. The goal of 12 well and truly destroyed, 11 was shattered too. What a joy to finish. Pretty happy with my first ironman attempt. The question is where to now?

Now for the thanks, thanks to Budgie, The SRG cycling crew, Paul my chiro, Sheldon my massage dude, friends for encouragement and my Family. Special thanks must go to my wife Narelle and daughter Sydney who supported me through this ordeal and helped me achieve my goals.