

Ironman Coeur D'Alene 2006 - June 25, 2006 Susan Cadman - Race Report

"Ironman is electric!!!" Pain, determination and will power show us how strong we really are. After completing my second Ironman, I am now convinced of this fact. After 8 months of training that involved hours of swimming, 1000s of kms on the bike and run we were ready for Ironman #2; Ironman Coeur D'Alene (CDA) in Idaho. By the way, for those of you not familiar with the Ironman it is a 4km swim, 180km bike, 42km run...consecutively and all in one day!

As I read in an article "It's not east to explain what the attraction to this sport is. It hurts, it takes all my free time, and it's expensive. As I plan my next race, I am beginning to realize it's not about the race. It's not about swimming, biking, or running. It's about discovering my limits and finding out how strong I am. It just so happens that triathlon is a great way to do this."

Training

So why would you do a second Ironman many people asked me? Even better...why would you do a first Ironman? The best way to describe it as a good friend of ours Mike Copeland said... "Because you can...". This is so very true, I really love setting personal goals and having something to work towards. Pushing myself beyond the limits of what I thought I could not do. The other thing that gets you "coming back for more" is the triathlon community. We have met so many great people doing this sport...friends I know I will have forever.



We had decided in the fall that we were going to sign up for Ironman Lake Placid again. We knew that the regular registration filled up the day after our race last year but we figured we could buy a charity spot and get in that way...think again. We were too late, they were already gone as well. This was a little disappointing as we really had our hearts set on doing that race again. We had a lot of friends doing the race in Lake Placid and it was a great location for friends and family to come down and watch. Now for Plan B...what other race can we do? So we started our research to find a spring race so that we would have the rest of the summer to enjoy up at the cottage. So, with some research and buying a charity spot we were able to sign up for Ironman Coeur D'Alene in Idaho. Great, we could race and help out the local charities.



We had a long winter of training, 2 workouts per day, 6 days a week...we were quickly into our training routine from last year. Seemed easier to get into it this year, likely because we knew what was ahead of us. We also had a larger group to train with this year and had set some new routines. Early Saturday rides...pretty standard but this year I had my partner in crime Phaedra (other wise known as T-bar or Whitebread) to train with...someone to push me, motivate me, laugh with and keep me company on the long rides. Rick was always so much faster than me on the bike and too far ahead of me. And my new running partner Monique...for our Sunday "Run and Brunch".

Sunday mornings became our little routine. However, our Sunday running dates with Pat and Monique took a much different meaning than just running and eating. In December while training for Ironman LP, Pat was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and had to immediately start chemo treatments. Through all of his treatments he continued to train with us rain or shine and never complained once. He is a remarkable person, athlete and inspiration. He truly showed me what mind, body and strength can really do. Amazingly, he also ended up racing the Lake Placid Ironman this year and showed us all how to truly LIVESTRONG! Thank you Pat for all you did.

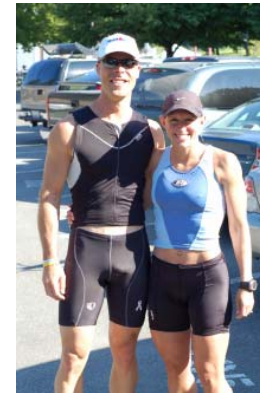


With having to do our long rides indoors for the winter...we were lucky enough to be able to get away for a long weekend to South Carolina in early April with part of our "tri-gang" and cycled some pretty crazy hills...thanks Jamie for organizing this great trip!! I was then lucky enough to get a trip to Kona Hawaii for Rick and I through my work at the end of April. So we shipped our bikes down and got to ride the actual Ironman World Championship bike course. What a great experience...and wow...those winds really are as bad as they claim!!

With the cool spring we had and every Saturday morning either snowing (even the May long weekend), raining and/or windy...I figured we were set to race in anything...except extreme heat! We got through all the training with the help of our crew, Coach Steve and our determination and drive to get to the start line. CDA here we come!!!

Race Week

For those of you who don't know where Coeur D'Alene is...don't worry...many don't. We flew to Seattle, and then flew to Spokane Washington and finally drove an hour east to Coeur D'Alene Idaho. As we checked into our hotel and I got into bed...I thought to myself...I can't believe we are here and are about to do Ironman #2!!! Where did the time go? The journey seemed to go very fast. That week we did a lot of relaxing along with a couple of light swims, bikes and runs on the race course. We also took the downtime to catch up with some great new friends we had met that were also from Toronto and racing. We drove the bike course with Linnea, DA, Norm and Jan to see what we were about to race. This I thought would take away any anxiety I had about the bike course...but actually it seemed to have caused more anxiety. It seemed a lot more difficult than I had thought it would be and it seemed really long and we had only driven it once...it was a two loop course. Last year with Lake Placid were able to go down and do training weekends on the actual course...so that on race day we knew what the course was like and what it was like to ride and run it. However, this year it was all unknown territories. Organizing our transition bags was a lot easier as well as the whole registration, bike check in, etc... we learned a lot from last year and made sure we applied it all this year. We had a great pre-race dinner with the Toronto Gang, Bobby Chew (he drove all the way from Vancouver to watch), home early and off to bed for our early morning rise.



