

# **SWIM SWIM** T.M.

**FOR FITNESS SWIMMERS**

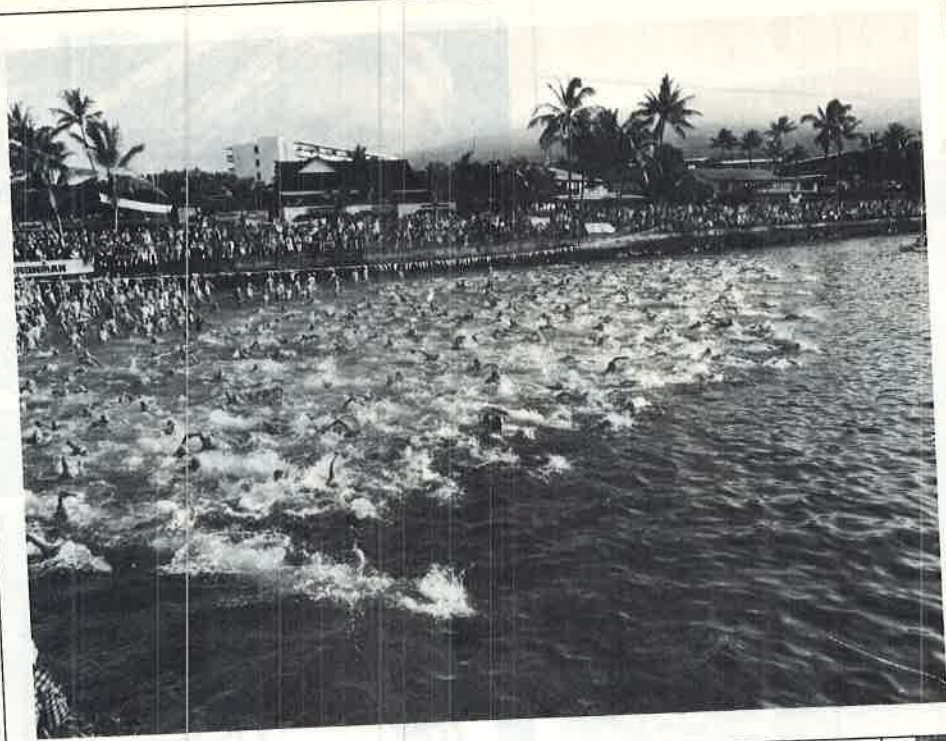
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The start. Amazingly 93% finished.



Mark Wendley

# TRY TRY TRY

*The Ironman Triathlon is heralded as the most demanding endurance event in the world and to finish, let alone win or place well, is an amazing accomplishment.*

*by Mark Wendley*

The final rays of light from the sinking Hawaiian sun filtered through the palm trees, casting long shadows on the asphalt of Alii Drive. I was heading north now, running ten-minute miles, only seven miles into my marathon run. At my present pace, I would finish the race in something just under 14 hours.

Fourteen hours! What kind of race is this?

This race—if you can call it that—was the Fifth Annual Ironman World

*Mark Wendley, President of the Northwoods Aquatic Club Masters, is currently training for several shorter triathlons he plans to enter this summer in California.*

Triathlon, consisting of a 2.4-mile ocean swim in the warm waters of the mid-Pacific, a 112-mile bike race through eerie black lava fields, and, finally, a 26.2-mile marathon run.

The triathlon, heralded as the most demanding endurance event in the world, is held on the Kona Coast of the “big island” of Hawaii. Of the 584 competitors who entered the water on February 6, 1982, only a small fraction would tell you they came to win. For me, as for most of us, the goal was to finish. Almost everyone has an estimated finish time they would like to achieve, but this goal becomes less important as the race progresses. In the end, it is the finish line that every triathlete looks to. To cross that line in one piece is so satisfying it makes those months of intense training all worthwhile.

The triathlon was conceived five years ago when Navy commander John Collins,

a Masters swimming competitor, thought of combining the established 2.4-mile Waikiki rough water swim, the 112-mile around-Oahu bike race, and the Honolulu marathon into one grueling event, each stage to be completed consecutively over the course of one long day.

