

IRONMAN COZUMEL 2010 RACE REPORT

(Very long and potentially boring depending on your opinion)



PREAMBLE:

First of all you need a race report disclaimer from me. This was my first Ironman and I did not break any land speed records. I started doing Duathlons in 2003 and did my first Sprint TRI in 2008. I have not done any ½ Iron distance races either. I have done ½ marathons but no marathons yet. If you are looking for a bunch of sage advice from an experienced Ironman competitor stop reading and go look elsewhere. Also, if you don't want to read about any of my preparation activities and just want to read about my race experience than skip to the Race Week section.

Linda and I also decided to use the race as a way to raise some money for the Humane Society of Cozumel Island (<http://humanecozumel.org/>). We asked friends and family to support our efforts through monetary donations to the shelter. In the end we raised about \$ 1000 US for the shelter and they were very appreciative of our efforts. If you donated to this effort thank you very much.

RACE PREPARATION:

This adventure started back in November 2009 when other members of the Nacho Average Triathlon Club (<http://www.nachoaverage.ca/>) kept filling up my inbox until I signed up for the Cozumel race. I thought peer pressure didn't work once you were out of high school but I guess that is not correct. Aside from the crazy entry fee it wasn't that hard to do this part of the event. I was now competitor number 470 and sat there wondering how stupid a decision I had just made.

I like to keep track of things so I made myself a training log in Excel to keep track of all my workouts. I also decided to keep track of my weight not because I was overweight but just out of curiosity. I started to seriously keep track of things starting January 11, 2010. My starting weight on this date was 187 lbs. (I do everything else in metric but for some reason I always weigh myself in pounds).

Our club has the benefit of having a multiple Ironman finisher to provide advice to all of us. David is the owner of our local triathlon store (<http://www.ontariotrysport.com/>) and did stir up the idea of all of us going to Cozumel. So he is both a benefit and a curse (depending on your perspective). [We still like you David].

Training from January to March was fairly relaxed for the most part (3-6 hours per week). Did a couple of running workouts per week, a couple of spin workouts each week, lots of cross country skiing, and swimming when possible. I know skiing is not race specific but it is a great workout and when you live in a colder environment why not take advantage of this activity. We don't have a pool in our community so pool workouts during poor winter driving conditions were somewhat sporadic. A pool workout for us involves driving for 1 hour to an adjacent community, swim for 1 hour and drive home for 1 hour. If you live in a community with a pool and complain about swim workouts – stop it.

Once late March came around I was finally able to get out for some bike rides. Nothing too crazy just some 45-90 minute rides, some followed by short runs. The skiing came to an abrupt end so I started to pick up the running a little more. Better driving conditions also allowed a couple of swim workouts per week. [Workout time per week 4-8 hours - weight 186 lbs.].

April and May brought more swim workouts at the pool along with more outdoor rides. Did one slow 3 hour ride in early April that felt great. My first open water swim of the year was May 26th with a wetsuit. The water was just warm enough to not be too uncomfortable. Our club did the 100 km Spin-The-Lakes cycling tour on May 30th and I felt pretty good. [Workout time per week 6-10 hours- weight 182 lbs].

June brought a good mix of swim, bike and run workouts. I started to do run interval workouts once per week with our group, these were coordinated by David. Most of these were 1.6 km repeats. In addition our club started our weekly cycle/run time trial workouts. One swim workout per week was a coached session in Huntsville hosted by our favourite triathlon swim coach Jane. The rest of my swim workouts were in the open water. I also made a conscious decision to not wear my wetsuit the rest of the year since Cozumel was a non-wetsuit swim. [Workout time per week 6-10 hours - weight 177 lbs.].

July brought an increase in volume in all the disciplines. The first test of fitness was our annual club Nachoman event. This is a 1 km swim, 75 km ride and about a 10km run. We then follow this with a Beer Mile (<http://www.beermile.com/faq.beer>). It takes a somewhat *elite* athlete to perform well in a Beer Mile after a triathlon. We have some members who are definitely of an *elite* stature when it comes to this event.