Race Morning



4:00am and Race Day is here!!! We arrived at the transition area around 5 AM to set up our gear and prepare for the race. This is always a little stressful and nerve racking part of the race for me as I think about the long day ahead and the think of the unknowns that can happen and for the first time begin to see the competition arriving in droves. I had a nervous knot in my gut as I went to get body marked and made one last pit stop before putting on my wetsuit. Rick and I split up to hit different port-o-potties and had set a meeting point. I got to the meeting point first and waited what felt like 15 minutes but I am sure was only 2 or 3 minutes. Rick had been my support, my training partner and my motivator...I really wanted to make sure I saw him before the gun went off. We put on our wetsuits and walked hand in hand down to the beach start. This is it!!!

Swim - 2 loops totally 4kms - water temperature 63 degrees Fahrenheit



Silence. 2227 people and I heard nothing. I began to hear my heart beat and notice again the length of the course in front of me. On a bullhorn I heard "10 Seconds!" Everybody on the beach let out an adrenaline-influenced scream, the cannon fires, and Ironman CDA begins. It was completely insane to say the least. Having done Ironman last year I knew what to expect in the swim...or at least I thought I did. I am not sure if it

was where I started in the swim, whether it was the beach start or the fact there were an additional 300 people this year...or a combination of all three but man that was a crazy swim start. The swim was a double loop rectangular course. As I mentioned last year in my race report being in the swim is like being a sock in a washing machine. As I reached to find a stroke all I could feel was the guy's back in front of me. At the same time I was feeling people swimming up on top of my legs, and the feeling of being dunked and held down by 100 people. Two goals: keep my goggles on and lungs filled with air. I ended up kicking and dunking with the best of them for the first 10 minutes. As the swim continues the swarm thins and I began to find my space.



I tried to start focusing on continuous motion forward, sighting, and trying to find pockets where it wasn't so congested. As I approached the first turn buoy it felt like there where 1000 people all trying to get around the same buoy, but I focused on getting around it and with a few kicks and jabs I was around it and heading towards the beach. It was at this point that I realized I had already exerted a lot of energy on the swim...more than I had planned with the crazy swim start. Onto the second loop and finally everyone has thinned even more and I am swimming on my own. With the sun in my eyes on one side I found it hard to keep a straight line and I was trying to find a pair of feet that I could draft off of...but with everyone all over the place I found myself swimming on my own. As I approach the beach I was so excited to have the first leg of the race done. Feeling a little more exerted this year but feeling good.

Swim Time = 1:07:01, Age Group Place = 23/134

Transition #1 - T1

Out of the water, up the beach through hundreds of cheering people and straight to the wet suit "peelers". The man I got...wow he was good. Two pulls and my wetsuit was off. As I ran to get my transition bag...I couldn't remember which was my designated row...so I yelled out "2039, 2039!!!" (my race #) and a volunteer held up her hand indicating which way I needed to go. Into the tent, I got my helmet on, socks, cycling shoes, sunglasses, sunscreen, extra salt in my back jersey pocket, sucked back one gel and away I went. As I was getting my gear on I noticed it was really "foggy/steamy" in the transition tent...I figured this was due to the heat, all the bodies and the spray sunscreen they were using. As I was trying to decide if I was going to put my cycling sleeves on one of the sweet volunteers looked at me and said "sweat heart it is already 83 degrees out there...you are not going to need those". So out of the tent, I ran through transition to get my bike. I am now realizing that my glasses are also all steamed up and foggy...but figured I would wipe them down once I got on my bike... Total Time = 5:26

Bike - two loops totaling 180 km - Temperature 97+ degrees Fahrenheit



So I am out of T1 and feeling pretty good and super excited to get onto my bike. I worked pretty hard this year on trying to get my riding stronger so wanted to see what race day was going to deliver!! I was also really excited to try out race wheels (a special thanks to my good friend Pat who lent me his Zipp 404 race wheels). The bike is also a two loop course...two 90 km loops. Once I got onto my bike I decided to take my sunglasses off to wipe them...it was at that point where my race took a bit of a different path. As I took my glasses off I quickly came to the realization that it was not the tent that was foggy nor was it my glasses that were foggy...it was my actual eye site. "What is going on...?" I said to myself. So I started to blink a lot, rubbed my eyes and kept tried to focus on something...nothing was working...so I took my water bottle and tried cleaning my eyes out with water...all this while I was still riding my bike. Many people after the race when I told them this story...asked me

