

FROM THE COUCH TO 2005 IRONMAN NEW ZEALAND FINISHER

I completed in my first Triathlon 5 years ago, I remember the swim being just over 200m long, Bike of 7km and a run of 2km. (200m,10km,2km)
I dragged my body over the course in 35min thinking I was the famous "Croc" Brad Bevan.

I knew that I liked the sport, the lifestyle and getting out in the early morning on my bike with my mates. Over the years my fitness improved and the distance started to increase as well. Soon I was able to complete an Olympic distance Triathlon (1.5km,40km,10km) I raced many of the shorter distance triathlons and enjoyed them emensly.

It was not untill I saw the faces on the finishers of the 2003 Ironman Australia Triathlon (3.8km,180km,42.2km) that I even thought about a race of this distance. Some people were in pain, some crying, laughing, but EVERYONE I saw looked like they had the JOURNEY of there life.

The next 2 years proved to be the training required to get not only my BODY but my MIND ready for my first IRONMAN. I attempted to qualify for the 2004 Australian Ironman by racing two Half Ironmans (1.9km,90km,21.1km) but sickness during one race and metal fatigue during another left me just short of the start line. I was not ready!!

I watched the 2004 Ironman Australia and knew this time that I wanted to hear "Steven Newman YOU ARE AN IRONMAN" Another year of training and two more Half Ironmans and I found myself qualified for the 2005 Ironman Australia and at the start line of my first IRONMAN.

"2005 IRONMAN NEW ZEALAND"

The day started with the traditional Maori Haka on the shores of Lake Taupo then the loudest "BANG" you have ever heard as a military cannon signalled the start of the race for 1160 athletes.



The 3.8km swim was amazing, Fog covered the lake like a silken blanket and the water was as clear as a swimming pool. The first 2km of the swim went well then just as the last turn approached I was sandwiched in between another two swimmers and "WACK". I copped an elbow in my left eye which knocked my goggles off and subsequently knocked the contact lens out of my left eye. I was prepared for the wind,cold,punctures,blisters,chaff and a myriad of other problems, but not this one. You learn to take everything as it comes and do the best with what you have. So I had one 1 1/4 eyes, hey it could have been worse. SWIM 1hour3min

Once out of the water I started on the longest event for the day, the 180km bike. The course was a 2 lap out and back course, downhill out to the turnaround and then uphill back. For the first lap fog still lapped the road, it was cool on the bike and my vision made for a interesting ride through some thick fog in places. The second lap the wind picked up and the last 45km was an uphill journey straight into this wind. I just remember saying to myself that EVERYONE is riding in these conditions so head down and keep working. BIKE 6hour3min



I eventually made it to the run transition, swapped my bike shoes for run shoes and started the 42.2km MARATHON. The first 5km felt unreal as the crowd were very noisy as we ran through Taupo. The entire run was on open roads around the Lake with little protection from the strong sun that was now beating down. It got real hot by the 30km mark and I used ICE to cool myself down to stop overheating.



Like most people I think the last 5km of the run was the hardest, yet most enjoyable part of the day. The work was done, the crowd increased the closer I got to the finish. Turning the last corner was a great feeling. I ran down a 100m chute surrounded by a thousand people clapping and yelling, as I approached the line I heard those words "Steven Newman YOU ARE AN IRONMAN" I looked up to see 11hours 5min 49sec on the clock. RUN 3hours51min My JOURNEY from Couch to IRONMAN was now complete and "WHAT A RIDE"

Many thanks go to my wife for understanding, family for support, friends and training partners for there wisdom and assistance, my work mates and company HATCH who have all played a part in the successful completion of my first IRONMAN.

STEVEN NEWMAN