



Laurie gives a 'thumbs up' on the bike ride.



Laurie proudly wears her finisher's t-shirt.



Laurie has a big smile as she starts the 26.2 mile run.

Laurie Sloan Is An Official **IRONWOMAN**

By Laurie Sloan

(Editor's Note: On Saturday, October 21, OCC member Laurie Sloan entered the Ford World Championship Ironman Triathlon in Kailua Kona. The race is a 2.4 mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2 mile run. Laurie competed in the 55-59 age group and finished in 15:38:28.)

Saturday morning started as early as 3 a.m. with a bagel breakfast followed by body marking at 4:45 a.m., meeting friends to "talk" strategy for the swim start knowing there would be almost 1,700 swimmers in the water all at the same time.

Tension began to build around 5:30ish as we made our way to the swim start. All the elite swimmers followed by the age groupers headed towards the water awaiting instructions to "line up".

I got a head start by jumping in and heading toward the right side (closest to the pier) as we were instructed by experienced Ironman participants. More tension built as we heard the announcement that all swimmers should now be in the water and ready for a 7 a.m. start.

The cannon went off and the water felt like a washing machine as 1,700 swimmers were now on their way to the race of a lifetime. Water conditions happened to be rougher than expected; however, I got a fairly good line out and back finishing my swim at 1 hour 30 minutes.

Now was the worst part (for me anyway) getting on the bike and preparing mentally for a 112 mile ride to Hawi and back. In the transition area, I changed into my bike jersey and tri shorts and stuffed my clothes with all the nutrition I plan to eat for the next eight hours.

The start of my ride was favorable until unexpectedly about one hour into the ride we encountered rain storms which surprised all of us.

All the food I had packed and prepared for easy consumption during my ride (all wrappers removed and sandwiches in my bento box without any covering) got ruined by the rainstorm. I began to worry about not having sufficient nutrients for the next three hours as my special needs bag containing extra food was not until I reached Hawi (56 mile turnaround point).

Oh well, I said, there is nothing I can do at this point so Plan B kicked in. I took in gel and Gatorade and Clif Shots and prayed that this would hold me until I could get more solid food in Hawi. Upon reaching Hawi, my stomach was so upset from hunger that the food in my special needs bag didn't do much for me as I could not consume too much without throwing up.

I turned around and pedaled another 56 miles back to Kailua Kona, making it back in 8 hours and 2 minutes.

Upon reaching Kailua Kona, I was actually looking forward to the marathon only to find out that an upset and crampy stomach was going to make it a long night. I started the run (on empty) approximately 4:30 p.m. and nightfall came quick.

Now, we were running in the dark. The only light on the Queen Kaahumanu Highway, besides the glow sticks other runners were wearing, was from the aid stations we could see in the distance.

It was a long haul out to the Natural Energy Lab (approximately six miles out) and then I entered the "pit" for another four miles after having done a 10 mile loop in town. Many were walking and jogging, some were happy talking stories in the dark, others were pretty sick (myself included) and many just minded their own business jogging back in darkness.

Finally we saw light, city lights, yes!!! As we were getting closer to home and the adrenaline started to fire up, my heart rate began to heighten. By now (over 14 hours later) I had finally reached civilization and could see and hear friends cheering me.

By this time I was pretty much "brain dead". All I could do was to move on forward. As I neared the final stretch on Kuakini Highway with just one more turn on Alii Drive everyone was cheering like thunder. I suddenly had a burst of energy and kicked it in to the finish line at 15 hours 38 minutes and 28 seconds.

This has certainly been an experience of a life time (and yes, I can truly say) that it was a journey and quite a positive one and perhaps another Ironman may be on the horizon.

Other OCC Ironman Finishers

Wil Yamamoto 9:33:08
1st Hawaii Finisher

Rachel Ross 10:05:58
1st 30-34