My wife Linda helped me a lot with my open water swimming – a skill I still need to work on (more to come on that later). She paced Peter and I through a 4 km open water swim (no wetsuits) which was a nice psychological barrier to get over. I did the Huntsville Long-Course Triathlon race at the end of July (2 km swim, 55 km bike, 13 km run). I did the swim without a wetsuit and there was probably only 10 of us who did this – felt a little strange. I was happy with my swim, 56 minutes in fresh water. [Workout time per week 10-12 hours – weight 175 lbs.].

August brought more of the same (I must have lost a few readers by now). Peter and I did a 180 km ride in early August to see our time, assess our ride fitness and for the psychological benefit. We rode together all day but did not draft off each other and managed to do the ride in 6 hours and 20 minutes. We were both happy with this time. I didn't really expect to see this time in Cozumel and I was correct at least for me. Did the Parry Sound Bobby Orr Sprint TRI mid-August (got to support those local races) and had fun – finished 3rd in my age group. [Workout time per week 10-15 hours - weight 171 lbs.].

September training continued with a similar volume to July and August. Our Cozumel group decided to do a training ½ Iron distance race (2.2 km swim, 92 km ride, 21 km run). We picked Sept 5th as the date. It was f--- cold that morning and it took awhile for the group to get in the water. Once we did though the sun came out and the day started to warm up. David and Linda provided support on the bike and run course which was great. (David did Ironman Canada in late August so he didn't need this training day). I had a good day with a 6 hour and 44 minute race time (first half ever). The weather turned cool and our outdoor swim sessions came to a grinding halt – this is one problem with living here and training for a November race. [Workout time per week 10-15 hours - weight 170 lbs.].

October cooperated with us for the most part and allowed some good outdoor weather for riding. Bumped up the volumes again which was somewhat of a time crunch with

work and home. Linda didn't complain once though. Got in a couple more 5 hour + rides as well as a 21 km run near the end of the month. [Workout time per week 13-16 hours - weight 170 lbs.].

November and the taper was in sight. Tim, Chris and I did our last long run together on November 6th. We did 28 km at a slow 7 min/km pace. I was tired but not too sore the next day so happy. The next day we did a 4 hour sufferfest on our bike trainers at David's store. He cranked the heat up to 30+`C to give us some heat training. The jury is out with a number of individuals in our training group as to the benefit of this workout – I lean towards the beneficial side. I seem to recall that there was some foul language. On November 21st we packed all the bikes for Cozumel. [Workout time per week: Nov. Week 1 - 14 hours, Nov. Week 2 - 7 hours, Nov. Week 3 - 4 hours - weight 169 lbs.].

GETTING THERE:

Our Parry Sound, Ontario group (David, Peter, Chris, Tim, Linda and myself) decided to stay in Toronto the night before our flight to avoid the potential crazy winter driving conditions that can occur this time of year. We had a nice dinner at a Moxies restaurant near the airport. Some people may have ``hydrated`` a little too much but hey, this is an Ironman.

We got a shuttle to the airport the next morning and got to the airport just after 7 a.m. for our 10 a.m. flight. We made our way to the WestJet counter to check-in our luggage and bikes. WestJet advertises a bike policy on their website that says each passenger is allowed to bring a bike. The bike will be subject to oversize fees (\$50) and overweight fees (\$50). My case was oversize and 2 lbs overweight so \$100 right – no! They charged me \$150 for my bike. Arguing at the counter doesn't do any good when you want your bike to go to Cozumel. Our group had one case with two bikes that paid this same price. We talked to others later that only paid \$50 and some that didn't pay any fee. What is the point of having a policy if it is actually a crap shoot as to what you will pay. Note: On the return flight from Cozumel everyone paid \$50. Many of the bikes were not even weighed. Next time we should just say it is a display case for a meeting. Telling them it is a bike certainly doesn't seem to get careful handling since on both the flight down and back we witnessed bike boxes being dropped and tossed around.