why I didn't just get off my bike to do all this? What was going through my mind was "this is just temporary, I am sure it is going to go away in 2 minutes...something must have got in my eyes if I keep flushing it with water it will go away". So I continue to ride in a panic as all I can see was colours and blurred/fuzzy blobs in front of me. I could not see anything clearly. What really got my nervous about not being able to see was 1. not being able to see and 2. not being able to see my watch. My watch is how I trained for everything...it allows me to keep my heart rate in the right zones, allows me to watch my cadence/rpm, tells me when to fuel, the time and speed. All these things are very important when doing a 180 km bike ride. So onto plan B...what is plan B I think to myself? Well since I had never considered eye sight being an issue I didn't have a plan B for this...so quickly I had to think of one. I was going to have to go on perceived effort and really focus on not going out too fast especially on the first loop of the bike. As it related to fueling and nutrition...I would have to strictly follow the 20 minute beep timer I had set prior to the race to let me know when to eat/drink.

I kept thinking that the itchy/burning, blurred vision was going to go way. At around 18 miles into the race I heard a voice "How you doing Honey? You look great!!" ...it was Rick passing me. I told him "good except that I can't see!" We were about 2 miles from the next aid station, he told me to meet him there. As I got to the aid station there was Rick...I took off my sunglasses and asked him if anything looked different about my eyes. Apparently I didn't have any pupils!! Rick said my pupils were the size of pinheads and my eyes were blood shot red. We got one of the aid station medical staff to take a look at my eyes...they were trying to put saline solution in them to clear them...that was not working. At this point, Rick insisted that the support crew take me over to the Ambulance to take a better look at them. When we got to the Ambulance I was finally able to convince Rick to continue his race and that I would be ok. Of course I really had no clue if I was going to be ok but I didn't want him not to continue his race. So they had me lying down on the "gurney" in the Ambulance looking at my eyes, flushing them and trying to figure out what was wrong. I had to fill out paper work and the whole nine yards. After 15 minutes I realized it wasn't getting better but that the clock was ticking...after all I was there to race. I have trained 8 long months for this...I am not about to give up at this point. So I asked the Medical Staff if I could continue and they said that decision was up to me. So off I went...still no clear vision...except that I was going to finish this race one way or another. My plan was to try to focus as best as I could on the cyclists in front of me and then pass when I could.





The temperature was starting to rise and get extremely hot...97 degrees Fahrenheit, but with the heat coming off the black pavement...99. When I downloaded my watch it shows the temperature and it actually read 99 degrees! Good thing we had all those cold and snowy days!! Not being able to train in this heat was going to become another challenge. The course had three hills, some very technical descents; and lots of turns...just as you got your momentum going you had to turn again, some rollers a crazy narrow bridge and what was even weirder is that they had us ride through an actual Greyhound race track...very bizarre!!! Two of the hills (which we had to do twice) were grinders...throw it into the granny gear and push your way up to the top. Some of the course felt relentless as we were getting sun-baked

mile after mile. There was a nice open flatland section...however unfortunately we had a huge head wind. With the high heat it felt like a hot hair dryer in your face! The many twists and turns of the course did provide a welcome mental and physical relief and the time and distance did pass rather quickly, all considering. My fueling was great this year, I stayed conservative on the first loop and then pushed it a little more on the second loop...but still ensuring I had plenty left for the run. This is always the most challenging part of racing an Ironman. Keeping enough fuel in the tank for the run and not going too hard on the bike. The bike was long...but all considering I was feeling great and really excited about getting off the bike!! I was super pleased with my bike time as I did have a huge improvement over last year even with my 15 minutes spent in the ambulance.

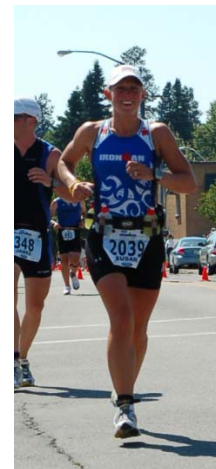
Bike Time = 6:44:18, Age Group Place = 54/134 (including 15 minutes in the ambulance)

Transition # 2 - T2

Yeah the bike is done and only a marathon to run!!! ☺ Felt good coming off the bike (aside from the eyes). I handed my bike to one of the volunteers, grabbed my transition bag and back into the tent. As I took my helmet and sunglasses off, one of the volunteers called for a medic as when she looked at me my eyes were totally glossed over. They were concerned and didn't want me to run without a medic looking at me. Once one of the doctors came over I explained what had been going on with my eyes for the last 7 hours, they finally they let me go. I put my hat on, sneakers on, fuel belt and a way I went. **Total TIME = 6:31**

