

July 21st, 2008 - "The mind's first step to self-awareness must be through the body." - George Sheehan

On the 4th of July, Beth and her sister Shannon and I woke up nice and early to run a 4-mile race in Palmer Lake, CO. It is a dirt course, slightly downhill and about 850 people showed up this year. I competed in the race last year as well and finished 6th overall. This year was a different story. I think a lot of the REALLY fast guys didn't show up because by 2.5 miles into the race, I was alone, and went on to win by a good margin. This was my first even win in a running race in Colorado. Any of you that have lived here, or raced here, know that any race in Colorado is stacked with all kinds of great athletes. Tidbit of information: Colorado was just deemed the leanest (or least obese) state in the United States. We probably obtained that because we have a ridiculous amount of people with a body fat percentage of about 4%, bringing our average down..... :-)

The second race of the month was the Geneva ITU Pan American Cup in the beautiful lakes of upstate New York. My mother, father and friend, Ala, and two cousins Max and Lillian made up up from Pennsylvania and New Jersey to watch the race. The weather report on Friday, the day before the race was pleasant with some light showers. The day after was a nice temperature with showers. The day of the race.... hot and humid, no rain, no clouds. Sure enough, that's exactly what we got!

I knew by looking at the start list that the swim was going to be important and that without a good one, it would be over. The field had many good swimmers and the worry was that 5-6 of them would swim together and pull away on the bike, making it difficult to catch them on the run portion of the race. The swim was difficult and I just managed to hang onto the second pack of swimmers and then fly through transition and the first mile or so of the bike to latch onto the larger group ahead of me. Once on the pack I had no choice but to sit near the back as I was exhausted, and already starting to notice the signs of heat related issues. If you are in the heat and are drinking fluids but still getting goose bumps, that's not good.

Two guys were off the front of the main group and putting nearly 15 seconds per mile on us over the 7-lap course. Our group was moving quickly, but not quickly enough apparently. The lead riders got nearly a 2 minute lead going onto the run, giving us quite a challenge to try to catch them. In the first several steps out of T2 I realized this was not going to be my day to have a good run. I tried to stay calm and come to grips with the fact that I needed to finish. At the end of each lap the aid stations were offering cold sponges and bottles of water. I would grab a sponge and drain it on my head and drink a sip of the bottled water and then dump it on my head as well. With this routine, I was gaining momentum as the race went on. Thank goodness that the course was 6 laps and gave me plenty of opportunities to cool off. I progressively got faster each lap and finished well. Unfortunately, I had started out so slowly that I still had a run split that was 4 or 5 minutes slower than I usually run and put me back in 11th place. It could have been worse, and was still one place higher than last year, but with my normal run, I would have done quite well.

One of the great challenges of triathlon is putting all three disciplines together on the same day. Sure, you can have a good swim and a good bike, but can you run as well? Or how about a terrible swim and

trying to make it all back up in the bike and run? That is what makes out sport so difficult (and frustrating).

I am racing State Games of the West, a sprint distance triathlon in which I won last year, on the 26th of July here in Colorado Springs. On the 1st and 2nd of August, I was recruited to run on a great team for the Wild West Relay. This is a running event that takes 9 team members alternating differing length runs for 200 miles, from Fort Collins to Steamboat Springs. It's a challenging race but luckily ends at a fantastic hot spring!!!! Then I have

Muddy Buddy with a friend of mine, Cyrus, in Boulder. Finishing off a couple months of NE big races with an 8-hour relay triathlon with Team Simper Fri, a group of injured Marines that are taking on a venture in triathlon.

Speaking of this Team Simper Fi, my coach Lisa and I just finished a training camp with a group of 6 injured Marines here in Colorado Springs. Their injuries range from traumatic head injuries to above and below-knee amputees to paralyze from the waist down.. These guys are amazing people and I can't even begin to explain how rewarding it is to be training with these guys. I could write forever about the experiences I've had in the two camps with these men and women.

Thank you for reading.