

IRONMAN '89 WAS THE RACE OF A LIFETIME

It was an historic race, no doubt about that, and like all things historic, it signalled both great endings and great beginnings.

Finally the seven-year monkey is off Mark Allen's back; the only major triathlon title he doesn't own now is Hilton Head, and he probably doesn't care too much about that one, anyway.

The last chapter of triathlon's Big Four has been written. They've all won in Hawaii now, Molina last year when no one expected it, Allen in '89, years past the point when his great talent and will dictated that he might. What next? Who cares? The blank page has been filled.

For Allen it was a joyous, unmitigated triumph. He told the audience at the awards ceremony on Sunday night that a vision of courage had sustained him, but that wasn't quite right. Allen has never lacked for courage. Indeed, it has been his depth of courage that at times has worried us all. Was he really a man who, like the greyhound he so resembled, or a thoroughbred horse, could actually run himself to death, as he seemed ready to do in Nice in 1983, or in Hawaii in '87?

Courage? Of course. But smart, too. At last, smart. And with Mark Allen's smartest race, the Dave Scott era ended. Even if The Man returns to Kona in 1990 and wins for a seventh time, his long reign there has come to a close. He was magnificent on Oct. 14, fulfilling all of our, and even his own, expectations. This time, though, someone was everything Dave Scott was and more, a little more, 58 seconds more. It was enough.

For Paula Newby-Fraser, whose victory will no doubt (and quite wrongly) be overshadowed by the epic battle which developed less than an hour ahead of her on the Queen Kaahumanu Highway, the race was more of a landmark than one might imagine, for by surpassing the breathtakingly impossible course record she set last year, she affirmed it beyond any doubt. "My first goal was to beat Paula," Mark Allen said at the post-race press conference. Everyone laughed. He was kidding, of course, but not by much. Nine zero zero fifty eight. Any one of a hundred minor adjustments during the day might have gotten her across in under nine hours, but none of them really mattered. Has any single athlete been so dominant at the Ironman two years in a row? Not one.

For the men it was the race of a lifetime. The supporting cast included the 27-year-old West German, Wolfgang Dittrich, who led the field out of the water with a 48:13, then held grimly onto the lead for the next 112 miles, setting the stage for the Allen/Scott duel to come. How much do you pay a man for such a good day's work? Dittrich's last Ironman marathon, in 1987, was a 3:48; this time he managed a 3:12 and finished 10th. He earned \$1600.

The battle started for real at the bike/run transition area at the Kona

Continued on page 2

JON FRANKS — AN ANGRY MAN IN AN UNEASY CHAIR

How do you figure Jon Franks? The television and print media point their cameras at his two lifeless legs and call him "a role model," "courageous," a "great story." Transition area volunteers at various races who have been the object of his loud and unprintable wrath have learned to see him in a less favorable light.

Crowds at triathlon finish lines all over the country see him as a hero and applaud him wildly. Valerie Silk, race chairman of the Bud Light Ironman, won't speak to him; she has trouble even speaking about him.

Franks's issue, his platform, is his right to race as a wheelchair triathlete, and by association, the right of other severely handicapped people to do the same.

"Anything I can do to help the ranks of whatever it is I've joined, I'll do," he says. "I'm just not running around saying that's what I'm doing."

His favorite topics of conversation, though, are slightly more . . . shall we say, colorful. First on the list seems to be Jon Franks. Tied for second are the Hollywood stars and big-name athletes he says are friends or clients, and the many beautiful women — "Playboy centerfolds and models," he gloats — with whom he says he sleeps. "When I go out with a girl on a date," Franks told the *Tampa Tribune-Times* earlier this year, "I try to get everything out in the open right away. 'Relax,' I tell them, 'I'm normal. I can even have sex with you.'"

Maybe he just knows what sells; skipping almost weekly from race to race this year on the national triathlon circuit, he has, with the help of his publicist, generated a volume of media coverage that makes Mark Allen and Dave Scott look like Little Leaguers.

