

Titanium Bikes: Fast or Fiction?

Triathlete

TRIATHLONS • DUATHLONS • SPORT EVENTS

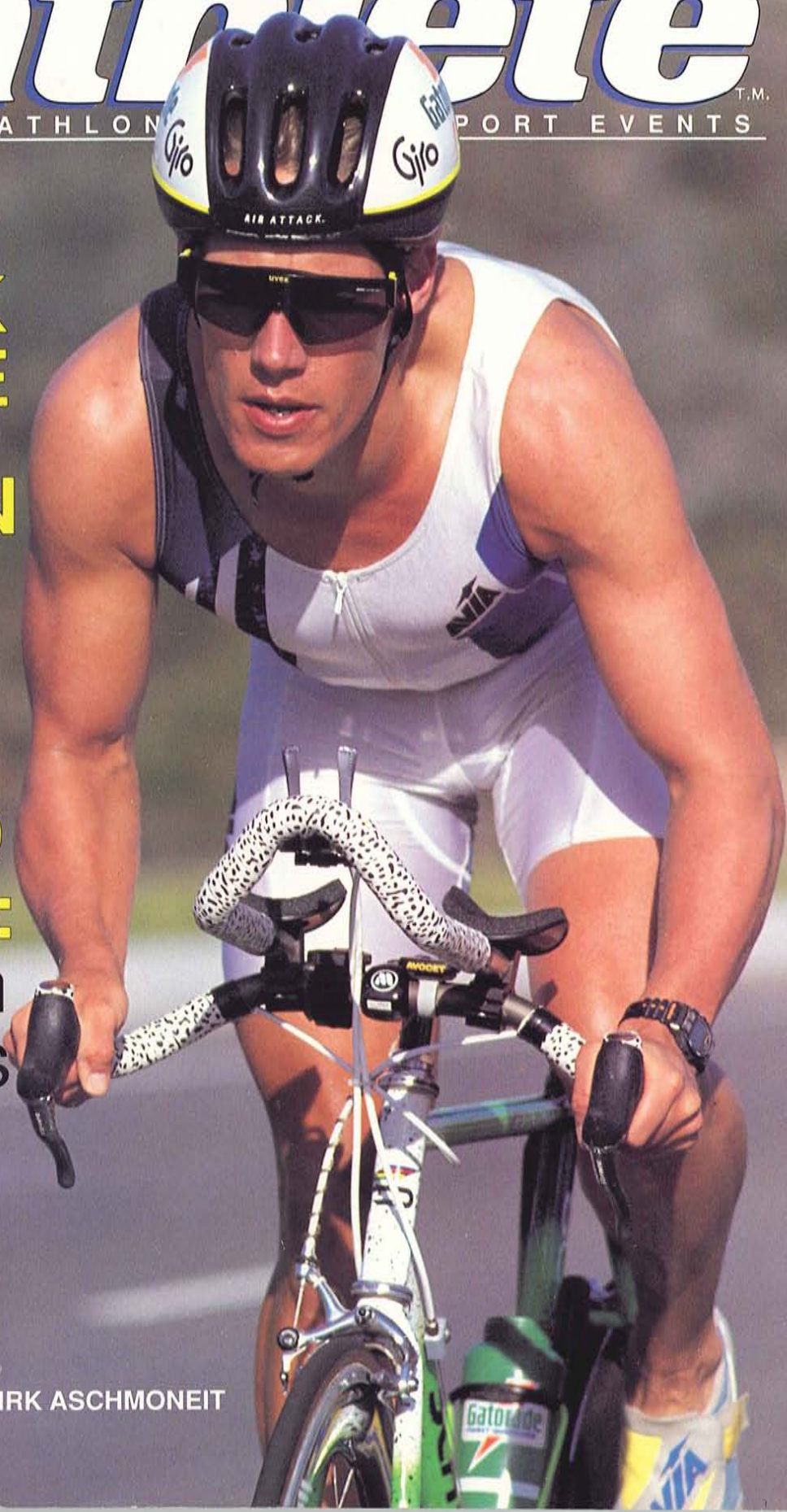
**THE
SIX-WEEK
TRIATHLETE**

DB IRONMAN

**SPLASHY
FASHION**

**WORLD
CHAMPIONS:**

**Greg Welch
Karen Smyers**



JUNE 1991 No. 89
Canada \$3.95 WPS38202
\$2.95



DIRK ASCHMONEIT

BY BARBARA LEHMAN SMITH

TRI-MATE CONFESSIONS

Notes from the edge of a transition area.

As I stood on the banks of New Hampshire's Lake Sunapee last September waiting for the Endurance Challenge Triathlon to begin, it suddenly dawned on me: There's no turning back now. These athletes—my husband among them—were going to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles and then run a full marathon. What's even crazier, I reminded myself, is that we traveled 400 miles to be here.

