

Ironman 70.3 California, Oceanside – March 28th, 2015 – Race Report

My 2015 season kicked off 2 months earlier than in 2014 with Ironman 70.3 California in Oceanside. Training through the winter and waiting until May to pin a bib on was too long last year, so Oceanside seemed to be a good compromise. And SoCal did not sound like a bad destination race at all, and certainly did not disappoint: “Grand-theft-Auto-like” scenery, amazing ocean view, and beautiful 80f and sunny weather set the tone for what was a great weekend. Nothing like the rough NY winter we have had (24f felt like 15 5 days before the race), leaving with no better option than doing all my training on the trainer and treadmill.

I travelled to California with no expectations, but I am flying home with a 4’21”09, finishing 38th OA (got “chicked” four times!), and clinched my first podium at an ironman-branded event with 2nd in my AG. A good start to 2015!



accenture
IRONMAN
70.3[®] *California
oceanside*

MARCH 28, 2015

FINISHER	Kevin Portmann						
SWIM	00:28:29	BIKE	02:23:00	RUN	01:24:46	OVERALL	04:21:09
AGE GROUP	M/25-29	AGE GROUP RANKING	2	OVERALL RANKING	38		

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The week leading up to the race

Joe and Fitwerx going the extra mile to get me race-ready...

I brought my bike to Joe Saturday afternoon to make sure everything was okay and swap the 10-spd cassette of my race wheels with an 11-spd cassette, only to realize that the space that I thought was for the extra gear was instead a washer. My race wheel needed a new hub, essentially leaving me with no race wheels for Oceanside.

Joe didn't see it that way and spent his weekend gluing a pair of Mavic CXR 80 for me, putting on the cassette and making sure the wheels would be perfectly set up on the P5. And if that wasn't enough, work keeping me in the office for most of the day, Joe met me at the shop late on Tuesday evening with a smile and great words of encouragement. He essentially took it on him to make sure I would have the best machine racked in transition on Saturday, making this stressful situation a non-issue for me. Absolutely phenomenal service!



Beginning of the week...

An intense 2-week block training session left me physically tired. I knew I would need to really focus on my recovery to rest my legs and recharge the battery before Oceanside. I focused on hydrating well, eating well, and getting as much sleep as possible. My legs felt heavy on Monday and Tuesday, and a busy work week made it challenging to get the rest I was hoping for. Nothing I wasn't prepared for as work picked up quite a bit in the past weeks, probably the effect of the end of year promotion ☺.

As always, I knew I could count on Nugget to watch my nutrition and make sure that I ate healthy. I anticipated the busy work schedule and packed up my bag on Sunday afternoon, leaving me with just having to pack the bike on Wednesday evening. There is just too much to think about to do it last minute. At least I had the peace of mind that I wouldn't forget anything.

I can't lie: getting on the trainer even for an hour was almost asking for the impossible, and putting on my running shoes for a recovery run when it's 24f outside almost felt like torture, but I shook off the negative thoughts and got it done.

Wednesday evening...



YES! We made it! Race week officially kicked off. After a late work event, we dropped off Bentley at the Hortons (I guess we can say that now). Meredith and Mark made this trip even easier on us, agreeing to watch Bentley until Mariosa's sister picked him up. We knew he would be in good hands, and based on the pics we received on Thursday, I think it's fair to say that he adjusted just fine. You guys rock! I packed up my bike in my SciCon bag. We were finally ready to fly out to Sunny California to kick off the tri season!

Thursday...

We arrived in LA around noon, and aside from TSA taking my padlock, the bike arrived intact. As nerve-wracking as it may be to fly with my bike, Virgin America personnel at Newark was great and my bike got to LA intact. We picked up the car and drove down to Oceanside, in awe of simple things like 80f and sunny weather, palm trees, and ocean views...The drive was amazing, especially down I-5 when we started to see the Pacific.

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We arrived at Andrew and Dena's house in Carlsbad around 4:30pm. I couldn't help but compare their new, beautiful home with Andrew's apartment in Hoboken! Well done Drew, what a beautiful place you have! Thank you very much for hosting us!

And of course I came to Cali with Warm-ups, a race kit, running shorts, but no casual shorts, so we drove to a nearby store and bought some.

Happy Friday...1 day until race day!



