

Matthew Bach
Ironman Maryland 2014
9-20-14

Woke-up: 4:40 AM

Breakfast: 4:45 AM (2 slices of Martin's Whole Wheat Potato Bread with ~3tbsp peanut butter each – 760c)

Weather: 60 at wakeup, 60s on bike, 70-80 during run. Sunny with some clouds, dry

Gear: Team Zoot two piece trisuit, Aquasphere goggles, race provided swim cap, BlueSeventy full length wetsuit, A&D ointment, timing chip (left ankle), Garmin 310xt in T1, white puma socks in T2, Specialized Trivents, Lazer Aerohelmet, IM sunglasses, Zoot Ultra Race 4.0 racing shoes, IM Louisville visor, 808 Firecrests, Cannondale Slice Hi-Mod (Dura-Ace components, ISM Adamo saddle, X-Lab rear mount, Gorilla Cages, Quarq Elsa powermeter 170mm crank, Look Keo 2 Max pedals)

Race Statistics

SWIM

39th fastest swim, **1:05:05, 1:41/100m**

Bill Bishop swam an unbelievable 50:05. Most times looked ~5min slower than usual

BIKE

10th fastest bike, **4:41:46, 23.85mph avg**

Off bike in 11th. Nathan Rickman (2nd OA) biked fastest in 4:29:03

RUN

2nd fastest run, **3:00:25, 6:53 pace**

Brought me to the overall win. Only Justin Jacobs in 26th place ran faster, 3:00:09

OVERALL

1st fastest time, **8:51:19 final time**

Ironman Maryland Champion

Race Commentary

I am ecstatic with my performance (9.5/10), meeting or surpassing nearly every goal I set for myself and it resulted in an unexpected Ironman win.

Race week: I was a bit worried about both of my Achilles as they had been nagging me for the past couple of months. I had been rolling diligently and they were getting better, especially with the drop in volume as I tapered, but I wanted to make sure they were good to go for the race so I stopped by Clutch Physical Therapy and had an appointment with Josh. After some ultrasound and manual therapy, I left feeling a good deal better.

I dropped off my bike for a tuneup and to put on a set of Firecrest 808s that Joe LoPorto was lending me at FitWerx on Sunday. I picked up the bike on Wednesday morning and drove down to Maryland alone, checked into the Days Inn Cambridge. I did short “stoke the fire” workouts in each discipline for the three days leading into the race, with pickups at race pace, and short bursts above. Visualization for 30min on Thursday, and 15min on Friday. Lauren arrived on Thursday evening. I ate metabolically efficient meals all week. As I was preparing my bottles of UCAN the night before, I remember that I was actually looking forward to drinking them during the race, which has never happened before with a race drink.

Pre-race: Left at 5am, staked out a spot on Oakley St to park at 5:15am for Lauren's convenience during the race. Walked 0.5miles to transition in the dark. Pumped tires, set bike to proper gear, masking taped 4 GUs to top bar, half of a Bonk Breaker to rear wing, placed 2 bottles in rear, left lower cage free, looped sunglasses on bike. No shoes allowed on bikes. Added Garmin 310xt watch to bike gear bag on and set to show power for the bike. Dropped off my run special needs bag. Earl suggested a 10min light jog and warm up swim. Shoes were in run gear bag and I only had flip flops so I only did continuous motion and leg swings. They didn't allow a warmup swim. I sucked down a "shot" of UCAN at 6:10am, sipped minimal water. Watched a 77yr old man put on a wetsuit with help from his wife, and Lauren thought "that's me in 50 years." Got on my wetsuit and edged my way to the front of the self-seeded swim start. The announcer, David Downey, said "with no Pro field, one of you at the front of the swim start will be the first ever amateur Ironman Champion today" and for the first time I said in my head "maybe that could be me?" and then quickly shoved it out.