It was my husband Chris' first Ironman-distance race, an achievement he had craved for years. After four years of being a sideline supporter, or what's commonly called a "tri-mate," I should have been prepared for the long day, but it was only daybreak and my resolve was already cracking. I pushed all negative thoughts from my mind and joined the other families and friends on the shore in clapping for, cheering on and taking pictures of our beloved triathletes.

As the 500 athletes entered the water to start their daylong event, the ticker-tape mood accelerated. I kept my eyes locked on Chris' white swim cap and hoped he would hear my shouts of encouragement over the others.

Then the race began, and instantly, I lost him from view. For a moment, the sight of hundreds of white-capped swimmers cutting through the misty lake mesmerized those of us on shore. A few cameras clicked. During this lull, I overheard one woman confide to another in a low, singsong voice, "I'm sca-a-a-red." Then they laughed conspiratorially while those of us within earshot smiled at her candor. Truer tri-mate words were rarely spoken.

If you are the spouse, parent or friend of a triathlete, then you are a tri-mate. As the saying goes (kind of), "Some great things are just thrust upon you." But unlike a lot of other sports, the presence of a sideline supporter truly makes a positive difference for the athlete during a triathlon.

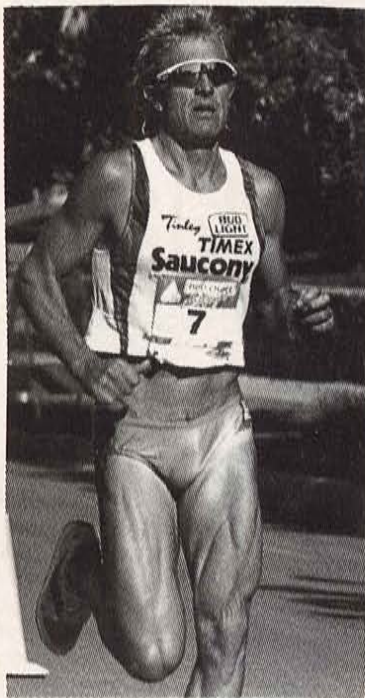
While the actions of the volunteer force hold the entire race together, tri-mates are usually there to support their particular athlete or athletes only. (However, we do cheer for anyone with a race number.) Over the years, I've acted as bike holder, lap counter, transition-area assistant, timer and, of course, captain of the pep squad. I've spent many pre-race nights searching supermarkets for fresh bananas and special vitamin packets (his lucky pre-race breakfast); watching Chris pack and unpack his transition bag 12 times; and lying awake while he tossed and turned. I also imagine I'm not the only tri-mate spouse who's had to share my hotel room during out-of-town races with The Race Bike. (Please don't ask me who received more attention.) And yes, through every "carbo-load" spaghetti dinner, I've loved it all.

But this was an Ironman race and, in a way, the ultimate challenge for both triathlete and tri-mate. My adrenaline surged and I felt ready once again for the demanding day. So what if I was 400 miles away from home, a cheering section of one with at least 13 hours lying ahead of me. I was no amateur.

Balancing a cup of hot coffee in one hand and a camera in the other, I hiked up the hill to the swim/bike transition area. In the few minutes since the start of the swim, a familiar change had taken place. The friends and families of the



RICHARD GRAHAM



Scott Tinley
World Cup Ironman
Series Champion

In order to *beat* somebody who eats *PowerBars*, you have to be somebody who eats *PowerBars*.

Call for a free newsletter, or the location of your nearest dealer.
800-444-5154
(7am- 6 pmPST, M-F)
Canada 604-929-6084
UK 0246 433 213



\$1.69 each
\$35/box of 24.
Protein: 10 g.
Fat: less than 2 g.
Carbohydrate: 40 g.
**In Malt-Nut, Chocolate
and Wild Berry flavors**

©1991 Powerfood Inc.

athletes, now officially on active duty, smiled and looked at one another with understanding.

I joined the majority of tri-mates in sitting down to wait outside the fenced-in transition area. As we enjoyed the brilliant foliage of the surrounding mountains, I reviewed my "Essential Triathlon Items" list in my mind.

Nourishment: check. I had packed sodas, sandwiches and a smorgasbord of snacks. (Most tri-mates learn fast not to let the healthy environment intimidate them out of eating junk food.)

Reading material: check. Since the frenetic atmosphere of the race does not encourage serious reading, I had brought a Stephen King paperback and a wheelbarrow full of magazines.

Clothing: check. Although I had the luxury of escaping to our rented minivan, I had dressed in layers. Depending upon the length of the race and the speed of the triathlete, it's best to be prepared for changes in temperature or the onset of mosquitoes.

