



Publisher's Note

BY BOB BABBITT

SUNSCREEN, A LITTLE SPRAY PAINT & A REALLY CHEAP BIKE

It was October of 1996 and as Cory Foulk wheeled his 61-pound monstrosity towards the Ironman World Championship bike corral, every eye in the house was on him. He was the proverbial brown pair of dress shoes hanging out with the black tuxedo or Dave Scott trying to sneak into the Pot Belly Hall of Fame.

The bike racks were filled with rows and rows of tricked-out rides. Cory's steed, however, definitely stood out. It was a neon yellow Schwinn Typhoon single-speed with solid green knobbies and coaster brakes.

"When I rolled it into the bike transition area for check in, the first thing they made me do was take my kick stand off," Cory laughs. "Then when they realized my tires were too thick to fit in the rack, I had to put the kick stand back on."



The total cost for the bike was \$15... with the basket.

"It cost me more for the three cans of spray paint it took to cover the bike," he insists. He also had rainbow straws put on the bike spokes to add just a hint of color along with streamers coming out the end of the handlebars and the foam flames attached to his helmet.

That's not to mention the tie-dyed Speedo and the Fred Kahuna Aloha Shirt that he raced in.

So why go retro at Ironman? Cory loves the sport and lives on the Big Island, but he felt that triathletes and the event had gotten a little too serious.

"I just wanted to go out there and have a little fun," he says.

And he did.

After coming out of the water, he started making up some serious ground. When you've got a 61-pound neon yellow beast with one gear, you're forced to work pretty hard on the uphill. But those downhills are SWEET!

He did the bike ride, believe it or not, barefoot.

"The pedals got a little hot, but it wasn't a problem," he recalls. "I had plenty of cargo space in my basket to carry water and ice to cool my feet down. Plus, I had a pair of tennis shoes in the basket in case I needed them to push the bike up some of the grades."

He never needed them.

When it came to nutrition, Cory was on top of that as well. He had 10 pounds of Jolly Ranchers in the basket to munch on along the way or to toss to the adoring crowds in town or at the aid stations.

"That bag cost me two dollars at a pre-Halloween sale," he laughs.

During the bike ride, he would stop along the way to call the local radio station and give race updates.

"The station gave me a roll of quarters that I kept in the basket," he says. "I was climbing the hill to Hawi, passing guys even though I had only one gear. But it was the right gear for that hill. I get to the turnaround, pull over, drop the kickstand and run over to the Laundromat to use the pay phone. I see these guys I just passed going by my bike, kickstand down, sitting there

on the shoulder. They're just shaking their heads."

After the call, Cory was back on the prowl — this time on the downhill.

"I was back on my American-made big rig and BOOM!, I blow by them again and I'm going so fast I just about suck their sunglasses off," he says. As he flew by, his feet were up on the basket and he looked like he was back in grammar school.

He was having the time of his life.

Cory has one picture that he loves. It shows a couple of athletes trying to draft off of him.

"I am towering over the course on this thing, and they are all tucked in behind me," he recalls. "Big draft. You could draft this bike from 40 yards out."

His bike split was 8:50:21 (including both transitions) and his total time was 15:46:57 (with a 1:29:40 swim and 5:26:56 run). Not bad when you consider that his bike weighed practically three times everyone else's.

You will see Cory Foulk at the starting line in Kona on October 13 — but this time with a racing bike, hot wheels, an aero helmet and, hey, maybe even a pair of bike shoes.

"Back then," he says, "I wanted to prove that you don't need ten grand to do the Ironman." A big smile.

"All you need is some sunscreen, a little spray paint and a really cheap bike."

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