Swim: started on shore, we ran over the timing mat, and down the boat ramp. A tight bottleneck at the end of the boat ramp made for a rough start. Nothing like the brawl that is the Kona swim start, but still fairly violent for the first 5 minutes. I was shocked by the "dirtiness" of the swimming as people were literally grabbing my ankles and pulling. Relatively small amount of drafting, some chop and a bit of swerving but not terrible. I got my wetsuit stripped, and they did a great job. All times seemed slow with very few breaking an hour. Bill Bishop somehow swam a ridiculous 50:05. Michael Hoffman and Daniel Szajta (2 guys I had scoped out in my age group) swam 58 something when they normally swim around 54-55. I swam 7 minutes slower than expected. Somewhat choppy, maybe long. I swallowed a decent amount of the brackish water and I had some leaky goggle problems after getting elbowed in the face a few times. Finished with dolphin diving in shallow water. I consider it fortunate that there was no clock at the swim finish, though I did look at the time of day on my Garmin and noticed it seemed late. After today, I realize that I need to put a focus on swimming again to achieve the goals that are formulating for Kona next year. Left the water in 39th place in 1:05:05.

T1: it was fast. With no shoes allowed on the bikes, and the All-World-Athletes being racked near the swim in (farthest point from bike out), Earl and I discussed and decided that I should



run with my bike shoes in hand to the mount line, lean the bike against the fence, and put the shoes on there. It worked beautifully. I

got sunscreen put on me by volunteers, but they only got to splattering some on my shoulders before I ran away and they laughed. I transitioned in 2:02, which I believe was the fastest time of the day, and my direct competitors averaged around a full minute slower.

Bike: the course began with us winding through the neighborhoods that we would later run on, but once we emerged onto open road I settled into my 230w target. It was, as anticipated, very easy to hold with fresh legs, and I stayed patient the way I had visualized



the day before. I carved through the field, taking splits every 10 miles and noticing that the times were right around 25min, which is 24mph, higher than the avg pace I was expecting going in – I purposely had my expectations set conservatively so that it would hopefully provide a confidence boost during the race when I was going faster than expected. It worked. The splits kept coming in at around 25min on the dead-flat course with relatively calm wind. At around mile 20, someone blew by me and I responded by matching his pace. I pushed around 250w for 2 minutes and then thought about what Earl expressed to me before the race...there will be some tough decisions that will need to be made that will weigh heavily on the outcome of the race. This was one of them, and the decision I made was to settle down. Riding at 250w (3.85w/kg, 81% of FTP) was not going to be something I could do for 90 more miles without wreaking havoc on my legs.

I began drinking my first bottle of 3 scoops of UCAN and a salt capsule at mile 20 and finished it over the next 20 miles. As I closed the first loop of the “lollipop” course, a group of cyclists passed me, and this time I went with them. Three or four of the dozen were blatantly neglecting the 4-bike length no-drafting rule by riding a wheel length off of the rider ahead of them. I was happy to see that most of the group seemed to respect the rules though. Unfortunately, I only saw a marshal once or twice and never saw them give any of the offenders a penalty. I rode in the vicinity of the group but noticed that while riding in the back of the pack there was an accordion effect. Every time it happened, the back of the pack would slow down so much that I would have to slow dramatically in order to stay 4+ bike-lengths away, and then surge again to get back to speed and target wattage. It wasn't efficient, so I decided to ride off the front most of the time with the added benefit that it would guarantee draft-free riding – the last thing I wanted was for a 4min penalty to ruin my race. I noticed that two of the guys in the pack were part of my age group.

I took a no-caffeine strawberry-kiwi GU Roctane around mile 60, and had my second bottle of 3 scoops of UCAN and 1 salt capsule around mile 75-85, careful as Nicci suggested, to keep the GU and UCAN separated by some time. I had a second GU with a little caffeine at mile 100. I never felt hungry so I didn't eat the half Bonk Breaker bar I had tucked in my rear mount. In fact, I almost felt overly full during the ride, and was teetering on “forcing” down the nutrition, even when only consuming 680 calories on the bike! It's likely I'll have just 2 scoops of UCAN in the second bottle next time, or go with one fewer GU. Throughout the bike leg, I took water bottles from aid stations for spraying over my entire body to keep my core temperature down as the day heated up and the sun baked us with few shaded sections of the course. I drank some as well, especially to



wash down GU and the chalkiness of the UCAN. I peed just twice on the bike, which is a very low number for me, and a result of Nicci's advice not to overhydrate.