A motorcycle accident three years ago cost Franks, a Los Angeles chiropractor and fitness entrepreneur, the use of both legs, from the waist to the toes, but if he feels sorry for himself, he hides it behind an in-your-face cockiness that either appeals or repels; with Jon Franks there is not much middle ground. He's strong, handsome, intelligent, well-spoken, but if after an hour you aren't converted, you start thinking that maybe without that chair of his, he'd be just another macho, loud-mouthed jock.

"That hero stuff . . ." Franks says, tossing off his press clippings with a shrug. "I think we all need heroes. Me, I like Rambo and Eastwood."

So how do you figure Jon Franks?

Certainly there are race directors who are uneasy about his competitive routine. By necessity, he takes a lot of license with basic triathlon rules. He must be helped into the water, usually by volunteers supplied by the race. He swims on his back, in a wetsuit, with flota-

Continued on page 3

ON THE RECORD—

"I did it! I did it! I did it!"

— Mark Allen, to the ABC camera van, or maybe just to himself, when he realized that he had finally beaten Dave Scott at the Ironman.

ON THE CIRCUIT

Patrick O'Riordan's \$100,000 Scottsdale International Triathlon, scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 26, has been cancelled. The race had been originally scheduled for May 28, but had been postponed due to lack of sponsorship. O'Riordan cited that same reason for the cancellation. "I just don't have the money," he said, adding that in the future he will announce no event or prize purse until he has sponsor contracts in hand. At the same time he expressed confidence that a \$110,000 race would be held in the British Commonwealth of Bermuda in 1990.

O'Riordan estimated that with the cancellation in Sept. of the 1988 Bermuda International Triathlon (PR #7) and now Scottsdale, he has lost \$150,000 in cash this year.

John Hamack of Dallas, who has for years been active in triathlons in the state of Texas, is a candidate for the Tri-Fed/USA Board of Directors. While Hamack's name was listed on the official ballot which appeared in the latest issue of *Triathlon Times*, it was inadvertently omitted from the list of candidates published in *Triathlon Today!*. Fairness dictates that I mention that.

Without making any endorsements, I strongly urge all Tri-Fed members to vote. In an election for 15 people by 35,000 voters, every single ballot counts, every one. Fill 'em out, send 'em in. November 2 is the deadline.

Alan Mitchell, publisher of *Australia's Triathlon Sports* magazine and Director of Triathlon Sports Promotions, is proposing an Olympic-distance triathlon to be held next March in Sydney that would put four top U.S. triathletes, four Australians and four New Zealanders in the same arena and let them have it. Officially, however, the race would not be scored as a team event. Mitchell writes that he is looking at March 3 or March 10 as possible dates and writes that he will offer a minimum of \$20,000 AUS (\$15,000 US) in prize money. He'll probably need more than that to attract the very best Americans.

As the result of a motion by Los Angeles City Council members Robert C. Farrell (8th Dist.) and Richard Alatorre (14th Dist.), a study has been conducted by the office of the City Administrative Officer to determine the feasibility of a major triathlon being held in Los Angeles in 1990. Budget analyst John Dugan said that he will soon forward the results of his research to a City Council committee, which will in turn pass its recommendations along to the entire council. If the report is viewed favorably, proposals and bids will then be solicited from interested production agencies. Other than to say his study is about to be submitted to the council committee (and thus become a matter of public record), Dugan could offer no timeline for action by the city.

As if one needs reminding that triathlon is still not as integral a part of American life as, say, NFL Football, or television comedienne "Roseanne," a multi-page Reebok ad which appeared in the Sept. 9 *Sports Illustrated* hooked the reader with this little teaser: "In this issue you'll find an athletic challenge more grueling than the Tour de France, the Boston Marathon and the Ironman Decathlon combined."

CAT Sports President Carl Thomas, no doubt with the delicacy of a man whose living depends on sponsors, wrote to C. Joseph Labonte, President and C.E.O. of Reebok Int'l and pointed out the error. Labonte wrote back and apologized, calling the miscue "embarrassing" and promising to address the matter "internally."

Anybody need an experienced advertising account executive?

IRONMAN • Continued from page 1

Surf Resort. Dittrich had been running for almost two minutes when Allen, Scott, then Mike Pigg and Ken Glah roared in. Allen ran out first, but Scott was right behind, and at an aid station still inside the parking lot, he sprinted past Allen as if the finish line was 100 yards, not 26 miles, away. You knew then what was coming.

