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The Ironman Triathlon—Whats Your Fear Factor?

By Ray Fauteux

What scares you the most about your upcoming ironman race? What's your fear–factor?

As fit as a person is going into the first career Ironman, the fear–factor is in the equation as the big day creeps ever closer.

As cool and confident as many participants may appear, there is almost always something that fills them with a certain amount of misgiving and anxiety.

For many, the fear–factor will be overwhelming self–doubt as they wonder to themselves what on earth they have gotten themselves into. Its almost like diving off a high cliff. Once you're committed, there's no turning back. After all, everyone in your circle of friends family and co–workers know all about it. For months they have observed as you've immersed yourself in your Ironman preparation. How can you possibly back out and face the people who have supported you as you've prepared for the race of your life?

Well, some people can and do back out. I recall one story in the early 80's that took place in the Hawaii Ironman.

As the story goes.....At the conclusion of the swim portion of the race and all the swimmers were off the course, it was discovered that one person was missing. In other words, someone who was signed in for the swim had not arrived. Apparently they searched the entire course with scuba divers looking for the missing swimmer and fearing the worst.

As it turns out, the missing swimmer had never entered the water. He decided he just couldn't do it and left the transition area and went for breakfast at a local restaurant. When he returned for his gear, he asked someone what all the fuss was about and then, much to the relief of all concerned, the mystery was solved. The lesson here---- If you EVER decide to drop out of an Ironman race, be sure to let the organisers know as soon as possible! They care about you and your safety.

It seems that the swim is particularly terrifying for many first time Ironman athletes. People have been known to stand on the shore in tears, unable to face the swim even long after the gun has sounded.

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Some have been coaxed into the water by volunteers and ended up doing just fine. Normally, just a few hundred meters into the swim, your nervousness will disappear and you'll settle into the race.

In my first Ironman in Hawaii, I'll never forget the amazing euphoria in the transition tent after the swim. More than anything, I believe it was relief, because for many, myself included, a very big hurdle had been cleared. As far as I was concerned that day, there was nothing that would stop me from crossing the finish line once I conquered the swim. There was no doubt, the water way my fear-factor.

I believe that most who are considering their first Ironman are runners. Also, pretty well everyone has biked at one time or another in their life, but really few have had the opportunity or reason to swim in the open water. So it stands to reason that a lot of first time Ironman triathletes are going to be extremely apprehensive about the Ironman swim.

Some I suppose may fear the bike. Maybe steep hills or cycling around so many others will cause some concern. At least in the bike and run you have complete control. You can just stop or slow down. I think its fair to say, that in the swim, once you're half a mile out in the open water, you're pretty well committed.

Personally, I think much of the fear-factor grows all out of proportion as the race nears. Ironman preparation is much more than swim, bike, run. You must also prepare yourself mentally.

When you begin to have doubts about your ability, or when the fear of failure begins to haunt you, its time to take a step back and consider how far you have come.

It may not seem like it on race-day, as you are surrounded by hundreds of athletes, but in the big scheme of things, few people in the world will ever attempt what you're about to do. Believe in your training, your preparation and ability. When the fear-factor is overwhelming as the race nears—regardless if its the swim or the bike or just fear of failing—remember this:

There are hundreds of other athletes who will feel the same as you on race morning. That's one of the things that makes the Ironman so amazing. You are all on the same journey together. The goal is a common one. It is this united spirit that will help calm the fear-factor and take you through the day. You'll understand what I mean as your first Ironman race-day unfolds.

There will be several thousand volunteers and thousands more spectators and friends and relatives who will all play a part in your amazing journey.

They will be behind you when your fear is greatest, your inspiration when you doubt and your strength when you tire.

You are truly amazing just to reach the start line of an Ironman triathlon. Just to have gotten to that point makes you a resounding success, so how can you possibly fail?

You have erased the doubts you once had that you would even find yourself on the beach on Ironman morning awaiting the starting gun. You are in the best condition of your life and have the admiration of

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everyone around you as you prepare for the greatest experience of your life.

If you are about to attempt your first Ironman, may the Iron Gods of Kona, who haunt the searing lava fields of the King K. highway smile upon you and very soon welcome you into the most amazing family on earth.

Are you a beginner triathlete or novice Ironman? My name is Ray and I've created a site called "Ironstruck" and its full of training and racing tips that may help you in realizing your triathlon goals.

<http://triathlon-ironman-myfirstironman-ironstruck.com>

Ironman Wisconsin Triathlon

By Sandy Sayler – WisconsinGuide Magazine

Ironman Wisconsin Triathlon by Sandy Sayler – WisconsinGuide Magazine

The Madison area is host to the Ironman Wisconsin triathlon with more than 1,800 elite athletes from around the world are expected to participate. The rush of excitement is building as September 7th is fast approaching. Record attendance is expected this year, as this triathlon is one of the four sanctioned events in the United States.

The persistence of these men and women will be challenged to the fullest as their determination shines through. The 2.4-mile swimming loop will be in the incredible waters of beautiful Lake Monona. The biking portion is a 112-mile loop that stretches into the rural country backroads touching the entire town of Verona. Take time to visit this proud community as spectators stand on the curbs cheering the disciplined bikers as they flash by. Verona's festival last year alone attracted over 20,000 people and was likened to the "Tour de France". The pumped-up pedalers will also be racing through Mount Horeb and Cross Plains. The final 26.2 miles is the running portion that tests the endurance of each individual. This part of the course will take the triathletes through scenic parks, historical sites and local attractions such as the University of Madison.

Ironman North America and Wisconsin Sports Development Corporation should stand tall as the lead organizations that brought this exciting event to our magnificent state. Their generous sponsors and ambitious volunteers deserve credit for sharing their efforts in setting up water and first aid stations along the way, coordinating shuttles and lodging, working with local and state officials, and their endless generousities could go on. Thanks for helping make this triathlon run so smoothly. If you are unable to attend, don't feel left out. You will be able to view the Ironman Wisconsin on various regional stations throughout the state and on National TV stations: ESPN, the Outdoor Life Channel and CNN.

The vigorous training of each triathlete should be commended. The mindset to push oneself to attempt an Ironman triathlon goal is exhilarating. Each contestant should embrace the honor of participating in this inspiring event. The hard work and time spent in developing these awarding-winning talents to accomplish their dream is the true reward.

None



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