We headed through security which went fairly smoothly considering all the horror stories you hear about air travel these days. I think everyone picked the body scan

option which was no sweat and I am not glowing. We met up with Tom, Wendy and their girls in the waiting area and had breakfast together. Peter managed to lose his carry-on bag but finally tracked it down back at security – first international incident avoided.



Once everyone was on the plane we started to notice a lot of bike boxes still sitting on the tarmac. The flight attendant made an announcement that they could not fit 18 bike boxes on the flight! I am not sure she realized that she was taking her life in her hands. Up until this point my stress level had been pretty low but this must have raised my blood pressure considerably. Many of us on this flight had told WestJet when we booked our tickets that many, many, many, many people on this flight would have bikes with them – they told us no problem, they didn't need to know about bikes. They need their f----- heads examined. Anyway a riot did not break out but there were a lot of stressed out triathletes fuming. It turned out that only 1 person (not me, however I didn't find out until we landed) in our group didn't get their bike on the flight. WestJet said they would have someone in Cozumel to deal with everyone who was missing a bike. Big surprise but this turned out to not be true. When we landed people missing bikes (including Peter) spent about an hour in line trying to deal with, primarily, Spanish speaking people at the airport in order to get a tracking number for their bikes. This is no slight to the people at the Cozumel airport but WestJet dropped the ball on this one.

The rest of us waited outside drinking beer at the bar setup by the airport exit doors – only in Mexico eh! We then caught a cab to our Condo – El Cantil. We also met up with Wendy our other Condo mate.

The Condo turned out to be quite nice (kudos to Chris for getting something nice) and was literally 100 metres from the finish line. This would turn out to be mucho appreciated by all after the race. My wife Linda was diving for the first three days so she had to meet with the dive company. The rest of us decided to head to the Mega Store for grocery shopping. Most of the food in Mexico was quite cheap by our standards and with our money. We were able to eat quite cheaply for the entire week.

One advantage of being in a Condo is that you can control what goes in your body before the race. All of us managed to get to race day without any stomach issues. It was nice to be done with the travelling and try and relax.



RACE WEEK:

Race week went pretty smoothly.

Wednesday

The rest of Wednesday was mostly spent being lazy. We did hop into the ocean for a short swim. Having been swimming in fresh water without a wetsuit all year I was quite happy when I hit the salt water. This made me much less apprehensive about the swim leg – Chris was relieved as well. Everyone managed to behave themselves however there was a short visit to Senor Frogs (<http://www.senorfrogs.com/cozumel/index.htm>) for some refreshments.

Thursday

We put all the bikes together on Thursday with Davids help. It is nice to have a bike mechanic with you when travelling to a race. Peter's bike showed late on Thursday so he didn't have to stress for too long. Peter was a much happier camper once he got to hug his bike. We went to race registration and this process went quite smoothly – good organization. We also hit the Race Expo and spent way too much for Ironman souvenirs. What the f----- is with \$16 coffee mugs!?! We found the shop selling the CO2 canisters and stocked up. No we were not the a----- that purchased 10 each, I mean what are you going to do with 10 CO2 cartridges in a week?

Friday

We skipped the swim training session at CHANKANAAB park (<http://www.cozumelparks.com/>) and just did our own swim in front of our condo. Some of us walked around town a bit to see the sights. Most of us went for a short bike ride and a short run to stretch our legs. The weather seemed to be warming up. We all attended the pre-race meeting and this was mostly a waste of time. Everything was in the Athlete Guide and some of the answers they gave conflicted with what was in the guide anyway – do better next year people. One of the audience questions was kind of

amusing. One athlete asked about the contents of Gatorade (<http://www.gatorade.com/default.aspx#product?s=gatorade-g>) since they didn't sell it in the country where they live.

If you are doing an Ironman race, and practicing your nutrition plan during training, wouldn't you do a little internet research on what is being served at aid stations

during the race, before you show up at the race? Just sayin'. We all prepared our bike and run gear bags when we got back to the condo – there is a lot of crap to organize for a race like this. Note to self, put sunscreen in all bags since just because they say there will be sunscreen at transition and aid stations does not mean it will be there.