As the lead swimmers came running from the water, through the water hoses and to their bike area, I stood up and watched the first tri-mates spring into action. Near me, a woman and her young daughter called out enthusiastically to their triathlete. Watching them, I had to admit I became a little jealous. Although not yet on my Essential Items checklist, the category of children seems to be a perfect addition. They are elated to see their mommy or daddy competing, and they provide the tri-mate with company

during the race besides. I confess that at times I seriously consider having children solely to alleviate my occasional race boredom.

With a time of slightly over an hour, Chris had finished the swim sooner than he'd anticipated. He was exhilarated as

he unzipped his wetsuit and prepped for the bike. "Great job! Keep it up!" I yelled to him as he biked past me. "See you in about six hours," he yelled back. Faced with this reality, my mood plummeted, but I responded with gusto: "OK. Keep that pace, and I'll see you then!"

As he biked into the distance, I grimaced. For me, cheering is one of the hardest tasks required of a tri-mate. During Chris' first triathlon season—with both of us triathlon rookies—I quickly caught on to the right and wrong ways to cheer. In a Bud-Light USTS race, he raced by me and said, "I'm dying." I replied, "Maybe you should walk for a while." Chris ran on but the man next to me gave me a withering look as though I had screamed the worst profanity. In a way, I guess I had. So now

when I really want to say, "It's OK, honey; you don't have to finish," I bite my tongue instead.

Hours later as I approached the bike/run transition area, I found Chris' bike already racked in stall number 233. I had missed him! Almost immediately, my disappointment changed to excitement. He was on the last leg of the race!

Back in the van, I drove to the nearest aid station, traditionally the best vantage point from which to watch the run. There

If you are the spouse, parent or friend of a triathlete, then you are a tri-mate. As the saying goes (kind of), "Some great things are just thrust upon you." But unlike a lot of other sports, the presence of a sideline supporter truly makes a positive difference for the athlete during a triathlon.

I met three tri-mates from Albany who had come to support 10 of their triathlete friends. They were lugging a cooler brimming with turkey sandwiches, sodas and potato chips. I liked them immediately.

At one point, one of their triathletes darted through the aid station accepting every cookie and banana offered by the volunteers. "I may be the only guy who gains weight in this race," he quipped to us. We rewarded his levity with a chorus of laughter. As he continued on, one of his tri-mates grinned knowingly, "Hmmm... We'll see how good-humored he is on the next lap."

As I clapped for the other runners, I began to worry about my husband. Why hadn't I seen him yet? Had he stopped? Was he walking? Was he hurt? I saw other competitors who had dropped out of the race, and my concern intensified.

Then, from around the bend, I spotted him donning his trademark Day-Glo hat, and I stood up, exhaling my relief. To my surprise, the Albany team assisted me in shouting a warm welcome to my triathlete.

As Chris walked through the aid station, I talked with him for a minute. His face showed a combination of frustration and weariness. My tri-mate training kicked in, and I said, "C'mon, Christopher, have fun!" Clearly, my words were those of a desperate woman. But they did the trick. He grunted acknowledgement and picked up his pace.

A few hours later, the mountain air had turned cold. As I sipped my 300th Diet Coke of the day and waited for Chris by the finish line, I looked around at the other tri-mates. Some were already with their precious triathletes, while others were still waiting. I exchanged smiles and greetings with a few familiar faces from the course; I felt a twinge of regret for the disbanding of our special "camp."

Then it was over. "Christopher Smith from Baltimore," the race announcer called out. The downhill final stretch gave Chris and the other runners, as well as the spectators, the benefit of a dramatic arrival. With a spotlight on him, the race officials put a red, white and blue ribbon with an endurance medal around his neck for finishing. Would it surprise any tri-mate if I admit that I snapped an entire roll of film during this moment?

Exhausted and proud, Chris put his arm around me as we merged into the crowd of families and friends. He did it, I thought, and we did it.

See you at the next race. ▲

Barbara Lehman Smith is a freelance writer. She and her husband Chris live in Towson, Maryland.



LEARN TO FLY.

At just 2.6 pounds, the Kestrel 200 EMS frame weighs less than your 28-spoke front wheel. Less than the water in two bottles. And less than any other bicycle frame ever put into production.

Other "superlight" designs don't even come close. The best-selling titanium frame falls short by half a pound. The lightest aluminum, three-quarters of a pound. Most other composite frames are at least a full pound heavier. And premium chromolly (like SLX, TSX, or Prestige) carries nearly a *two pound* weight penalty.

Now consider how much better a bike climbs, accelerates, and handles when it weighs a couple of pounds less.

And the EMS is also stiffer. More resilient and shock absorbent. Even more aerodynamic.

The world's lightest frame. Patented one-piece Kestrel construction. EMS composite fork. Lifetime warranty.

Just think of the possibilities.

Kestrel

For catalog, send \$3.00 to:
Kestrel, Dept. 12
265 Westridge Dr.
Watsonville, CA 95076.
Or call 1-800-KESTREL
(537-8735).