I noticed during the first half of the bike that my HR was nearly pegged at 150, though in training my HR was normally around 140 at that wattage. I still don't know why that was, but it bothered me a bit during the race because I thought it may have been indicating I was working too hard. It led me to keep relaxed in the 2nd half of the bike leg where I had originally planned on pushing the pace over the last 20 miles if I felt good. I certainly felt good, but still kept it restrained to keep the weapon (my run) sharp. I finished the bike in 11th place in the midst of a group with two competitors (Bill Bishop and Nathan Rickman) 12:00 and 7:30 ahead. I slipped my feet out of the shoes in the last half mile of the bike for the dismount, and volunteers took our bikes from us as we entered transition so we didn't have to run with

them. My time of 4:41 represents a 25 minute PR on the bike leg of an Ironman (5:06 at Kona last year), and a nearly 24mph average for 112 miles. Only my most bold and optimistic estimations had me anywhere near that time, with my most realistic estimate around 4:50. Even more encouraging is that I really held back in the last 50 miles of the race where I could have instead continued to target 230w or higher and ended up with a bike split that was several minutes faster.

At two different points during the latter half of the ride, I heard spectators yell out that I was 5th overall. I was very pleased to hear that! I didn't expect to be so far forward on the bike, and for the first time, real thoughts of winning popped into my head, especially after I found myself in 3rd at a few points during the bike leg. The problem was...I didn't know how far ahead the top 2 were. If they had opened a gap of 20 minutes, it would have been a lot tougher to overcome.

Bike Statistics:

Segment	Time	Speed(mph)	Power(watts)	VI	HR
0-10 miles	25:13	23.62	234	1.00	error
10-20 miles	25:07	23.85	232	1.00	error
20-30 miles	24:23	24.55	235	1.00	149
30-40 miles	24:40	24.32	235	1.00	150
40-50 miles	25:52	23.15	228	1.00	148
50-60 miles	25:56	23.16	228	1.02	148
60-70 miles	26:03	22.98	216	1.01	146
70-80 miles	24:45	24.16	221	1.00	149
80-90 miles	24:48	24.20	211	1.01	145
90-100 miles	26:08	22.91	217	1.01	146
100 miles-end	28:18	22.95	216	1.05	144
Overall	4:41:46	23.85	225	1.01	147

Link to full TrainingPeaks data:

<http://www.trainingpeaks.com/av/ZPZEGQL6WXTYFHNZK37T4CHWAI>

T2: uneventful, but moved to 10th overall. More sunscreen. Decided to put socks on, which I had left as a game time decision for me. I don't think I'll do it in the future though as they get wet and heavy, and the Zoot Ultra Race 4.0s are incredibly comfortable and made to be worn without socks. I've never had blisters in them during races or training even sockless.

Run: the main event...a grueling test of fitness and will power, where champions emerge and the weak flounder. The only leg of the race where the athlete approaches "the line" and has no choice but to face the demons within, or be swallowed up by the wolves behind.

I started the run alongside Dan Szajta, who is in my age group and one that I had noticed as a possible contender when looking at the participant list before the race. We acknowledged each other, and he asked me how many slots I thought there would be. I said "only one" and kept running. I ran at what I believed to be an easy pace and saw that I was running low 6min pace, faster than the goal by far. I find that to be a usual occurrence at the beginning of an Ironman run as the legs