The pasta dinner that evening was ok and the food was not too bad. They ran down the stats about numbers of athletes from different countries – good showing from Canada. I think they intended the videos they showed to be inspirational. However, I think the many scenes of people collapsing and crawling at the Hawaii race just freaked lots of people out. Maybe I am the only one, but those mimes that were wondering around just creeped me out.

Saturday

Tom (also from Parry Sound) who was staying at a resort with his wife Wendy and their kids came over to the condo in the morning. We all went for a short swim. Once we relaxed a bit we all rode our bikes down to CHANKANAAB park (about 8-10 km) to check in our bikes. We showed up for 11 a.m. and were right at the front of the line. Got inside quick, had our bike number and stats recorded and headed in to find our spot in transition. Lots of room in transition and a number of sections where bike racks were setup. We put our bikes in our numbered spots and went to get body marked. This was quick since not many people were there yet. Checked out the swim venue a bit and then headed inside during a rain shower – the first one of the week. We walked back out to the entrance to catch a bus back to town. A long line had formed to get in while we were inside – good timing.

Tom headed back to his condo for the night and the rest of us worked on our bike and run special needs bags. I didn't put a lot of stuff in them just some extra gels, bars, and two extra bottles of eLoad for the bike.

We all sat down for a pasta dinner together and had a toast with some (less than primo) red wine (for three of us this was our first Ironman). Chris made some rockin' sauce to go with our pasta and garlic bread. We sat around after dinner talking and headed to bed around 9:30 p.m. But not before Tim made us listen to some music including a brilliant masterpiece with a chorus of "but I got high, but I got high" – it took half the bike course to get this out of my head. Thanx Tim.

RACE DAY:

No surprise that I didn't sleep that well but did manage some sleep before the 3-3:15 a.m. wake up time. For me, at 3 a.m., nothing makes any sense so I was glad that my stuff was organized the day before. I made myself some oatmeal and a bagel to eat. Have I mentioned yet that COFFEE is nature's perfect drink – enough said. I had trouble watching Wendy drink 3 Ensure drinks for breakfast – that would just make me sick. Just because she has completed 6 Ironman races doesn't mean she should subject the rest of us to that stuff [still like you Wendy]. For more on Wendy's crazy nutrition plan see her blog at: <http://www.wendystriathlonworld.blogspot.com/>

We left Linda at the condo (she would cab it down later to watch the swim) and piled into cabs for the ride to the swim start. We arrived just before 5 a.m. We put our special needs bags on the appropriate buses and then got in line – we were right at the front of the line. We only had to wait about 5-10 minutes before they opened the gates. I walked into the transition area and organized my bike nutrition. I ride with 3 bottles of eLoad and 1 bottle of water on my bike (I just use the water on the course). Also had a number of gels, lots of salt tablets, a Clif Bar and a couple of bags of GU Chomps (good thing since these would come into play later).

Nutrition (at the Condo):

1 bowl of oatmeal

1 banana

1 small bagel with butter and honey

2 cups of coffee

1/2 bottle of eLoad

Nutrition (while waiting for swim start):

1 bottle of eLoad

2 gels

1 salt tablet



Swim **2:00:17**

Our entire Nacho Average Tri Group walked to the swim start from transition together. Up until this point I was actually not feeling too nervous. However, as soon as we were all packed together on the boardwalk waiting for the organisers to open the access to the dock, I started to get quite apprehensive. I think it was all the nervous energy from all the other competitors. We all said good luck to each other and I concentrated on not throwing up. As we walked along the pier Chris had his swim goggles come apart – not a good time for that to happen. At this point we all got separated but I learned later he was able to get them back together. I walked down a set of stairs and swam under the pier near the dolphin pens (dolphins don't belong in cages so I could have done without this part) to the open water area near the start line. I guess I cannot change my mind now. As I was treading water waiting for the start I saw Tim and Tom as they moved closer the front of the pack. I hung more towards the back to try and get a little more space. All my races up to this point (mostly sprint triathlons) had been wave starts so I was unsure about how the mass start would unfold. The Star Wars music ended abruptly and the start gun went off. I think the descriptions of the mass swim start as being in a washing machine is accurate. Arms and legs were everywhere but I managed to not get kicked too many times. The first section was against the current and I could definitely feel the push. I felt pretty good making the first buoy turn and the second buoy turn to head back along the longest leg. Cool seeing the divers waving from the bottom and the fish that were swimming around. I did get lots of jelly fish stings over

