

IRONMAN 70.3  
**NEW ORLEANS**

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On Sunday I got my US season underway with the New Orleans 70.3 and all though I didn't get the position I'd have liked I put together a very good performance. There are very rarely any easy races these days and once again I toed the line with a big pro field that had some of the current inform guys with the likes of Tim Reed, Andy Potts, Matt Charbot, Ben Hoffman and more. After a whole week of raining race day rolled around and was a pearla with a high of 29. The horn went off and with the likes of top ex ITU triathletes Potts and Charbot the pace was on. It's a strange swim, it is a point to point in the shape of an N and both last year and this year I have struggled to navigate it; as just like last year I led the main group who followed the lead trio with Tim Reed and Drew Scott in the middle. I exited the water 1:40 down on Potts and 50sec down on Reed, which I was a little disappointed with, but I just told myself I am riding and running well so no worries it's a long day. On to the bike and I was excited to be doing my first race on the new Cannondale slice which had felt great in training and so far has been very nice to travel with. The first goal on the bike was to catch who I considered to be the race favourite and the guy I could see next up the road, Tim Reed. This was no easy task and Tim is a super biker with a great aero set up and the first 40km was a tail wind (averaged about 48km/h for that section), so it took its time. I think I the closed the gap around 15-20km in. Once that was achieved I settled in for a few kms and started to think about what to do next. At which point I looked back and realized some of the other race favourites had caught up (Ben Hoffman 2<sup>nd</sup> in Kona 2014, Trevor Wurtele Uber biker, and unknown to me then but not anymore Canadian Cody Beals). After a few kms behind Tim and Drew Scott I decided to push on as I like to ride hard and really have started to believe in my run off of a hard ride and with Ironman adopting a 12m draft rule now I believed I could do some damage. It stayed like that until about the 50km mark when Trevor and Cody passed with a considerable amount of power and I tried to go with them but felt it was a little too much. Reed tried the same but I think he came to the same conclusion. And then it stayed like that until the end of the ride. Potts and Charbot lead off, Trevor and Cody next about 1.30 back and then me and the guys on my tail (Tim, Ben and Drew) about 2min 40sec off the lead.

What was amazing is the speed of the ride, I averaged 43.6km/h in winds and roads that were far from perfect. I had a good transition and took it out strong and didn't look back until I heard the pitter patter of Reeds foot steps at the 5km mark, which is about the point I passed Wurtel. Tim slowly pulled away and the next goal was to hold off the Hoff, but at the half way point he was only 100m back and over the next 1-2km he caught and passed me (I can see why he is a great Ironman athlete, Ben has an amazing rock solid and efficient run with very little upper body movement). This is when I hit a bad spot for a few kms. Oh man the stuff that was running through my mind then was not good, it was by far the closest I have come to stopping and walking since I can't remember when. But I just kept telling myself get to the next aid station, each were 1mile apart and I came right about 2 aid stations later, and then could pick it up a little again for the last 2 miles. By this point it was around 28 degrees and boiling, and with no pressure from behind I could ease up a little and enjoy the last stretch. I crossed the line in 3.44.56, which is a PB for me but that only got me 6<sup>th</sup>! This is not an easy sport and is only getting harder but I am proud of my consistent improvement and I feel I am getting closer to the top guys. Superb race by Potts and Charbot who took it to us from the first swim stroke and never looked back. Also, well done to Tim for rounding out the podium and being the most consistent racer on the scene.

For the next few days I get to hang out in New Orleans with good mates Sam and Rebecca and then I am off to San Fran and Wildflower, a race that has always been on the bucket list. Until then, Thanks for the support.

Regards,  
Mark





NAME	COUNTRY	DIV RANK	OVERALL RANK	SWIM	BIKE	RUN	FINISH
Potts, Andy	USA	1	1	00:18:35	02:02:24	01:15:54	03:39:49
Chrabot, Matt	USA	2	2	00:18:40	02:02:16	01:16:32	03:40:30
Reed, Tim	AUS	3	3	00:19:26	02:04:26	01:15:34	03:42:36
Beals, Cody	CAN	4	4	00:20:21	02:01:59	01:17:40	03:43:14
Hoffman, Ben	USA	5	5	00:20:20	02:03:33	01:16:39	03:43:41
Bowstead, Mark	NZL	6	6	00:20:14	02:03:32	01:18:10	03:44:56
Wurtele, Trevor	CAN	7	7	00:20:19	02:01:54	01:24:57	03:50:20
Skipper, Joe	GBR	8	8	00:22:07	02:04:31	01:19:48	03:50:26
Scott, Drew	USA	9	9	00:19:20	02:04:48	01:25:46	03:52:44
Hermanson, Mike	USA	10	10	00:22:10	02:11:01	01:19:20	03:56:09

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