are still fresh(ish), there is adrenaline pumping from transition and the crowds cheering, and because the pace seems so slow compared to the one we moved at for over 4 ½ hours on wheels. I settled almost immediately to 6:45 pace with Lauren yelling to me “patience Matt, patience!” At mile 2, one runner blew by at 6:15 pace and I sang that Frozen song to myself... “Let it go, let it go”... I’m not afraid to admit it. We caught him 2 miles later. At mile 3, I heard the time differential had shrunk to 9min and 7min. At mile 5, solely in 3rd place, the differential was just 6:30 and 5min, and that was the moment. Earl asked me after the race when it was that I knew I was going to win. I told him mile 5. Admittedly premature during an event like an Ironman, but at that point, I was running incredibly smoothly capable of gearing it up 3 notches, my HR was low for me (150s), and yet the time differential was shrinking rapidly. I was supremely confident that my nutrition overhaul with Nicci and the metric Ironmans I had done in training had prepared me for what I knew was coming. A question popped into my head... what should I do if I cross the line in first? And my answer to myself was that I’d raise the banner over my head. Then I quickly banished the idea from my thoughts. “Don’t get ahead of yourself Matt. There’s still work to do.” At mile 8, the leads were 5min and 4min. Through the last 5 miles of the first 9 mile loop, I continued to run relaxed and tell myself “run easy and whatever pace comes of it, allow it (unless it’s faster than 6:30, then you are an idiot).” The word that kept popping into my head was “luxurious” because that’s how it felt. It didn’t feel like a race, just a setup for a race. Spectators cheered loudly that I was catching the leaders, that I looked great, and that if I kept going like I did, I would win the race. At aid stations, I poured water over my head, took cold sponges, drank some water, and put ice down my tri-suit. Each loop is around 9 miles, and the first was complete.

Loop two. I told myself it was time to get down to business. Legs began to fatigue a bit and the 6:45 pace didn’t feel as easy as the first lap. My HR climbed, almost 80 degrees out now, but I maintained the pace. Lauren, her mom, and Ginny now yelling at me to “be comfortable being uncomfortable!” a quote that I read and mentioned to them in the days before the race. At mile 12, I passed Bill Bishop (the uber fast swimmer who held the lead until Nathan Rickman passed him at mile 10) and was 2:19 back from Nathan. Ice and water. My feet were now heavy with soggy socks and shoes from all the water I poured on myself (and a bit of pee) over the last 12 miles. GU Salted Caramel with 20mg of caffeine went down at mile 13. The other GU I brought with me from T2 fell out earlier in the run. A post on the Ironman Maryland live blog:

Matthew Bach is running up a storm at IRONMAN Maryland – looks like he's about to take the lead in the men's race at 15 miles:

*1 7:36:34 116 Nathan Rickman USA
2 7:36:39 0:05 45 Matthew Bach USA*

Earl saw me at 15 ½ miles, and said “he has 15 seconds on you, he is right there, it’s yours when you want it.” As we ran around the transition peninsula at mile 16, Nathan and I exchanged a couple quick words, and I took the lead. I continued to push the pace in order to open up a gap and ensure he didn’t follow. Less than a mile later I had 40 seconds on him. Another mile went by, I had another 30 seconds. Back at Great Marsh Park I asked for my special needs bag and was denied. They said I could only get it from the other direction. I was looking forward to that Red Bull in a flask for the last 20 minutes and they denied me. Loop 2 complete, and the line drew near. Not the finish line, the line where things get really tough.

Loop three. Here’s the hurt. The guy on a mountain bike with a “1st place Male” poster on the front pioneered the path for me through the now-congested run course, and alerted the aid station volunteers of my requests. Water and ice. I knew that the final out-and-back to the West Side Bypass was going to be a rough patch. Fatigue, no shade, no spectators, just sun,