the course but they were quick and not too bad. I think the long leg is where most of my swim mistakes were made. I could feel the current pushing me towards the buoys and I found myself constantly making course corrections. I also felt like the buoys were not in a straight line but that could have just been me. That long leg felt like it would never end. I finally made the turn near the submarine and started to head back towards the transition. I was also off a bit on my sighting for this leg because I was having trouble picking out the end of the pier. It was kind of freaky seeing that statue standing on the bottom – maybe Atlantis is nearby? I got to the swim exit steps without any more issues. I think the stairs could use one more step under the water since my arms did not like having to do a push up at this point. I got out and started to run down the boardwalk to transition. I think I heard Linda cheering me on which was nice. At this point I hit my lap button and looked at my watch – not a happy camper. I know I am a slow swimmer but I was hoping for a swim time in the 1:45 range. I had completed a 4 km swim in the 2 hour range in fresh water during training so I was hoping with the salt water that I would be faster. Maybe the current threw me off?



Swim Heart Rate: (no data for this section, monitor didn't pick up until on bike)

T1 Nutrition (nothing)

T1 0:11:27

As I picked up my transition bag and ran into the change tent I was not in a good mind space. As I stripped down and started to dry off (at least I remembered to put a small towel in my transition bag) I started to question my ability to finish this race but I kept getting dressed. I followed Tim's advice as follows: "if you think you have enough lube on, double it". I got dressed, put on my helmet and shoes. I wear those Pearl Izumi sun sleeves so I put these on my arms as well. The distraction of my poor swim time made me forget to put sunscreen on my legs – I would regret this during the bike ride. Took a leak and I was off to get my bike. I ran with my bike to the mount line and hopped on. The words vamos, Marshal, vamos from the Mexican fans definitely helped a little at this point.

Bike Nutrition:

4 bottles of eLoad

4 bottles of water

A few bottles of ice water over my head

9 gels

6 salt tablets

2 bags of GU Chomps (energy chews)

1 Clif Bar

1 PB and honey sandwich (thanx Tim)



Bike 7:19:14

My nutrition plan on the bike was to start eating about 20 minutes into the ride. I started drinking some eLoad as soon as I got up to speed. Initially I felt pretty good on the bike and tried to settle in. My poor swim time was still bothering me and I knew I had to get over it since I had a long day ahead of me. I decided to let it go, try and enjoy the ride and see how the bike went. I had my first gel at about 20 mins as planned and that went down fine so that made me feel a little better about things. ~15 mins later I started to feel nauseous. I kept drinking a little eLoad and water and took a salt tablet in another ~15 mins. I continued with eLoad and water and ~25 mins passed and time for another gel. I couldn't get it down since I was feeling sick. I was starting to feel the wind on the bike and doubt was creeping into my mind again. I decide to give it another 20 mins and then try a gel. Still no good and I need to figure this out soon. I decided to try a package of my GU Chomps. There is more substance to these since you have to chew them. I was able to eat the whole pack which is equivalent to about 2 gels. Yahoo! After another 15 mins I started to feel pretty good and had another salt tablet. By this time I was in the nice scenic section with the crosswinds. I was able to get in a

nice aero position and started to pick up the pace a bit. I made one quick stop at one of the aid stations to look for some sunscreen – there wasn't any. However, one of the volunteers took a small tube out of his own pack and gave me some so I could touch up my face. I knew my legs would be in trouble later but he didn't have enough for those so I thanked him and continued on.