Tom, Leo, and Dan from Team Trisports also came for the race. Leo, Tom, and I managed to meet up for a ride in the morning. It was my first interaction with the team, and their warmth and kindness made the integration to the Trisports Elite team very easy! We rode along the water for a good 55 minutes, alternating speed drills with down times when riding through town. Too much going on! Palm trees, the Pacific Ocean, and surfers riding their scooter to the beach with their board attached onto a trailer...what a stark change from NY!

I could not contain my joy to finally get on my new Cervelo P5 Six and ride it in nice conditions. I can't thank Rob, Ismail, Mary, and Patrick enough for their incredible support, and for allowing me to ride one of the best bikes that exist today. Getting down on the aero-bars required a good 20 min of adaptation as the bike is a lot stiffer than the Slice. It feels like it is made of steel, yet is incredibly light and fast. On the saddle or up on the pedals, the bike gives the impression that no power gets wasted. The frame translates the torque into speed almost instantly. The shifting with Di2 is out of this world, incredibly precise and quick. It took some time to feel fully comfortable with it (mainly knowing which button to press to get to an easier gear) but it is amazing. The wheels Joe prepared over the weekend were fantastic. It almost looks as if the tube is part of the rim thanks to the membrane that Mavic has to seal the gap between the tube and the rim.

After the ride, Mariesa and I grabbed breakfast by the pier and went to the athlete check-in. As an AWA (gold) athlete this year, I had priority check-in, and later realized in the transition area that AWAs had their own rack...pretty cool! I could get used to that. We, of course, immersed ourselves into the atmosphere of the race by walking around the Ironman Village, checking out the merchandise store and after a light lunch we headed to transition to drop off the bike. I recon'd the transition for a good 5-7 min, making sure I knew where my bike would be and where to go. I was starting to feel butterflies in my stomach.

We had a light dinner at Tuscany, an Italian restaurant 2 minutes from Andrew and Dena's. I opted for pasta, and though I expected more than 5 pastas in my plate, in hindsight, it was good not to eat too much. The legs were feeling better than earlier in the day. This was it! Last night of sleep before the first race of the season!

Race day

After a good night of sleep, I woke up in the wee hours of the morning, around 3:45 and had a big breakfast with 7 spoons of oatmeal mixed with honey, a large cup of coffee, and a big banana. Having the appetite for that much food was a good sign. We arrived at the transition area around 5am.

Setting up transition

It went so quick! Mariesa helped a great deal with packing the transition bag, so I knew exactly what was in it and where things were. I clipped on my bike shoes, set up my running shoes, Trisports visor and gels, my helmet, sunglasses and bib for the bike (the race organizers imposed the bib on the

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bike leg), and did my first warm up around 5:45am. After a second warm up around 6:15, I calibrated my power meter and headed to the swim start after I sprayed a lot of sunscreen and Aquaphor.

Swim: 28:29

7:08 and the horn went off! Chaos in the water but I tried to break away from the main group and find some fast feet, which I did after about a 100 yards. It worked until the first left turn. We passed a lot of people and I felt really good, so good I questioned whether I was pushing or cruising. I still felt like I had a decent stroke, and felt really comfortable in my new HuubDesign Archimedes II. It's nice and snug at the neck, but extremely elastic at the calves and arms. I did not feel any restriction around the shoulders. Such a great wetsuit!



As we got to the mouth of the harbor the water got choppy. I breathe on my left side and luckily for this race we swam counter clockwise, so sighting was a bit easier, but the waves after that first buoy still made it difficult to sight. It was all about taking it home after the second buoy. I lost my pacer and the water got a bit choppy, sighting got even harder, but after a while I could see the finish. Now time to have fun on the bike!



T1:

The run to the bike was long. I knew exactly where my bike was and thanks to the quick release of my wetsuit, the transition went fine. Helmet and sunglasses on, bib on, I am ready to go.

The race organizers made it clear that wearing the bib on the bike was mandatory (a requirement to ride through Camp Pendleton) and that people would be turned around in T1 if they didn't wear it. Yet some athletes managed to get turned around at the bike exit.

Bike: 2:23:00

After the first 3 to 4 miles where it was difficult to find rhythm, I finally got into a good position on the aero-bars, bringing my HR down to 158-159, and levelled my power. The section from mile 4 to mile 24 was fast and flat. I forced myself not to push too hard as I knew we had some climbs coming up. I passed a lot of people, but got passed by only one, Rory from Salt Lake. He was a strong cyclist so I kept him in sight for a while. The bike felt amazing, smooth on the bumpy sections and stiff when I pressed hard on the pedals. It was hard to contain the energy and hold off.