The Run - two loops totaling 42 km

Wow...where to begin...how about with HOT!!!! The run course was fairly flat and very beautiful. It ran along the lake side and in through some urban streets where everyone was out on their lawns with sprinklers, hoses and cheering everyone on. My goal this year was not to vomit the marathon like I unfortunately did last year. I also wanted to try and run (or do the infamous Ironman shuffle) as much as I could. Mission accomplished. Although my run was not fast...I was able to do a slow run for pretty much the whole marathon with the exception of the aid stations, where I walked most of them to ensure I got in the appropriate nutrition, liquids and ice. I finally found a soothing remedy for my eyes...ICE! So for the entire marathon I iced my eyes with an ice cube as I ran. Finally as I was approaching the second half of the marathon my clear vision finally came back! Wow...was this course ever pretty I finally realized! ☺ It was also at this time where I saw Rick on the run for the second time...although this time, he didn't look good. He was walking in a bit of a daze and totally covered in salt (from sweating so much). I stopped to talk to him and see if he needed anything...more salt pills, Gatorade, water, etc... we exchanged a quick kiss and off we both went. I was now feeling concerned for him and hoping he would be able to recover from this and complete the race. As it was an "out and back" course we got to see all our fellow competitors...Tara, Linnea, Dave, Kim and Norm...this was such a great motivator and energy booster.





Second loop of the marathon was really tough as the fatigue really set in and I could no longer stomach any more gels. So I started simply taking water, Gatorade and a little bit of flat coke which they provided on the course. Still thinking about Rick and looking forward to seeing him on the last out and back turnaround...there he was about 1 mile and a half ahead of me. He was looking a lot better and he had started to do a light run again. It was at this point that he decided he would wait for me and we would finish together. Earlier in the run when he was going through what our coach thinks was heat stroke, he threw his initial time goals out the window and was just hoping to finish in the allotted 17 hour cut off. After walking about 7 miles, he knew he would finish and time was not of importance...completing it was. So he waited for me and we ran/shuffled the final leg of the course together and then down the infamous finisher chute.

Run Time = 5:13:04, Age Group Place = 45/134

The Finish

With smiles now from ear to ear on both of us and a wave to Bobby Chew, I could see the finish line. As we approached the finish line the announcer Mike Riley shouted out on the loud speakers "here they are husband and wife team from Toronto, Rick and Sue Cadman"...wow we did it!! What a great way to end a very difficult day for the both of us. We started this together and we finished it together!!! They put a medal around each of our necks and again just like last year...I felt like I was on cloud nine and reminded myself that in fact anything is possible, all you have to do is put your mind to it!!

After getting our medals and two quick photo's it was then immediately to the medical tent for me. I was so exhausted, and now that I had stopped icing my eyes...they were burning all over again. At this point I think it was a combination of sweat, salt and everything else dripping into them. I couldn't even open my eyes. With tears of pain rolling down my face I had numerous doctors looking at me and inspecting my eyes. The final diagnosis was that I had had some type of major allergic reaction to something in the swim. After eating a piece of pizza in the finishers tent and talking with some locals there is apparently a pollen that is native to the Coeur D'Alene region that can affect people rather seriously. I do not have a history of any known allergies; however I will take their word on it...because what ever it was, it was very scary. After about an hour and a half in the medical tent with Rick by my side and one of our friends Mike who also did the race (he was there for some of this own medical issues), my eyes still burning, legs and body exhausted but all that didn't seem to matter. I was a second time Ironman...and it felt GREAT!!! We hobbled our selves to our car, hand in hand, medals around our neck...life could not be better.



Total finish time: 13:16:18

(Note: Ironman Lake Placid 2005 finishing time 14:11:03...yippee almost an hour better!)

Thank you's

Where to begin...family, friends and co-workers who have supported us through all of our hours of training. We could not have done this without you. It means more to us than you probably know. Ironman is not just a crazy sport, but it is a lifestyle change. The journey was magnificent and there are some key people that helped make it. Our training crew who made the workouts fun and memorable...Gary, Phaedra, Pat, Monique, Mike, Fred, Dave, Tara, Linnea, Kim, Kate, the Bally's Plio crew, coach Steve Bentley and...the one and only Rick!!! It is Rick who helped me the most in making this dream a reality. He was my motivator on the tough days and my daily inspiration. His strong belief in me truly made all the difference in my racing abilities. We went in this journey together and finished it together. It is because of Rick and his vision that we got to the finish line.



The Stats

Bib Number = 2039

Race Division = Women 30-34

	Time	Average Pace (miles/hr)	Age Division Placing	Overall Placing
Swim	1:07:01	1:46	23/134	505/2227
T1	5:26			
Bike	6:44:18	16.6	56/134	1311/2227
T2	6:31			
Run	5:13:04	11:57miles/hr	45/134	856/2227
Total Time	13:16:18		43/134	912/2227