It was only after 12 out of 15 starters finished the 1978 triathlon that it was discovered that the around-Oahu bike race had always taken place over two days. The following year, 12 out of 15 again finished the triathlon, including the first female. With media coverage from *Sports Illustrated* in 1979 and ABC Television a year later, the number of competitors swelled from 108 in 1980 to 326 in 1981, when the course was moved to the “big island” of Hawaii to facilitate the growing event more adequately.

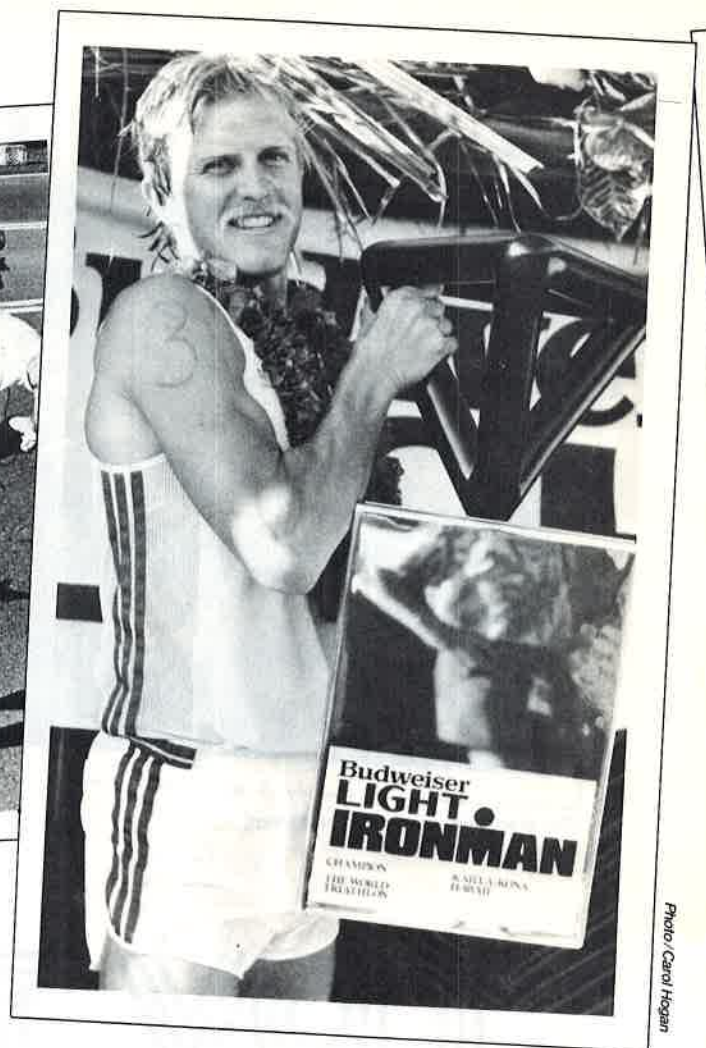
And so it was that I and 583 other

*(continued)*





Kim Bushong raced through aid stations, nonstop.



Photo/Carol Hogan

Scott Tinley, first place overall, Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon.

# TRY TRY TRY

(continued)

entrants began the 1982 triathlon at 7:30 on Saturday morning, February 6, in the shallow water at the base of the Kailua pier. A local minister gave a pre-race invocation, asking the Lord to grant the competitors strength for the long day. Moments later, the cannon sounded, signaling the start of the swim.

I have been a competitive swimmer for eight of my 24 years, and my career includes the Newbury Park High School Varsity squad, one year on the UCLA swim team and several years of working out on my own.

Finally, two years ago, several friends and I formed the Northwood Aquatic Club and have been enjoying great success in the Southern Pacific Association of U.S. Masters swimming. In fact, I enjoyed my best swimming year in 1981, recording numerous personal best times and setting a 19-24 regional record in the 200-yard backstroke. I also completed several rough water swims in 1981, my first ones ever, including a two-miler in August.