Mile 24 almost marked the beginning of a new race. I went from averaging 25-26mph down to 10-12mph in a matter of minutes, facing some long steep climbs, broken up with false flats and steep, fast descents, all in the countryside of San Clemente and Oceanside. I caught myself gazing at the beautiful scenery more than once while enjoying riding on amazing road conditions. Despite the legs feeling that nice burn on the uphill, I was having a blast. I really, really tried to follow Kevin's guidance to not push too hard on the climbs, but I was having too much fun out there. The first steep climb, about a mile long, warmed everyone up for the next one, a nice, steady 6-mile climb that peaked at 730ft. Though I was hoping for a better pace up the second hill, I was still feeling good, keeping my power in check.

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The second loop did not go as well as I would have liked. I still felt good, and felt like I had a good form, but I did not have the extra 3-4 matches I needed to burn to get the legs moving again. Instead of being frustrated, I thought about my build up to the race, and the rough winter we've had. I recall smiling, realizing that for a first race, it was not bad at all, only if I could maintain the pace and form, I'd be happy. Before I knew it I was running up the ramp of the pier, and on the way down I could hear Dave Cruz's encouragement. Shortly after Mariesa, Michelle, Justin and Ryan were encouraging me at the bottom of the ramp. You can never underestimate the amount of energy you can receive from the crowd.



Mile 9 through 11 were tough. The Red Bull hill felt like a mountain, but I stayed composed, slowed down a notch, and built up my speed again on the way down. I knew that if I could reach the Red Bull turn-around relatively "unscathed", I could manage to have a decent last 2.5 miles. There was one last uphill before reaching mile 12. It was as if it were there to make you earn the waterfront stretch to the finish. Left turn, right turn, and off I was heading to the finish. My legs started to turn over quicker, my face lit up at the idea of completing my first Oceanside 70.3, and most importantly, I was thoroughly enjoying it. I went straight at

the junction where athletes either make a right onto the 2nd loop or take it home. My support crew was there to congratulate me. Done and done! I crossed the finish line after 4 hours, 21 minutes, and 9 seconds.

I finished 38th overall and 2nd in my age group, earning me my first podium at an ironman-branded race. Knowing that this race is a big season opener for a lot of athletes and San Diego being one of the best places a triathlete can find to train all year round, I knew I'd be facing some steep competition. There are a lot of lessons to learn, and a lot to work on to be more competitive, but overall I can be happy with my performance. The season just started and things are looking promising. Good start to the season!



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With the winner of the day Jan Frodeno



Roughly 1 hour after crossing the finish line

A big Thank You to...

Mariesa, aka Nugget, who is my #1 support during my training, racing, and more. She makes sure that I eat well, and helps with all things that could impede on my training. She puts up with a lot, my moods, my long work days, my crazy 4:30am workouts, or even drives to FitWerx during the week when I can't. I couldn't do it without her!



Capco and Rob, Ismail, Mary, and Patrick for supporting me this season. I can't thank you enough for providing me with one of the best bikes that exist today! In addition to giving me an incredible work environment, your support, encouragement, and interest in my passion are very much appreciated! Looking forward to representing Capco this season!

Trisports.com and Seton and Debbie for giving me the opportunity to represent their top-notch online tri store with their Elite team! The great customer service, couple with the wide variety of the best products one can find today in all 3 disciplines and more will guarantee you to be well equipped for your season! Thank you so much for having me in your Elite team!



FitWerx and Joe for always looking after my bike and dealing with my last minute requests almost all the time! Joe and Ron provide pro-like service to all customers. Hit me up if you want to go talk to them!

Huub Design for making me comfortable and fast in the water. My new wetsuit is incredibly flexible, comfortable, and fast! Looking forward to racing more with it this season!



Hawk-Racing for allowing me to race on some fast wheels! Light, stiff, yet very fast, the Veyrons are incredible to ride.

ClutchPT and Josh who is always there when I need his PT expertise! Thankfully I did not need to go see him this year, but I know he'll be ready to help me out in case I need him

And of course all my friends and family! Thank you all for being so involved in my passion!

Thanks and happy training!

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