heat, and fortunately, an aid station. I dug deep and conjured inspiration from people like Glenn Hartrick (just got home to Jersey City after a horrific bike accident in June, the hospital, and rehab), and my brother, Justin Bach, who died of cancer in 2008 after battling it for 3 ½ years. As I had missed my Red Bull, I took a GU of some sort from the aid station at mile 21 and sucked down half of it, afraid to take in any more for fear of a late stomachache. For the first and only time, I walked 10 steps and sucked down some water in preparation for the journey back to town. I saw Nathan running towards me now far enough back that, barring a blow-up, he couldn't catch me. One last time running around Great Marsh Park, spectators cheering loudly, every step sending shockwaves of pain up my legs. I told myself that there is only one way to make it stop, and that is to cross the finish line. Stopping is not an option. "I had money on you!" I heard one say. Another... "nice race weight!" A competitor on his second loop yells "hey, put my timing chip around your ankle!" as I ran by. I ran down the cobblestoned High Street raising my hands up and fist pumping to get the crowd going, and they responded beautifully. A hearty shot of adrenaline and I turned the corner of the last checkpoint and the homestretch. In a brief moment of clarity, I zipped up my tri-suit, covered my exposed chest hair, and presented my sponsors names in glorious continuity. Two hundred yards to go down the finish chute with announcers Dave Downey and Jeff Meeks calling into the microphone "here comes Matthew Bach, Ironman Maryland Champion!" I uncharacteristically stopped to give Lauren a kiss 10 yards from the finish because I knew it would mean the world to her, raised my fists above my head, and then crossed the line picking up the finishing banner above my head as I had planned while a dozen photographers flashed their cameras at me. Eight hours, fifty one minutes, nineteen seconds. Ironman Maryland Champion!

Run Statistics:

LOOP 1			LOOP 2			LOOP 3		
Mile	Pace	HR	Mile	Pace	HR	Mile	Pace	HR
1	6:31	150	10	6:50	160	19	6:48	158
2	6:50	153	11	6:57	160	20	6:47	159
3	6:52	154	12	6:51	161	21	6:53	158
4	6:45	157	13	6:49	163	22	7:13	153
5	6:43	159	14	6:49	164	23	7:00	155
6	6:41	159	15	6:52	163	24	7:06	154
7	6:41	159	16	6:55	163	25	7:10	153
8	6:48	162	17	6:54	163	26	7:05	155
9	6:48	158	18	6:45	159	26.2	7:24	159

Overall: 26.2 miles, 6:53 pace, 158avg HR

Link to full TrainingPeaks data:

<http://www.trainingpeaks.com/av/ZPRJAM522W53LSG2IFBEPB35E>

After the Finish: Two reporters immediately started asking me questions, which I somehow was able to respond to in a coherent fashion. My quote to newstation WBOC16 was "Incredible, awesome event. Loved the bike course, totally flat. The run course was great because we got so many spectators cheering, it was three loops. Tough swim. Great course, very well directed, well supported, had a blast," said Bach. Articles were also written in the:

Baltimore Sun (http://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/bs-sp-digest-0921-20140921_0_3500703.column) and

The Star Democrat (http://www.stardem.com/easternshore/news/dorchester_county/article_a9708a92-d18c-5292-833a-9d70f8d31597.html)

After the reporters, they had me sit down to autograph a couple of the finish line banners, and they gave me a piece of one to take home!

Dave Downey requested an interview but let me go to the medical tent first. I composed myself after crossing the line, but once I didn't have to, I was a wreck. I struggled to walk, talk and see straight. They signed me in, I laid on a cot, and they asked me to drink something. I struggled to sit up, and they instead gave me two bags of IV, which was miraculous. A half an hour later, I felt like a million bucks. I drank some chocolate milk, some water, and a Perform, and left the med tent. I went back for the interview with Dave and it went really well. I ate some food at the athlete food tent while being congratulated left and right by spectators and athletes. I had kids asking for pictures, parents asking for pictures of me with their kids, selfies with strangers...crazy!

After the race, I had dinner with Lauren at The High Spot on High St as we watched the athletes continue. A group of spectators gave us their table so we could eat and I had a beer, a burger, some fries, and crab soup. The soup didn't sit well.

Dave Downey and Jeff Meeks, announcers for Ironman, offered that I come back at 11 for the midnight finish to put finisher medals on the athletes. I gladly accepted! I ended up high-fiving the athletes as they finished, a job reserved for the champions if they accept, but one that has never been done by an amateur! It was an incredible experience and a dream come true. I was on such a high that I wasn't even tired. That night we went to bed at 1am, but my eyes snapped open at 5:15am and I couldn't fall back asleep. I lay there for 3 hours while Lauren slept.