All of this gave me great confidence when I positioned myself on the front line for the start of the Ironman swim leg and began the race at a near all-out sprint to find some open water. I quickly learned that I was not the only strong swimmer in

the field. I found myself stroking along behind a rather large group early into the swim.

The water was rough. I later learned that the large swells actually pulled the turn-around vessel several hundred yards further out to sea than it should have been. The rough water forced seven of the 584 starters to drop out. Most of these seven complained of nausea from seasickness caused by the swells. The swim was no piece of cake for me either. Before I was to exit the water at the 1:13:15 mark, in 60th place, I suffered several minor jellyfish stings and a cramp in my right leg. I also ended up swimming 15 to 20 yards wide of the course at times, due to losing sight of the marker flags and buoys.

About the time I was cramping up, two miles into the swim, W.F. McCarthy III was finishing first in 57:39. His time put him one minute ahead of fifth place Dave Scott, 28, of Davis, California, who won the 1980 Ironman with a record of 9:24:33 and to most observers was the clear favorite for the 1982 title. Pat Hines of the Santa Monica Masters Swim Club emerged from Kailua bay in twelfth place overall, just seconds ahead of the second woman, Shawn Wilson, who won the swim in 1981. For Pat, a friend I met while

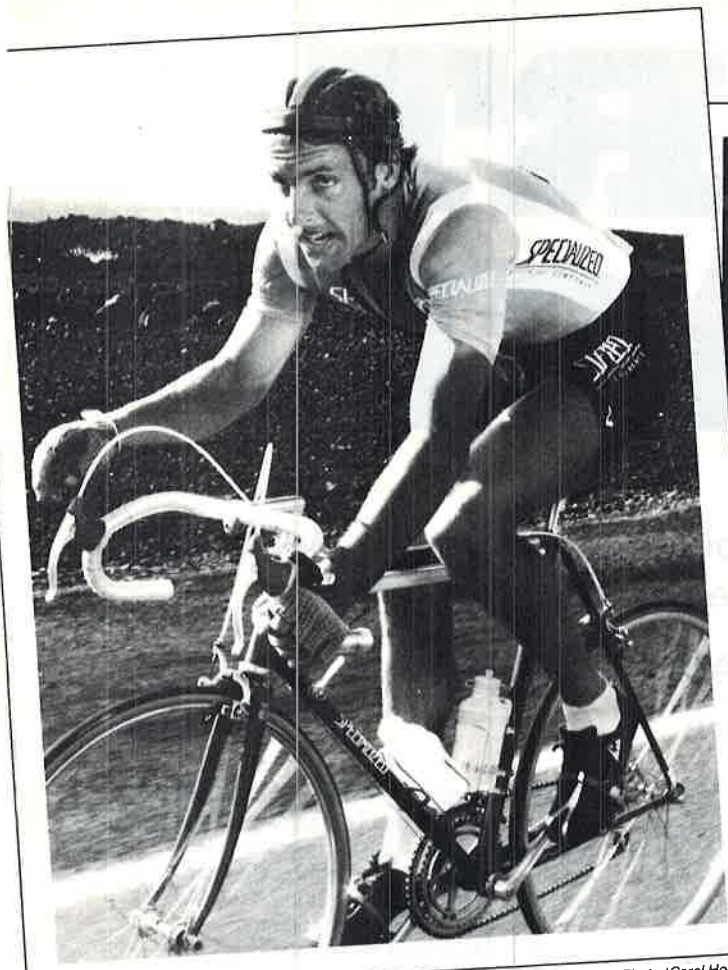
working out at the Santa Monica Swim Club, the day would be one of many ups and downs.

I was approaching the pier now, but six minutes ahead of me my Northwood teammate, Dave Sundius, was exiting the water at the 1:07:17 mark. Dave is a strong swimmer who won the swim portion of a half triathlon in Santa Barbara. He'd also trained with me for the triathlon for much of the past six months. Three flat tires in the bike portion would prove his undoing, and I beat him by 53 minutes.