I hit the main turn at the straight stretch that crosses the island back to town. The wind is at your back and I was able to pick up some good speed all the way back to town – finally felt like things were going my way. I tossed an empty water bottle to some kids cheering at the side of the road. This was a poor section of the island and the kids seemed quite excited to be getting a souvenir. I started saving up bottles in my jersey on the last two loops for this very reason. There were families out in front of their houses all along this section cheering everyone on.



When I hit town I couldn't believe the number of people lining the streets cheering everybody on. It looked like the footage you see of the Tour de France as the riders pass through the various towns. This alone would make it worth coming to this race again. It made you feel like you were one of the pro athletes. I rode through town and saw Linda just before the turn to head back out for another loop. I must say it is great to have your spouse cheering you on for each loop.

The crowd support makes you pick up the pace a bit so as I exited town I eased off a bit to get my heart rate back under control. As I rode past the swim transition exit on my second loop I started to feel like crap again. The wind was picking up as well which made me have to work harder. For about 15-20 mins in the windy/treed section I felt extremely nauseous. There were a couple of times I slowed right down and almost got off my bike. However, I was afraid if I got off my bike feeling like this I might not get back on so I pushed through. Just before the open cross wind section one of the elite women came up beside me to pass and said hi. I wasn't feeling very well so I am not sure who it was but they said keep pushing it will get better and kept going. That was nice of them. When I hit the open cross wind section I started to feel better again and picked up the pace.

At this point a 20-25 person Peleton passed me. What the f---- was with the drafting on this course! There were a number of smaller drafting groups too and not enough of them were in the penalty tents. This will sound like sour grapes but I will say it anyway, why should someone who drafts the bike leg (saving their legs for the run) get the same medal as everyone else at the end? Its b--- s---. This is an individual sport not a cycling race. I know most of those guys are still faster than me but the finishing time gaps would not be a large if they had to do some work on the bike (the end of my rant).

I pulled into the special needs bag area and saw Chris standing with his bike. He said he had dropped his salt tablets on the bike so I gave him a couple of extras that I had with me. He said he wasn't feeling great and he headed out on his bike. I took my 2 eLoad bottles from my special needs bag for my bike and ate the sandwich (PB and honey). I must credit Tim with this idea, it really hit the spot. I also put 2 bottles of ice water on my bike. It was now freakin' hot so I dumped another one over my head. The ice water in the bottles was a genius idea. I stood in the shade while I had a gel and drank some water. I entertained myself by watching a couple of meltdowns by athletes who had to slow down slightly to get water from the volunteers. If that was you, get a grip, those people (kids mostly) were out there all day in the hot sun handing you ice water.

I headed out to finish the second loop and was feeling pretty good again. Made some good time to the turn back to town and was able to cruise along at a good clip on the straight section. I threw a couple of bottles to some kids again. I caught up to Chris again just as we entered town and the awesome crowds. We road through town together enjoying the energy of the crowd. We passed Linda and got a good cheer. Just after we made the turn to head out of town for the final lap we heard another person cheering for us. Just a little further on we saw a sign that said "Go Peter Jones". It turns out that Peter's wife Kim had flown down to surprise him during the race – what a nice treat. At the time Chris and I just thought we were delirious from the heat.

We rode together for a little while (without drafting) but Chris stopped to get some water. I kept going since I was feeling pretty good at the time. I had a good ride through the windy section without any bad feelings. My nutrition plan was still on track so I was happy. I saw a number of turkey vultures perched along the beaches, probably waiting for some triathletes to drop. I kept all my empty water bottles in my jersey pockets during this leg so I could toss them to the kids on the ride back to town. They

were still out there cheering and had fun chasing after the bottles I threw to them. I held a good aero position and good speed all the way into town to transition. Hit the dismount line and handed my bike to a volunteer.