That night I was alerted by Bryan Dunn, Griffin McNeese and Jared Tootell that TheRealStarky was looking for my contact info for an interview. I didn't really know who TheRealStarky was but researched him and gladly accepted the interview. I spoke over the phone into the first ever podcast on TheRealStarky Show. Link here:

<https://soundcloud.com/therealstarky/the-real-starky-show-episode>

Chris Kaplanis made me aware of a pic taken by Liz Kreutz of me crossing the line that was posted to the Live Ironman feed on the website. Liz Kreutz was the personal photographer for Lance Armstrong and is a decorated sports photographer.

The next day at the awards ceremony, I received the 1st place 25-29 male age group award. I was a bit disappointed that they didn't have a special podium for overall finishers, and a/o 9/24/14, WTC still hasn't referred to me as the "champion" of the race. Lauren Capone (female winner) and I received a bottle of red wine with a label that read "Ironman Maryland 2014" and "Men's Champion" but nothing special beyond that. I was invited to make a speech at the awards ceremony after receiving the award, and it went really well. Lauren recorded it on her phone. It was brief and the crowd laughed a lot.

Team Zoot used my finishing pic as the profile pic for the Team Zoot facebook page. Zootsports.com posted a blurb in their bulletin that read "*TeamZoot NorthEast athlete Matt Bach takes the overall WIN at the first Ironman Maryland! Congrats on an excellent race Matt! Matt raced in the Ultra Race 4.0 Boa shoe and the TeamZoot custom Kit.*" with a pic of me crossing the line.

I have an interview lined up with Endurance Planet for Thursday, September 24th, 2014, and am in the process of having interviews lined up with local newspapers in Roseland NJ, Danbury CT, Newtown CT and Summit NJ.

Four days after the race (at the time of writing), I am not sore anymore. Even the day after the race, I could have gone for a run as my legs didn't feel so bad (though I did have "sausage toes" and my legs were puffy). The lack of soreness is surprising for sure, but I've noticed that my body has increasingly become more durable since I started triathlon 4 years ago. Mentally and physically I feel great so I may have some fun doing the Philly Marathon and use it to qualify for Boston 2016.

Nutrition Recap

4:50am: 2 slices of Whole Wheat Martin's Potato Bread with 3tbsp peanut butter each 760c
6:10am: 1 "shot" of UCAN (1 scoop UCAN in 8oz water) 80c

Bike: 3 scoops lemonade UCAN, 1 salt capsule in bottle (22oz) 240c
1 GU Roctane, strawberry-kiwi, no caffeine 100c
3 scoops lemonade UCAN, 1 salt capsule in bottle (22oz) 240c
1 GU, salted caramel, 20mg caffeine 100c
Water throughout bike (estimate 40oz) 0c

Run: 1 GU, salted caramel, 20mg caffeine 100c
½ GU, not sure flavor, not sure caffeine 50c
Water throughout run (estimate 30oz) 0c

Calorie Target: 840c – 1080c (680-820 on bike / 160-260 on run)
Actual Calories: 830c
Actual Fluids: 114oz (only an estimate)

Nutrition Commentary

Execution of my nutrition plan went almost flawlessly. I had sent my nutrition plan to Nicci two weeks before the race and we finalized it together. Based off of my metabolic efficiency tests on the treadmill and trainer, the numbers suggested that I only needed around 100c per hour on the bike and run. A massive improvement in my metabolic efficiency in the 5 weeks between treadmill tests led to me burning 60% fat / 40% carbs at my goal IM race pace of 6:45. The first test showed me burning the opposite, 40% fat / 60% carbs. My crossover point moved from 7:09 pace to 6:23 pace in just 5 weeks! To top that off, there was another two weeks after the 2nd test until Race Day which gave me an opportunity to improve my metabolic efficiency even more, and I ate near perfectly for those two weeks. MET doesn't call for carb-loading before races, so the night before I had a normal-sized meal which consisted of a spinach and lump crab meat salad, glazed salmon, a sweet potato with butter, and a little wild rice. I went into this race leaner and lighter than any Ironman I've done at 145lbs. Normally I carb-load and end up over 150 on race day.