Training really is the hardest part of the triathlon. Most competitors put in four to six months of intense work, but they almost always start out in top condition from their various year round conditioning programs. A survey of the 1981 contestants showed that the average triathlete trained an average of 4-10 miles swimming, 100-200 miles biking and 40-60 miles running a week. The major contenders, about 10 percent of the field, do more, and about 25 percent train less.

I found myself in this latter group. Like most competitors, I had to continue to work as I trained. I put in 40 hours a week in the finance department of *California Magazine*, where I'm the Accounts Receivable manager. In the final months





Photo/Carol Hogan

Second place finisher Dave Scott was out to duplicate his 1980 win.



The "agony of defeat" took on new proportions as ABC's Wide World of Sports covered Julie Moss crawling across the finish line just seconds after Kathleen McCartney passed her to become first place woman.

before the triathlon, I was training an average of 20 hours a week, swimming 10,000 yards, biking 115 miles and running 28 to 32 miles. An example of a typical training week is given in the chart at right. The other chart shows the weekly workout totals of three of the top triathletes who came from swimming background.

Triathletes usually come from a background of either swimming, cycling or running, which they consider their "specialty sport." It is interesting to note the advantages and disadvantages each group faces in training for and competing in the triathlon. For the swimmers, one advantage is that their event comes first and the rest of the field must chase them. Also, the skills involved in swimming, especially ocean swimming, are not as easy for a novice to pick up in a year as cycling and running may be for a swimmer. The one obvious disadvantage for the swimmer is that the swim leg is the shortest segment of the triathlon, both in terms of distance and time spent per event. Dave Scott cites yet another advantage for the swimmer, "Swimming training is boring. If you have swimming training in your blood—the discipline—you are probably better

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### The Author's Training Regimen

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Up-7:30	Up-6:30	Up-6:30	Up-6:30	Up-6:30	Up-7:00	Up-7:30
	BIKE 10 mi.	BIKE 10 mi.	BIKE 10 mi.	BIKE 10 mi.	BIKE 15 mi.	BIKE 63 mi.
Work 9-5	Work 9-5	Work 9-5	Work 9-5	Work 9-5	(to swim workout & back)	
RUN 8 mi.	SWIM: 3200 yds.	RUN 12 mi.	SWIM: 3200 yds.	RUN 12 mi.	SWIM: 3600 yds.	
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		
Bed-11:00	Bed-11:00	Bed-11:00	Bed-11:00	Bed-11:00		

### What it Takes to Win

	DAVE SCOTT	TOM WARREN	SCOTT TINLEY
<b>Ironman Performance Record</b>	1980 1st 9:24:33 1982 2nd 9:36:57	1979 1st 11:15:58 1980 4th 10:49:16 1981 2nd 10:04:38 1982 10th 10:18:06	1981 3rd 10:12:47 1982 1st 9:19:41
<b>TRAINING: (Average per week, four months prior to Triathlon)</b>	SWIM 30,000 yds. BIKE 350-400 mi. RUN 55-60 mi.	SWIM 9000 yds. BIKE 230 mi. RUN 58-70 mi.	SWIM 10,000 yds. BIKE 225 mi. RUN 65-70 mi.

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equipped mentally to train at all other sports."

Once I'd finished the relatively easy swim leg, I jumped on my bike and headed well into the heat of the lava fields that make up the majority of the bike course. The course runs 52 miles out to the small town of Hawi, climbing 500 feet over the final 15 miles to the turn-around. We were riding a tail wind out and I was flying along at 17 m.p.h. up the hill to Hawi. About ten miles from the turnaround, I spotted the leader heading toward me on the return leg, an ABC vehicle in front and a helicopter above. I was looking for Dave Scott, but saw a blurred figure in a leopard skin suit race by with a five-minute lead on the now second place Scott. I later learned that Kim Bushong, a 25-year-old lifeguard from La Mirada, California, who had been third in the swim, was the proud owner of the leopard skin and the lead. It was a lead he would hold until five miles into the run. I hit the turnaround at 12:00 noon and after stopping for food at an aid station, and noting that Dave Sundius was only five minutes ahead of me, began to head back down the hill. The tail wind we had riding out was now a 25 m.p.h. head wind. My pace slowed considerably.

