



## **RACE REPORT**

### **GARY PITMAN IRONMAN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

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My journey to Ironman started back in 2008 after finishing Shepparton half ironman only to find an ETPA flyer promoting an eight week training program for Geelong 70.3 on my car window.

After tossing and turning for a while the decision was made to send off an email to enquire a little further about the program and, would ETPA take someone with my lacking ability on. Presto a couple of days later Mat was on the phone and the journey commenced.

First appointment we finally meet & greet in the flesh (95kgs) and Mat takes me through the program and what to expect, I wasn't expecting the 3k swim set at MSAC nor were the people that I was holding up in the lane.

A year earlier , 2008, I had finished with a mind blowing 5.49 at Geelong and it bloody hurt & I then hated triathlon, however things then turned around training with ETPA I achieved my first PB with a with a finish time of 4.53 (wow couldn't believe it !!).

After taking a little time off after Geelong I then caught up with Mat to discuss my further plans and the seed was planted for Ironman Busselton, I thought yes Mat you are full of it and I did pay for breakfast but the decision was made to commit for Busselton.

My PB's continued with Noosa Olympic distance time @ 2.21, previous time @ 2.31 and then there was Shepparton having total control of the run finishing 4.46 compared to 5.25 twelve months earlier.

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Training throughout winter was hard with the early Kinglake rides and VUT squad sessions but meeting and training with a great network of new people really helped me, we had heaps of laughs along the way.

The effects of training started to show as my body weight started to strip off with my race day weigh in at 76kgs but Mat's common statement there is at least 3kgs further to go ! I put my weight loss down to others who dare to ask that I am terminally ill.

Arrived at Busselton early in the week and set up base with the rest of the crew slowly arrived each day.

Each morning I'd walk down to the jetting thinking it's getting longer and self doubt setting which wasn't good and the effects started to show, not comfortable in my wetsuit, stroke all over the place, I was messed up.

My intimidation of the 3.8 swim increased when Kellie arrived at Busso, the first thing she said looking out at the jetty was Gary I feel sick just looking at that distance and can you swim that far!" (Thanks for your encouraging support!!).

In our swim set Mat could see my anxiety and helped me to get refocussed again but I couldn't take him too serious, this man standing there in the worlds' smallest pair of red budgie smugglers, Mat it's not a good look.

Race day time to harden up – Arrived T1 checked my bike setup numerous times; put the wetsuit on had a few jokes to take attention away from what lies ahead. In the water waiting for the start and bang this crab bites me on the toe and I let out a girly scream, great everyone turns around and so do I so people don't think it was me screaming.

Bang! off and swimming and I weave a good passage through the middle of the pack and then settled into my rhythm & stroke, the swim leg goes extremely well and I start jumping on the back of numerous sets of feet as I near the end of the swim. Exiting the water looking up at the finishing clock I see 1.23 but then realise there's 15 minutes to come off that, fantastic 1.08 swim feel great about myself first box is ticked.

Quick transition then I set off on my trusty steed for the next 5 hours & 20 minutes my plan was to stay around 35kmph and concentrate on my nutrition and slowly chase riders ahead of me. Not before long into the bike I hear this voice "Chop Chop " then Dave pulls alongside we have a laugh and then he's is off, but no I'm staying to my own pace being my first Ironman.

The kilometres go by and Glenn comes along side of me and then passes and I sing out to him "you dirty bitch" but after a couple of kilometres I wind up the legs and take my positions back.

I found the bike challenging, head wind & the heat and as always it's great when the aid stations handout hot bottles of water. The 180kms goes really quick and my nutrition intake was working well as Kellie had tattooed my arms the night before with my kilometre intervals for my Hi5 intake (every eight kms).

Arriving into T2 and dismounting the bike I could feel my quads but I soldiered on running into the tent for quick change of shoes then tackle the final leg of Ironman. Exiting the T2 tent I start rolling over the legs trying to get into my run rhythm thinking it's going to hurt for a while until my legs kick in. After running past the Goose then the first aid station thinking my legs would kick in after the first 5-8kms the demons had arrived. Parts of my mind told me to stop and give up and the other half offered me a reward of walking if I could toughen up and make it to each aid station for a rest.

I was hurting but so was everyone else out there.

The support from everyone was fantastic but for the crew standing near the first aid station that wanted to replay the Nicorette TV commercial "Go Gary Go" really gave it to me every bloody lap. These guys would see me coming and they would be in full swing by the time I arrived and everyone else in the crowd were laughing then unfortunately joining in on the chorus.

I had my own support crew getting me home lead by my wife, Zoe, Tracy Mrs Big Boy and comments from the beer fuelled coach. My official pacer, 'Killer' joined me for a few seconds until I told him that I would be disqualified for Kona, I was only joking but he thought that I was serious – Killer you must finish in the top 3 to get a spot for Kona.

Peter Coulson near nudity made me laugh especially when this guy running next to me asked if I knew this person and of course I said no, but Peter wanted to debate this fact.

I wasn't enjoying the run, all previous half marathons I had total control of the run and could push harder as the time went by but this wasn't the case this time, welcome to Ironman.

Pressing on I was counting down the laps and feeling better after collecting the different coloured scrunches and feeling sorry for others yet to complete their first lap.

Seeing the ETPA crew battling the same conditions help me and on the last lap Dave (sunfish) added wood to the fire pointing out that I was catching him but he was still in front.

Finally on the way home time to soak things up a little and to think this wouldn't be possible without the support of my wife, family & friends.

Yes honey (Kellie)I owe you and love you very much.

Near finishing Mat greets me & congratulates me on sub 11hrs for my first Ironman, and its only then I think yes I'm a worthy of being an Ironman.

The final stages I gather up what remaining energy I have to impersonate a plane flying down the finishing chute, marathon finally finished 4hs & 10mins (overall time 10.47)

Best memories of Ironman,

- My training buddies & all the great times we had mainly at Dave's & Andy's expense.
- Support from my wife & friends
- Crossing the finishing line!!!!

Will I do it again you yeah why not!



Thank you ETPA

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