

Hey Coach -

Here is my race report from Wildflower. Good times! The unofficial results have me down for 5:26 which I pleased with. I'll send along the times when the "official" ones go up.

Overall:

Wow - what a race and what an experience! I'd recommend this "event" to anyone interested in challenging themselves with a tough course in a beautiful local. The Lake San Antonio area is absolutely beautiful with hills and valleys that are picture perfect when you weren't struggling to get up them. The support crew and weekend festival was top rate and the atmosphere was very laid back and inviting. One added bonus with this signature race is there were a lot of pros in the field and at sponsor's events. For those of us not penciling Kona on the calendar, it was pretty cool to be so close to the stars of triathlon. It was crazy to be setting up in transition and being only a few feet away from Macca as he got himself ready!

Camping?:

Getting to Lake San Antonio from San Francisco is about a three hour ride. I left work around noon on Friday with Tom Bruno, one of my co-workers doing the race. Tom had supplied all the camping gear and I supplied the rental car to get us and the gear there. We arrived around 3:30, picked out a site in the Overflow area and eventually made our way down to the festival local to check in. The whole site was well laid out down by the lake. It is important to note the word 'down' to the lake since everything else (ie. all your stuff and the only way out) is 'UP' from the festival. I note this because getting to and from required some hill climbing and descending that was less than ideal before/during/after the race. :-) We attended the festival and got a pasta dinner typical of these things and just looked around and watched the people and bikes and gear You get the idea. This is a big Triathlon Shindig and it was all on display. We made it back to the tent and sat around shooting the breeze until about 9. One thing to note is that despite the fact that some people aren't competing until Sunday people are pretty respectful of athletes trying to get some sleep. All in all the camping deal went very well with some pretty cool people to meet in and around the race. We had some college girls doing their first tri (Mtn Bike sprint) on one side of us and a family of 5 on the other with 3 small kids under 7.

Swim:

Water temp was about 65 at the race start 8:00AM and the lake was calm. The Pros went off first with 5-minute intervals between waves so I finally got going about 8:50. Despite the numerous waves there was a lot of banging and congestion for a good part of the swim. I've never been in such a large field so all the while I was thinking this was good "practice" for IM. I felt pretty good and kept my pacing and breathing in check and fought to keep my ground. Finished at ~35 minutes which was a PR for a half.

Bike:

The transition area was HUGE and unfortunately my rack spot was as far away from the Bike Out as you could get. The course was challenging from the beginning with a number of hills right out of the gate. It took me longer to settle into a heart rate that was right, my goal was to push just enough to "race" but keep the enough left to give the run a legitimate shot. I started out with only a 1/2 bottle of fluid at the start to minimize the amount I had to carry up the hills. I then took advantage of the aid stations to get all my fluids which worked pretty well. Good news is that the Gatorade Endurance worked just fine with no GI distress, so I should be all set for CDA. 3 bottles of Endurance and 2.5 bottle water. I make it a point to take in the gel from my flask every 15-20 mins during the ride. The last 20 miles were hilly with "Nasty Grade", which is 5 miles of climbing coming at 32 or so. Seeing the guy in the "Pink Bunny Outfit" close to the top was motivational and helped bring this circus into perspective. I was pleased that I finished pretty strong at a bit under 3hrs and still had legs enough get after it in the run.

Run:

Running out of transition I was happy to see my turnover was good and got the competitive juices flowing. I was looking for guys in my AG to start to put behind me at that point considering I was doing more passing than being passed. I made a point of walking the aid stations to get Endurance & Water and pour water over my head. It was about noon when I started the run so the sun was high and it was getting pretty hot. I brought two gels for miles 4 & 8. The run course is an excellent mix of trails then road. Running along the lake and through the campgrounds was great because my legs actually felt pretty fresh despite the hills. The closing 4 miles is mostly on roads with spectators and good views of the competition. Once I got the gels down I turned it up a notch and reeled back in two guys that passed me but I kept in my sights as pacers. I also spotted my friend Tom ahead of me and gave him the word I was gunning for him! :-). The downhill finish was pretty brutal on the legs but I wanted to catch Tom and keep the two guys I passed at bay so I went for it and finished well.

Finish!:

I felt like a rock star crossing the line with all the hoopla and my name being shouted out. Excellent crowd at the finish always gets me pumped! I visited the "Ice House" at the finish to get some fluids down and recover a bit from the effort. A short dip in the lake after all the celebration and back to the campsite to breakdown and get home. I'm pretty happy with results and my execution of the race, I expended my energy wisely and made use of the support along the way. I didn't hold back which was important to me because I rediscovered the FUN of racing. I needed this experience to keep me motivated for the big show in June and I'm excited for the next one.