Bike Heart Rate: (Average 147 bpm)

T2 Nutrition (water):

T2 0:6:41

I ran towards transition, grabbed my run bag off the rack (these were very well organized) and headed into the change tent. I found a seat and sat down. The volunteers were quite helpful and offered water and any assistance we might want. I just asked for a bottle of water. Almost as soon as I sat down I started to feel dizzy – not a good sign. I had been racing for about 9 ½ hours at this point and I still had a freakin’ marathon to do. I guess I cranked it a bit too hard on the way back to town. I stripped off my bike clothes, lubed up as per Tim’s previous directions, and put on my running attire. One of the Red Cross volunteers was walking around asking everyone if they were ok. When he got to me I lied, put on a smile and said I was ok. I am not sure he believed me but he moved on to the next person. I put all my bike stuff in my transition bag, handed it to a volunteer, said thank you and left the change tent with my bottle of water in my hand. I walked the first 20 m so I could have a good drink of water and then started to run. I still felt a little dizzy but I was hoping by moving forward the feeling would pass.

Run Nutrition:

Gatorade at most aid stations

Water at most aid stations

A few bags of ice and water over my head

8 gels

Lots of pretzels

Lots of coke (the drinkable kind)

4 salt tablets

A few orange and banana pieces

Run 5:29:42

I turned the corner onto the main street in Cozumel to start the marathon. Linda was just a little way along from here and was cheering me on. I am not sure how I looked to her at that point but I felt like one of the zombies from the Walking Dead (<http://www.amctv.com/originals/The-Walking-Dead/>) – a good series by the way. This was definitely the lowest point for me in the entire race. As bad as I felt on the bike a couple of times I never felt this bad. I did stop running for about 30 seconds and just stood there drinking the rest of my water. I was thinking seriously about quitting at this point since I just couldn't wrap my head around doing a marathon. The crowd was very loud and they were cheering everyone on and yelling our names from our race numbers. This definitely helped and I started moving forward again. David had told me before the race to just keep moving forward no matter how slow I was going so that is what I did. I hit the first aid station, had a couple of pretzels, a little Gatorade and put a bag of ice on the back of my neck. I don't remember the volunteer handing it to me but it was a life saver. I ran with this for about 500m and slowly started to feel a little better. By the next aid station I was starting to feel human again.

At this point I was feeling good enough to try and salvage my marathon plan which before the race was to run 9 mins and walk 1 min (with some variation to deal with aid stations). Concentrating on this actually gave me something to think about other than pain. This definitely got me back on track. At the next aid station I took a gel and some water. I must say this is the first race I ever had water in a condom (not really condoms but that is what they looked like). At first those little tubes of water disturbed me but after a couple they actually were quite handy. I would stuff them in my jersey pocket and use them to take gels and salt tablets when I wanted. This way I could time my nutrition my way instead of based on the 1 km aid station spacing. The aid stations were very well stocked, and contrary to what Marianne told us, I did use them as a buffet. I ate pretzels whenever I could stomach them and even had a couple of orange and banana pieces.

Starting the 2nd lap (it was full on dark now) was hard knowing I still had another lap to do after this one. Anyway, I stuck to my run/walk plan and got through the lap without too much trouble. The crowds as we passed through town were still just as big and

loud. It is hard controlling your pace with this kind of crowd support and keeping your heart rate in check. I saw other Nacho athletes including Wendy, Tim and Chris and we cheered each other on. Linda was cheering each of us as we came into town. I was still waiting for the mosquitos that everyone mentioned last year to appear. I never did see any insects.

I came into town to begin the 3rd and final lap. Linda was there cheering me on which made a huge difference. I told her that Peter was behind me ready to finish his race. I also mentioned that I saw his wife Kim near the end of the second loop. The crowds were still going strong which was great as well. About halfway to the final turn-around I started to have some minor stomach issues. Nothing too serious just a sick feeling that I couldn't shake. Maybe if I had thrown up I would have felt better but that never happened. I cannot say the same for many people I passed along the course. I made the final turn to head back to town and for the first time during the run I looked at my total time so far. I started doing math in my head to see if I could break 15 hours. The math attempt was a nice distraction but I suck at math in my head at the best of times (just ask Linda). I must have had a 15 min conversation in my head trying to figure out if I had enough time at my current pace. I hope it was in my head or many of the spectators must have thought I was a crazy person. Eventually I just gave up and decided I would push my pace as much as possible and see what happens.