The two men ran literally shoulder to shoulder for the next 23 miles. Scott would later praise Allen for a tactic that may or may not have been intentional: he ran to the inside, nearest the aid stations; once every mile Scott had to drop back slightly to get aid, and once every mile he caught the aid station volunteers recovering from having just serviced Allen. A drib of energy was wasted here, a drab there.

The pace quickened at the turnaround, with nine miles left to run. The mile splits, which had been incredible, escalated toward the insane: 5:40s, 5:45s. Finally, at the aid station at mile 23, Scott fell five yards behind and struggled for three-quarters of a mile to catch up. He felt tired, he said, but was still strong — stronger, he thought, than Allen. Running abreast of Allen once again, he began to plot his two-mile strategy. "I'll idle with him here and be patient," Scott said to himself. "I'll outrun him on the downhill."

But right then Allen made his move, a strong surge at the base of the low, almost non-existent uphill just outside of town that has broken thousands of Ironman hearts since the race came to Kona in 1981. Scott, caught off-guard, was unable to respond. The master of the Ironman had been out-mastered by the Grip of Death himself, the man who had made all the mistakes and finally, had learned all the lessons. "It was brilliantly timed," Scott said.

At the top of the hill, seven-tenths of a mile later, Allen had gained 31 seconds and the race was over. He crossed the finish line, exultant, waving a small American flag, washed of pain and fatigue and seven years of frustration by the thunderous roar of the huge crowd. Waiting for him there was his fiancee, Julie Moss, who had been solidly in the top 10 when she had glimpsed the drama on the highway and had hitched a ride into town because, as she put it, "I couldn't keep my mind on what I was doing."

Allen's time of 8:09:15 was a course record by more than 19 minutes, and a personal best for him at Ironman by almost 30. "That was the difference," Allen said, "between surviving and racing."

His marathon was a course record, too: 2:40:04. Scott finished in 8:10:13, having run a 2:41:03 marathon, Greg Welch, the bubbly, diminutive 24-year-old Aussie who will certainly win the Ironman someday, was third, at 8:32:16; Glah was fourth at 8:32:32; Pauli Kiuru, of Finland, was 10 seconds behind in fifth.

Newby-Fraser, in contrast, raced only against the clock. Kirsten Hanssen, performing wonderfully after an abysmal season, stayed close through much of the ride, but lost four minutes in the last 40 miles. She gained back some ground during the early stages of the marathon — probably unwisely; she was running too fast — but from the sixth mile on the only doubt was whether Newby-Fraser would break the big Nine-0 — although in her own mind it was a remote goal, at best. "I just wasn't ready to make the sacrifice," she said.

And for what? As it was she ran a course record 3:05 marathon. Sylviane Puntous, who went painfully past Hanssen late in run, finished second, 21 minutes behind, at 9:21:55. Hanssen was third, at 9:24:31, Fernanda Keller, from Brazil, with the second fastest women's marathon of the day (3:15:42), was fourth at 9:38:33. Susan Latshaw, from Berkeley, an Ironman rookie, crossed at 9:43:00, in fifth.

IRONMAN NOTES

Ned Simon, the producer of the ABC's Wide World of Sports coverage of the Ironman, was understandably elated by the race which unfolded before his cameras. Television moves in mysterious ways, but don't be surprised if what was planned as a 40-minute Wide World segment, ala 1988, expands to a full, 90-minute show by air time sometime in January or February.

For the first dozen or so miles of the marathon it looked as if **Scott Tinley** was going to finish third. The huge crowds lining Alii Drive were thrilled; ST is a favorite in Hawaii, and he was running beautifully. He looked better, people said, even than Scott or Allen. But then he hit the wall hard, and faded fast. He finished sixth. "Something jumped on my back," Tinley said wryly. "Maybe an elephant. Or a giraffe."

What happened to Mike Pigg? Well, after the best bike ride of his life, his shaky season, which has been complicated by a still-undiagnosed intestinal problem, caught up with him. He ran a 3:16 marathon and finished 15th. "At two miles I just wanted to quit," he said.

