

Beat: Sports

MAYTAG IRONMAN 70.3 STEELHEAD-BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN 2014

Outstanding Race From Start to Finish

Benton Harbor, Michigan, 23.09.2014, 13:08 Time

USPA NEWS - Lionel Sanders (CAN) PRO MEN and Cait Snow (USA) PRO WOMEN win the MAYTAG IRONMAN 70.3 STEELHEAD TRIATHALON in Benton Harbor, Michigan. A 1.2-mile swim in the clear refreshing waters of Lake Michigan, begins on the beach to continue with a bike ride on a winding road and ending after a 13 mile run.

The Ironman 70.3, also known as "HALF IRONMAN" distance race, is a very popular triathlon event in the United States as this Country alone hosts over thirty races each year. As a sport photographer I usually "shoot" motosports events but being by nature one who loves to capture the emotions of the athletes, I thought, "which better way than to do so by going to a triathlon race"? I decided to attend The Ironman 70.3 Racine in July. As a neophyte to this sport as a photographer I thought it would be interesting to have an insight from someone who was actually participating in the race, to get that - how it feels from inside- emotion. Basically, I started scouting for someone who could inspire me for the project I had in mind.

I noticed this one gentleman who was very focused before the race but unlike the other racers, he was also enjoying the moment interacting with fellow racers and always looking in the direction of a lovely young woman, who I later discovered was his wife.

The unusual thing about this guy? He was comfortably wearing Speedo swimming briefs! We are used to seeing athletes wearing briefs in a swimming pool, but outdoors? Right there and then I thought to myself he could have been the person I was looking for and I was right.

I waited for him at the finish line that day and agreed we would meet at the next race for an interview at Benton Harbor, Michigan in August.

So here we are in Benton Harbor, Michigan for The Ironman 70.3 Steelhead on a hot summer morning. Anthony Di Mauro is on the beach ready to hit the clear fresh waters of Lake Michigan at 7:30 a.m. The first five minutes of the swim is a continuous struggle to find an opening trying not to bang into the other swimmers. Everyone is suffering to stroke against the slight current.

The first swimmers start to emerge from the waters to jump on their bikes and challenge the winding roads for the second section of the race. Di Mauro exits the water after 45' and quickly changes into his cycling wear, grabs his bike and speeds off to reach the other bikers. This is the part of the race where the American athlete, originally from N.Y. seems more confident.

With the temperature reaching its peak at 84°, the racers are now off their bikes and putting on their running shoes to face the final 13 miles of the race. The heat taking its toll on the athletes, this is where only those well prepared, focused and sufficiently hydrated make the difference and Di Mauro is one of them. He completes the race in 5h:17'

I meet Anthony later on that day for our interview.

"Anthony, you and the others struggled in the water", I begin.

A: "In fact, I was swimming over the other racers to find a clear spot. It also felt like swimming against a light current.

Q: "You seemed particularly confident in the bike race. Have you trained more for this part of the race?"

A: "Yes, I was" (smiling). "I wanted to test myself and push it to the limit". "During the bike race I took care of liquids and calories as planned and the ride was pretty much flawless besides the heat building up". "I knew that my biggest demon, heat, would effect the 13 mile run and the hills would make the final part of my race much more difficult but I just kept pushing".

Q: "What were your expectations on the out-come of the race"?

A: "I didn't keep track of my time after the swim so it came to my surprise when at the finish line my wife told me I completed the race in 5h: 17', 20 minutes quicker than last year's event!"

Q: "Next race"?

A: "Ironman,-Arizona, November 16th". "See you there"!

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-2727/maytag-ironman-703-steelhead-benton-harbormichigan-2014.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

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