It is at times like these that one appreciates proper—and expensive—equipment. Top contenders ride bikes that run \$1,500 or more. Add to that the cost of biking shoes, shorts and gloves, plus running shoes . . . the list goes on. Many of the top triathletes secure sponsors who pay for travel and equipment expenses. I had partial help from the Bikeology Bike Shop in Santa Monica. The manager, Howard Jackson, sold me a \$389.00 Niko Elite at a generous discount and also gave me a break on my biking equipment.

Despite having a good bike and the right shoes and shorts, after 90 miles on the bike, I was hurting. The lava fields were endless. I was also hungry, despite having already eaten three sandwiches and several bananas. I began looking for the airport which signaled the rider he had eight miles to go before reaching the town of Kailua. Several hills later, I was in sight of the marathon turnaround and the airport and an aid station . . . a peanut butter and jelly sandwich! I was saved.

Again I saw the leaders. This time they were running. Dave Scott was heading into the turnaround and I yelled encouragement to him as I passed. He waved weakly. Certain that he was the leader, I was startled to see another ABC vehicle several miles down the road. The runner following was 25-year-old Scott Tinley of San Diego, California, a man who had finished third a year ago but who was now pulling away from Scott. Several miles later, I saw Pat Hines and yelled to

her. She was walking. She turned and looked at me but did not speak. I learned later that Pat had finished the bike with a 14-minute lead on the second place woman, but a previously injured ankle had forced her to walk in the marathon and eventually drop out of the race.

Back in the town of Kailua, I raced toward Alii Drive and then south the 6½ miles to the end of the bike ride at the Kona Surf Hotel on Keauhou Bay. Here in town the crowds were out in force and my spirits climbed as the people cheered.

The moon was near full, casting a soft glow over the expanse of the lava fields. My 10-minute miles had slipped to 12-minute miles at the marathon turnaround, 17 miles into the course, and then to 14-minute miles. At 22 miles, I was reduced to a walk as my stomach muscles cramped. There was no question I would finish, but my hopes of breaking 14 hours vanished. I would run the last two miles through town. I couldn't, *I wouldn't* walk in.

But for now, I walked. A cloud passed over the moon and I felt the soft drizzle of a light rain. Ahead, I could see the glow of the lights at the next aid station. I tried running again . . . a few yards. No, I had to walk a little longer.

It felt strange. For two years, I had dreamed of doing the Ironman. I had trained hard for six months, wondering if I could go the distance, and now here I was only a few miles from the finish line. I was

unaware of the dramatic finish in the women's division. Kathleen McCartney of Costa Mesa had claimed the Ironwoman title in a record 11:09:40, passing Julie Moss in a final sprint as Moss, exhausted, stumbled and fell four separate times only yards from the finish line. Moss was to *crawl* across the finish on her hands and knees only 29 seconds later. I was also unaware that my teammate, Dave Sundius, was finishing 36 minutes ahead of me after leading me by only 10 minutes at the end of the bike. Scott Tinley won first place with a recordbreaking time of 9:19:41. But at that moment, none of it mattered.

I was running again, a mile to go. I grew stronger with each stride, the cramps in my stomach gone. The grin on my face broadened as the cheering crowds grew along the road near the finish. Ahead, the finish banner was in sight, along with the digital clock which showed just over 14:30.

Spectators began holding out their hands in front of me. I slapped them all as I ran along. And then, the moment of victory. I crossed the line at 14:33:35, in 360th place overall. Five hundred and forty-one had started and 534 would finish. The last two finishers would cross the line 24-and-a-half hours after the starting gun had sounded. But we were all winners. We Ironmen and Ironwomen had conquered an event that surpassed what most of the rest of the world cannot accomplish in their wildest athletic dreams.

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**BENEFITS:** 1. Strapless, yet it floats. 2. Contoured nose pads adjustable, more comfortable fit. 3. Rustproof. 4. Sand-beige skin tone. 5. Handy storage case.

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