

A podium in Kona 07

This was my ninth Hawaii and sixth podium. I cannot grumble!

I didn't quite get the result I was hoping for this year however being rewarded with a second place in my age group at the World Championships does allow me to close my season on a moderate high.



I would be lying if I said I wasn't disappointed but it is not always about the race but the journey. And for me, 2007 has been a very special year.

Training in Boulder, Colorado under my new coach, Mitch Gold, competing at Ironman Brazil earlier in the year and several great races in the US and training with minimal work/life stress has been a very enjoyable experience. A year I will treasure. If life ever presents itself where you can take time out from the rat race, I say go for it!!

The World Champion title will be there next year for the taking and I intend to return in 2008 to have another shot at the age group title or at least have a better performance than this year.

For Kona 07 I was in great shape, injury free and relaxed (perhaps a little too relaxed). But as most of us triathletes know, race day brings the unexpected and from time to time the race unfolds quite differently from our original desired result.



For me it started from the swim, instead of "set and forget" I let my swim time unsettle my focus. I am use to racing from the back but this year I got it in my head that I could not afford to give one of my competitors, Juliana Nievergelt, such a lead (22 minutes). My swim time simply did not reflect the improvements I had gained over the past few months and I was gutted when I exited the water. As in past years there was a strong current on the way back. I just seem to suck swimming in a current!

On to the bike I felt good, being very conscious to control my power output and to keep my heart rate low.

It is always my plan to hold back on the bike and come home strong. I felt strong the entire way, just towards the end, the last 20k or so, I seemed to fade. Juliana got another 10 minutes. She rode 5:35 and I rode 5:45. So at T2 she had a tad over 30 minutes on me.



For the first part of the marathon, I settled into my pace and concentrated on hydrating and eating. My aim was to hold back at least until St Peters Church and then depending on how I felt and my heart rate I would up the pace another notch. I took two girls in my age group once I turned around at St Peters and knew there was only one competitor remaining, Juliana Nievergelt. With over 30 minutes on me I resigned myself to the fact that I would have to settle for second place.

However, last year Lydia Delis-Schlosser had a 30 minute lead but I caught her with 6k to go. Why was this year different? Well for one I knew Juliana could run around 3:50 and the only way I would catch her was if she blew or I ran a 3:15 and that wasn't going to happen.

I was very confident going into Hawaii thinking I could pull off a sub 3:30 marathon but I ended up running the slowest I have run in an Ironman for some time. I felt fatigued and disheartened because I did not believe that I could catch her. I gave up far too early!

In my defense, I did have some stomach issues on the run. I started vomiting out on the Queen K to the Energy Lab and after that it was difficult to keep up the calorie intake which meant for a slow run time because of lack of energy. I walked at almost every aid station but still ended up with a run time of 3:39.

This year I also found the race to be extremely hot on the run course. We seemed to have absolutely no cloud cover this year. Hawaii is always hot but for some reason this year I felt the rays more than usual.

However, despite my performance I am very motivated to qualify for Kona 2008. I will not be leaving the Big Island with that performance!

My next challenge will be living in Boulder for the winter! However, in my off season I am looking forward to participating in some other activities such as skiing, snow-shoeing, mountain biking and the like. I plan to race at Coeur d'Alene in Idaho in June to qualify for Kona 08. Be happy and train safe!



After an hour or so in the Med tent and an IV, I look and feel better!