Still, the Pigg Man remains undaunted. "It's going to be a great winter," he said. "I've got a lot of hunger and fire to come back next year and show people that Mike Pigg is still Mike Pigg."

The strangely persistent rumor that Dave Scott filed a post-race protest against Mark Allen has been vigorously denied by both Ironman officials and Dave Scott himself. "That's just not true," Scott said. "Why would I do something like that? The race was perfectly clean."

Dick and Ricky Hoyt, after failing to make the 2:15 swim cut-off time in 1988, returned to Kona this year and finished triumphantly in 14:26:40. Dick, a 49-year-old Lt. Col. in the Air National Guard from Holland, Mass., pulls his son Ricky, who is a successful student at Boston College despite his severe cerebral palsy, behind him in a raft, then pushes him along in a specially-designed bike and finally in a beefed-up baby jogger-type cart. Dick is a magnificent athlete; he ended the long day by sprinting across the finish line with a marathon time of 4:30:27.

Lisa Laiti, the 27-year-old pro from Clifton, Va., whose dramatic comeback from head injuries suffered in a severe bike crash in 1987 was highlighted on ESPN last year, shared the lead with Newby-Fraser and Hanssen in the early stages of the bike ride. After the turnaround in Hawi, however, she began suffering from a severe headache, and witnesses reported that she was having trouble holding her bike in a straight line. Several miles from the bike/run transition area, Laiti apparently blacked out. With her bike beneath her, she slid hard across Alii Drive and into a parked car. Her boyfriend, **Todd Jacobs**, who had witnessed her previous accident, was running in the opposite direction, heading for what he hoped was his third top-10 finish in a row at the Ironman, when he happened upon the scene. Horrified, he abandoned his race, and in tears, tried frantically to inform the attending medics of Laiti's history. Ringing in his brain were the admonitions of her doctors — that a second head injury could prove fatal.

Laiti spent the night in intensive care. Happily, after neurological exams and two CAT scans, doctors at Kona Hospital were able to announce that she had suffered no further head trauma and escaped neurological damage — despite two fractured vertebrae frighteningly high on the spinal column.

The cause of the problem was hyponatremia — low sodium — an old enemy at the Ironman which can severely affect performance (and obviously, health) and which many of the top pros have only just begun to deal with.

"She's very, very lucky to have come out of that with no neurological deficit," **Dr. Bob Laird**, Medical Director of the Ironman, said. To which Todd Jacobs and Laiti's parents, who flew to Kona to be with their daughter in the hospital, can only breath a grateful "amen."

The expected three-man, 70 years and over duel between **Edson Sower**, 74, **Norton Davey**, 71, and **Holger Riise**, 70, from Denmark, did not develop as planned. Sower squeaked past the swim cut-off time but had to drop out after the bike ride. Riise would

have been too strong in any case. His 15:20:54 broke Sower's course record by 37 minutes. Davey was second in 15:44:47. In a touching display of sportsmanship, and to the delight of the crowd, Sower handed out the awards. Then Davey put his arm around Sower's shoulders and wouldn't let him leave the stage. "Oh, no, no," Sower protested, not wanting to steal the limelight from his two *compadres*. But the crowd was already on its feet, cheering and applauding wildly.

Not even Dave Scott ever won the Ironman four times in a row. But 54-year-old **Louise Taylor** had. Shooting for an unprecedented fifth consecutive age group win in Hawaii, Taylor, from Olympia Wash., was shaken up early during race week when she was knocked off her bike by a car. Undeterred, she raced on Saturday with a borrowed bike — straight into the jaws of 53-year-old **Sonja Sutmoller**, from Carstairs, Canada. Sutmoller beat Taylor by more than an hour; her 11:53:49 was 42 minutes faster than Taylor's course record. "Even if I had my own bike it wouldn't have made any difference," Taylor said graciously. "I was lucky to win four."

Who rode the fastest bike split of the day? Allen? Scott? Pigg? Glah? No, no, no and no. Try 34-year-old **Oleg Ljadov**, from the Estonia, who went 4:37:01. (Allen was second fastest, in 4:37:52). A champion cyclist back in the USSR, Ljadov unfortunately swims like a rock; the first event took him an hour and 17 seconds to complete.

