



## **PR Tri Coach's Lee Simril Interview with Ironman Triathlete Katy Sirovatka**

LS: Congratulations on finishing the 2008 Ironman Kentucky.

KS: Thanks Lee! It was a fantastic day for me.

LS: How was your training leading up to the big day?

KS: My longest distances peaked three and four weeks out. My longest ride, 107 miles, came complete with two flat tires I fixed myself, including using a Gu wrapper as a tire boot, so it really worked as a confidence builder! My longest run was 20 miles. I had a knee go haywire on me two weeks out, but I "rested aggressively" with lots of ice and swimming and it was back to normal within a week.

LS: Please give me a run down of your nutrition for race day, beginning with the night before the race and ending at the finish line.

KS: I ate the well-respected pasta dinner the night before. At 4:15 race morning, I had a bagel, a banana, and some instant breakfast. I sipped on Gatorade as I waited for the swim start, but I really dislike the taste!

I'd been searching for a solid food that would work for me for early in the bike. Clif Bars have too much fiber (not good for the run later) and Power Bars are too hard to chew. I settled on cheap grocery store granola bars, chocolate chip flavor! They have 200 calories apiece and supply a mix of simple and complex carbs, so they worked for me. So I ate one of these as soon as I was settled on the bike. I had a scheduled "feeding" every half hour. Usually this consisted of a Gu and a salt tablet, but I also had another granola bar about 1.5 hours into the race and I ate  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich from my special needs bag. I drank tons and tons of water and took in close to 600 mg of sodium per hour, which was at the low end of the recommendation for the Louisville heat (appropriate for my body size). My goal was to average 300 calories per hour on the bike, and I was fairly close to that. The only issue was that although the PBJ worked very well for me in training, it didn't sit well during the race. I was burping peanut butter for hours until I finally "lost" a bit of it in the last 10 miles.

I was still feeling bad when the run started, and it necessitated a change in nutrition plans. I got down no more than a gu and a half in the first hour, but managed to eat one pretzel at most aid stations. My calorie intake was too low and I knew it, but I think it worked out because I'd stayed on top of things on the bike and because I kept my heart rate down and ran slow enough to lean heavily on fat metabolism.

LS: Please tell me your best moment of race.

KS: I remember being around mile 80 of the bike, starting to accelerate out of an aid station, when another competitor (reading my name off my bib) said, “We are *almost* there, Katy!” I was feeling strong and my biking felt so smooth. It was one of the few times I allowed myself to think past the next ten to thirty minutes and briefly envision the finish line. I knew I was going to get there.

LS: Please tell me your worst moment of the race.

KS: Well, learning how to “barf off the bike” does rank pretty low, but I’d say the first two miles of the run were the worst. I was having trouble in the heat, my stomach was upset, and my heart rate was too high. I solved the problems by slowing down and stuffing cold sponges into my top. I ditched the Nuun I’d been planning to drink and stuck with plain water (plus the ever-present electrolyte tablets). After about a five minute walk, I was good enough to resume a jog to the next aid station. I kept this pattern up for the rest of the race...run to aid station, walk, change cold sponges, sip water, eat pretzel, repeat. And ultimately, my “worst moment” is also what I’m proudest of. Things weren’t going well, but I didn’t panic—I figured it out, and I fixed the problem.

LS: Did you get to enjoy the post race party?

KS: I was more interested in seeing my family, Jon and the boys. I got a bit of food at the athlete recovery area, we sat outside while I nibbled it, and then walked back to the hotel. Sloooowly!

LS: What motivates you to compete in triathlons, as opposed to just exercising for the sake of fitness?

KS: I love to have a goal. I’d even say I need to have a goal. When I first dared to imagine running a 5 K, and then a 10 K, it was so exciting. It’s not about how fast I go (though it’s fun!), it’s about the experience of bringing the best of myself to the line.

LS: What are your race plans for the “Off Season”?

KS I’m looking forward to doing some of the fun stuff I passed on during the summer. I’m running a leg of the Fox Cities Marathon relay with some folks from work, and then maybe I’ll do some 5Ks, shorter races, just have a good time.