

Lakeside International Duathlon Race Recap



Lakeside signifies the last race of the MultiSport Canada Skechers Performance Triathlon Series for the 2017 season. The Lakeside course is challenging. From the out-and-back loops on the gravel and stone resort access roads to the windy and hilly bike course, the last 10km of which you fight headwinds and some nasty rollers on legs that have already been toasted. I've always considered this course to be an honest test of one's fitness and pacing abilities. Overcook the hills on the first run and you leave your legs taxed for the bike not to mention another go at the run course for a final 5 km.

I've come to realize over the years that it's more than the course itself that presents its challenges. As I stood in transition, teeth chattering and layered in winter gear it became apparent that the timing of the event has as much to do with the challenge as the course itself. When I started running back in 2004, I scoffed when I heard "experienced" runners declare that getting to the start line healthy was half the battle. Reviewing race recaps, I've struggled to get the start line healthy 3 of the 4 years I've competed. Motivation starts to wane after a long season that for some started with the onset of the New Year. The body starts to falter as aches and pains become the focal part of many a conversation. Early morning races are met with cooler temperatures, and race day rituals are thrown to the wayside in futile attempts to stay warm.

2017 has had its fair share of obstacles from the onset and to be honest it's starting to wear me down. I've managed to remain focused but everyone has their limits. The accident has left me feeling pretty beat up. I've had difficulty sleeping, concentrating, and reduced energy levels. My legs have no power, running is a challenge, and my heart rate is elevated. The morning of the race, my son Dakota asked me could I win? "Not today" I answered. "Top 3?" "Maybe...but let's just hope I can finish. This is going to hurt."

The horn sounded and I was comfortable running a conservative 10k. I needed to compete smart and not over extend myself. Approximately 1 km into the race our first casualty - Larry Bradley, undoubtedly a race favourite pulled his hamstring and was forced to withdraw. Not wanting to end up a casualty, I needed to be patient and get to the bike. I consumed 3 gels in that first 10k,

trying to keep the energy levels topped up. I fought to catch Dempsey Cruz but couldn't close the gap. I struggled to hold a consistent pace and entered transition in 6th place, just 2 seconds back of Kevin Gallagher and 12 seconds back of Cruz in a time of 41:12 and my slowest 10k of memory.

A smooth transition (35sec) and I was out onto the bike course now in 4th place and in search of the leaders. Ricardo Mansueto's running prowess had him claim the early lead heading into transition but at approximately 10k, I made the pass and now sat in 3rd with Garvin Moses and Scott Finch pushing the pace. I knew if wanted a chance, I'd have to put together a top bike split. Early signs were promising but then came the false flats, rolling hills and just enough wind to make things challenging. My legs had no power...no extra gear today. Focus waned and the struggle to maintain speeds grew exponentially. I entered transition in 3rd place in a time of 1:05:06 and with a new challenge...don't give up my top 3 placing.

The final 5k required a great deal of focus and a deep desire not to disappoint Dakota. It was far from blazing but I crossed the finish line in a time of 22.25 and yes, 3rd overall.

Post-race Larry Bradley, Scott Finch and myself discussed the struggles of the aging athlete. We're not as young as we once were and yet not willing to give into the mindset that toeing the line at these events is an accomplishment in and of itself. We're still competing for the overall win even though sometimes our bodies are unwilling to co-operate. Just don't expect us to take a back seat anytime soon.

I spent some time at the Skechers Performance booth with Kyle – Field Marketing Associate. He shared with me the modifications for the 2018 line-up. The word that best describes the changes “lighter”

All in all, I was proud of my performance. Although not my best, nor my worst I competed and gave it everything I had on the day. I didn't give up and didn't give in and that's something to be proud of.

A special thanks goes out to my sponsors - [Cycle Culture](#), [3Sixty5 Cycling](#), [Skechers Performance Canada](#), [Compressport Canada](#), [MultiSport Canada Triathlon Series](#), [Skratch Labs](#) / [Raceday Fuel](#), and [Community Chiropractic Centre](#) without your support this wouldn't be possible.