He kind of looks like a rock, actually. When he took the stage to accept his third place age group award, the sight of his huge, heavily-muscled legs brought a moment of stunned silence, then gasps of amazement from the crowd of more than 3,000. Ljadov just grinned broadly. His English, like his swimming, needs work; he might not have even been aware of the cause of all the excitement.

FRANKS • Continued from page 1

tion braces on his legs and paddles on his hands. His "bicycle" is an expensive, high-tech, arm-powered recumbent, a device specifically disallowed by Tri-Fed rules; among other things it sits very low to the ground and is hard to see, especially by riders in the middle or to the rear of a large group.

He "runs" in a wheelchair; starting in the middle of the field he zooms through crowded courses much faster than able-bodied triathletes can run. In the minds of some people, that makes Franks a risk they'd rather avoid. Nor does it help that Franks has a habit of doing things his way — regardless of what he's been told by the race director — especially when there are cameras or reporters in the wings.

One of Franks's severest critics is Valerie Silk, who last year found herself on the receiving end of a media campaign by Franks that left her and her race organization tagged as "discriminatory" after she denied his request for an entry to the Ironman. Her position (aside from the fact that Franks had never submitted an official entry) was that he was a hazard, especially in his wheelchair in the dark. Franks countered with a threat to crash the race. Silk promised to yank him off the course if he tried. That argument ended on race day when Franks completed the swim and found a contingent of local police waiting to make sure he went no further. He didn't try.

In one sense, though, he'd made a point: that if you were going to stand in his way, you'd better be prepared to fight — and take a P.R. hit in the process. So far this season, no race director or Federation official has taken that stand, although several privately admit that both his presence and his attitude on race day make them nervous.

"You get this special sense of guilt when you malign a man who is handicapped," said one official who asked not to be identified. "But the fact is, the guy has the world's biggest chip on his shoulder."

Other race directors, however, among them **Don Andrews** of the Vancouver International Triathlon, are pleased with the media attention Franks attracts, and are happy to roll out the red carpet. Vancouver is the kind of race, Franks says, that make him feel like "just

another guy, just another racer. That's all I want."

But then why all the press, why all the talk, why make so many people so angry when a softer touch might accomplish so much more?

Franks admits the incongruity, but says that "in order to race, you've got to have sponsors, and in order to have sponsors you've got to have the media." And he points out that triathlon itself, which he sees as a "boring sport to watch," has benefited from his being, as he terms it, a "media magnet."

Uncomfortable with the term "militant," to describe his approach, Franks seems nevertheless unrepentant over the fact that he has ruffled some feathers. Nor can he himself answer with any certainty what might be the most critical question stemming from his often stormy involvement in triathlon: is he making things harder or easier for his fellow wheelchair athletes? On balance, Franks thinks he's making progress.

"From what I hear, there have been other people who have wanted to do races," he says, "but nobody's stuck their head in the guillotine and said, 'I'm just showing up.'"

It's about as accurate a description of his strategy as exists.

Even for those willing to give Franks the benefit of the doubt, there are risks to smiling and holding the door open long enough to listen to his pitch. Tri-Fed learned that lesson recently when Franks took it upon himself to issue a press release announcing his appointment as chairman of the "Tri-Fed/USA Committee for Physically-Challenged Triathletes." He has since stated publicly that it is the Federation's intention to establish a policy requiring all sanctioned events to have a handicapped or wheelchair division.

According to Tri-Fed Executive Director **Mark Sisson** neither point is accurate. As a subcommittee of one under Tri-Fed's Medical Committee, Sisson said, Franks is not a "chairman" and had no authority to issue statements to the press on behalf of the Federation. Nor is Tri-Fed planning in the near or distant future to force race directors to accommodate severely handicapped athletes.

How do you figure Jon Franks? You probably can't. It would be a good idea to get used to him, though. It doesn't sound like he's leaving any time soon.