I saw the 40 km sign and I could hear the roar of the crowd at the finish line. I didn't feel great but I decided to push my pace as much as possible for the last 2 km. I was actually able to run the last 2 km at about a 6 min/km pace which at that point was fast, fast, fast for me. At about 400 m from the finish shoot I started to think I had made a mistake since I was now feeling very bad and a bit dizzy again. I thought, that will be my Ironman finish, passing out in the finish shoot. Anyway, I tried to ignore the feeling and kept pushing even though my legs were screaming. Linda was still there cheering me on. As you get close to the finish line the crowds keep getting louder which definitely lets you ignore the pain for a short time. As I approached the turn to the finish shoot I could hear the announcer calling out someones name: so and so You are an Ironman. I made the final turn and could see the finish ramp at the end of the bleacher section. All the people in the bleachers are cheering for everyone – makes you feel a bit like a celebrity. I ran up the ramp under the timing clock and put



my arms in the air. I didn't actually hear them say: Marshal, You are an Ironman! but I guess they did. As you can tell from my finisher photo there wasn't a lot of energy in my arm raising.



Volunteers put the finisher medal around your neck and a necklace made out of shells. David was there at the finish line and guided me back past the medical tent. I decided not to go in since I thought I would be ok if I sat down for a while. He took me to the table for my finishers shirt and then we got our picture taken in front of the Finisher banner. I took some water but didn't feel like any food yet so I headed further along to have a seat in the athletes recovery area. David headed back to the finish line to wait for Chris.

I met up with Tom and Wendy in the recovery area and had a little talk with them. Tom got us some pizza and that went down nicely. After I had sat for a while we all headed back to the finish line to wait with David for Chris. Chris came in and there was high fives all around. We all got our picture taken in front of the Finisher banner. Once Chris sat for a bit we went and got our bikes and headed back to the condo. 10 mins and we were all back in the condo recovering and telling war stories. It was great that we didn't have to take a taxi anywhere. Our condo was close enough to the finish line that I could hear the rest of the competitors coming in from our porch. I did stare at a beer but didn't drink much of it. Nobody stayed up much longer. Tim was feeling like crap and passed out on the couch. I had a shower and went to bed. Surprise, surprise but that was my best night of sleep the whole time in Cozumel.



Run Heart Rate: (Average 146 bpm)

TOTAL RACE TIME: 15:07:23

Post-Race Weight: 165 lbs

Placing Age Group 40-44: 238 / 354

Placing Men: 1158 / 1788

Placing Overall: 1428 / 2248

POST-RACE:

The next day there was not a lot of strenuous activity. Tim seemed to be fairing better than he had been the night before. Chris was not feeling very well and spent much of the morning lying in a chair on the condo porch. I didn't feel great but not horrendous either. Wendy cooked up a wicked breakfast which was great. Once everyone was feeling a little better we all went down to the pool and had a little dip in the hot tub. We sat in the kids pool (since it was a little cooler water temperature) and talked to the athletes from Guelph, Ontario about their race.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The first person I have to credit is Linda. She put up with all my training this past year. Training for these things is like having a part-time job. She also deserves a medal for spending the entire day on the course cheering all of the Nacho athletes and taking pictures. That is a long frikin' day.

I would like to thank David for all the help throughout the year with training suggestions, coaching, advice, bike maintenance, etc. etc. We all owe you for this David even though it is mainly your fault we were in Cozumel in the first place.

Thank you to Jane for getting my swimming to this point from close to zero.

I would also like to thank all the other Nacho athletes for dragging me off to Cozumel for this race. I had a great time. The Caterpillar in my bike box was a nice treat!

THINGS TO IMPROVE UPON:

Obviously I need to improve my swimming abilities. I finished the swim leg 30-45 mins behind many of the participants. . This is a lot of time to make up on the bike and run. If I could knock 30 mins off my swim time that would be great

I also knew coming in that I needed more run training. I wasn't unhappy with my marathon but I think with more volume I could do better.