Prior to the 2nd test, I had a feeling that my metabolic efficiency had improved because while training, I was eating fewer and fewer calories and not feeling hungry. For example, I did an 80 mile ride with Jared Tootell two weeks prior to the race and only had 1 bottle of 2 scoops of UCAN (160c), 1 pouch of applesauce stuff (80c), and a GU (100c) for a total of 340c for 4 hours of riding. Never felt hungry. Another example...Metric Ironman #2 which is a 1.5 mile swim, 70 mile bike, 16.2 mile run. I had 2 bottles of UCAN with 2 and 3 scoops (400c total), 1 GU (100c), 1 pouch of applesauce stuff (80c), and on the run had 2/3 of a can of Red Bull (80c), or a total of 660c for over 6 hours of effort. Not only did I not feel hungry, but I felt full/stuffed on the bike after drinking both of those bottles of UCAN. These anecdotes led me to believe my efficiency had improved, and I was happy to see the numbers proving it when I tested.

I was still a bit nervous about having so few calories during an Ironman, so just to play it safe, I taped 2 extra GUs to my bike, as well as half of a Bonk Breaker bar. I ate neither. I also had extra GUs stashed in my T2 bag, and knew that I had the course to rely on if I needed it. In the end, I didn't take any of the extra nutrition – I felt like I was almost forcing down the 2nd bottle of UCAN on the bike because I was so full, and the only time I felt I needed a little something was during the run when I tried to get the Red Bull but they denied me. I had to continue running to the next aid station to get a GU to supplement and ensure that I kept it together. The lack of caffeine from the Red Bull and the fact that I had taken a little caffeine earlier meant that I might have been coming off of the high for the last 5 miles when I slowed down. I'm excited for my next chance where I will get my hands on the Red Bull and try to make those

last 5 miles some of my strongest. I had experimented with Red Bull for the first time in Metric Ironman #2 and it worked like a charm.

In past Ironman events, I've consumed 2-2.5k calories during the race, and had a far larger dinner the night before and breakfast the morning of. In this event, I consumed an incredible 1/3 of that amount and I am convinced it prevented GI issues on the run, and kept the blood flowing to my legs (and not my gut), leading to a higher level of performance. I'm blown away by the success of MET and really enjoyed working with Nicci.

Summary & Conclusions:

- Race performance 9.5/10
 - o Biggest improvement in execution would have been to get the nutrition late in the game to be faster in the last 5 miles of the run. I may have met the only goal I didn't attain which was to break 3hrs in the run.
 - o Next biggest is to be confident riding at my target wattage instead of playing it conservatively and backing off
- Strength work 3-5 times per week during the offseason definitely had an effect on my strength/power and durability, helping me to make huge improvements on the bike and to not get injured while training the run.
- Earl challenged me this season with my training in ways that I wouldn't have dared to challenge myself. The key workouts I had done proved to be incredibly valuable both physically and mentally as I ran the last 15 miles of the race.
- Slow build of training throughout winter and spring kept the rest of my life in order, and I always felt like I had extra bandwidth. Lauren was happier as she got to see me more than last year, even in the last 2-3 months when Earl and I ramped the training from Half IM training to IM training.
- Not completing Timberman (though starting strong and still feeling good) left me hungry, with something to prove, and was a blessing in disguise.
- Earl and I decided on not tapering too much as my body loses fitness relatively quickly and I also recover very quickly, especially this year. Taper was about 10 days.
- Swim was rough. Time to work on it again in order to meet the Kona goals that are forming
- Massive improvement on the bike. Base from last year and winter paid off. Key bike workouts and lactate threshold testing were ultra-valuable.
- Strong race tactics proved powerful
- I ran mentally and physical strong to a big PR
- Don't wear socks in the future – they get heavy and the Zoot Ultra Race 4.0s are designed to be worn sockless and don't give me blisters.
- Nutrition was mind-bogglingly perfect and minimal. Maybe use 1 less scoop of UCAN or have 1 fewer GU as I felt I may have had too much on the bike.
- Came to try for a Kona slot, and to achieve some time goals, and left as the Ironman Maryland Champion. I'm enjoying every minute of it!