"The racers love me, the media seem to love me, and most of the race directors seem to love me — with the exception of a few groups who look at it differently," he says. "People who don't like me, don't like me; it's been that way all my life."

CAT/DMSE WIN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RIGHTS

The three-person committee appointed by Tri-Fed/USA to review 1990 world triathlon championship bids will recommend that the Tri-Fed Board of Directors accept a joint proposal submitted by CAT Sports of Carlsbad, Calif. and Dave McGillivray Sports Enterprises, of Medford, Mass.

The news brought immediate charges of favoritism from officials of the Boca Raton-based Exclusive Sports Marketing, which also submitted a bid to the committee. Noting that CAT Sports President **Carl Thomas** and **Dave McGillivray** are both members of the Federation's Board of Directors, and that review committee member **Lyn Brooks** works for CAT Sports (as a regional Bud Light USTS coordinator and as race director for the series' Baltimore event), ESM Public Relations Director **Tom Ziebart** called the choice "very political."

Ziebart said that while he had been told only that CAT/DMSE had submitted an "impressive" proposal, his company's bid had identified a site and stated that \$200,000 from an unnamed sponsor (of the estimated \$500,000 thought necessary to produce the event) had already been obtained. "How was their bid impressive, that's what I want to know," Ziebart said.

But according to Tri-Fed Executive Director **Mark Sisson** and **Tom Cooney**, chairman of the review committee (Charlie Lincoln,

director of the World's Toughest Triathlon, was the third member), the very fact that the CAT/DMSE proposal was not specific in certain areas actually worked in their favor.

"It was the most comprehensive proposal by far," Sisson said. "They (CAT/DMSE) submitted an elaborate budget and a specific timeline. They really did their homework."

And rather than name one specific site, Sisson said, CAT/DMSE named seven possibles, representatives of which had all been previously contacted: Miami, Daytona Beach, Orlando/Disney World, Hilton Head, S.C., Kiawah Island, S.C., San Diego and the Dallas/Ft. Worth area.

Citing the "high confidence level of the two most experienced organizations in the business," Sisson said that he is comfortable with CAT/DMSE's ability to market the world championship now that they have the committee's recommendation (and the Board's anticipated approval) in hand.

"You have to have the rights before you can cut the deal," Sisson said.

Cooney, who as director of the Chicago Sun-Times Triathlon is by no means a CAT Sports loyalist, added that Thomas's experience in the television market place was a big plus.

"I'm doing everything I can to make this look good," Sisson said. "Both Thomas and McGillivray have offered to resign from the Board if necessary. In any case they will not be involved in any of the discussions or voting. It's as clean as it can be."

George Isom, director of the President's Triathlon in Dallas, also submitted a proposal. The International Management Group of Columbus, Ohio, producers of the Nice Triathlon, were also interested, but failed to meet the bid submission deadline. "Time was of the essence," Sisson said.

According to the Tri-Fed national office in Colorado Springs, a "rough" date for the 1990 World Triathlon Championships is Sept. 8.

DANSKINS WALTZES INTO THE TRIATHLON BUSINESS

It's been a busy month for CAT Sports. Carl Thomas reports that his company has signed a three-year deal with Danskins to produce a national series of all-women's triathlons beginning in 1990.

The 800m/20k/5k distances are "designed to get women involved who aren't already involved, and to encourage those women who may be intimidated by existing events," Thomas said.

He added that from the sponsor's perspective the series will help Danskins drive home the point that in addition to being a leotard company, it is also an "authentic" manufacturer of women's active wear.

Two events are scheduled for 1990. The tentative dates and sites are: June 3 in the Los Angeles area and Aug. 12 in the San Francisco Bay area. To what degree the schedule will be expanded in 1991 will depend on the success of the program in year-one, Thomas said.

Secondary sponsors for the series are being solicited. Thomas said that no decision has been made regarding the size or even the existence of a prize purse. He declined to reveal the level of Danskins financial investment in the project.

OOPS

Major oops. Rule #1: If you don't know for sure, ask how to spell it. My information came straight from the source (Dave Scott's mom) but my hearing came from somewhere out in left field. Dave's new son's name is Ryan Forshee Scott, not Bryan, as I wrote in PR # 7.