



Ahhh the Lake Tahoe Sprint Triathlon: yet another one of my favorite local races! How could it not be a favorite? The entire course showcases North America's largest and most pristine alpine lake – Lake Tahoe of course! The race starts and finishes at [Sugar Pine Point State Park](#), which is home to the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion; a historic estate built in 1903.

This year I was all signed up and ready to race the Sprint on Saturday the 26th and the Olympic on Sunday the 27th. Having tackled the Donner Lake Sprint and Olympic in similar fashion and having loved every second of both races, I was determined to repeat the process here in search of the epic, week-long endorphin high I had after Donner.

The morning of the race arrived, I jumped out of bed, piled all of my triathlon accoutrements into my car and drove the fifty feet to pick up my friend/neighbor, Cortney who was also racing. It was 5:45AM and we were off to the race start at Sugar Pine Point.

Arriving on scene, there are three main stops to make. 1) Parking & Potty: The parking lot at Sugar Pine Point is easy to access and has plenty of clean, well-maintained restrooms and of course the event provides even more porta-johns for those pre-race potty preparations. 2) Packet Pick Up: As usual, Misty (Big Blue's Volunteer Coordinator) and her crew of volunteers ran a smooth operation and



we had race packets in no time. 3) Transition & Body Marking: Here comes that Sharpie again! Bib number on left arm, age on calf then rack the bike and lay out all the gear.

After our typical transition area antics, Cortney and I made our way down the roughly quarter-mile path to the water's edge ahead of the race start. The water level was SO HIGH this year! I expected it to be higher than it had been in previous years, but not quite this high. There was no beach. Literally! The water was right up to the edge of the wall that was built as part of the mansion grounds. While receiving prerace instructions and waiting for the waves to start we were able to take in the sunrise and scenery. This is one of the most beautiful views of Lake Tahoe around.

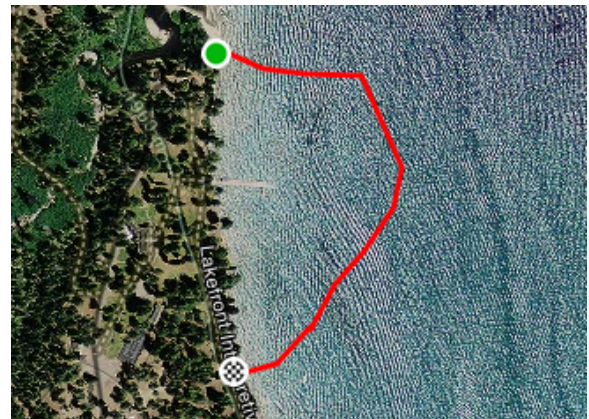


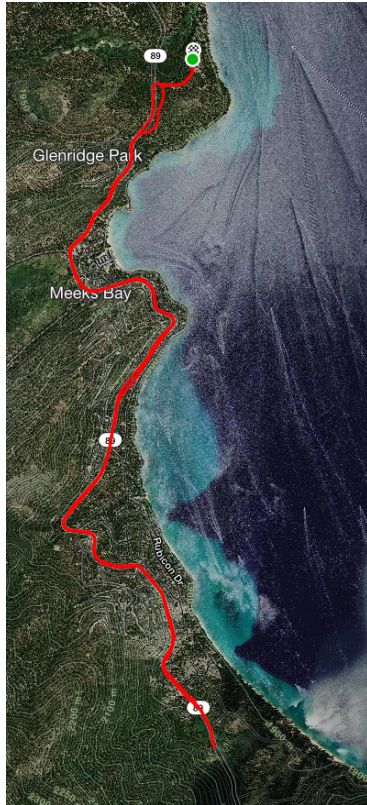
Once the first couple of waves launched, I overheard a group of fellow women pointing out that some of the swimmers in an earlier wave were cutting inside of the first buoy and that if those swimmers were going to cut the corner, they were going to follow suit. Not cool for a couple of reasons: 1) I watched what these ladies were talking about and I

actually think it was an optical illusion based on the angle of our vantage point. I don't think anyone was actually cutting the corner and I doubted that the course marshals on paddleboards would let anyone do so. 2) Even if some swimmers were cutting the corner, IT'S POOR FORM! Who does this? Why would anyone do this? It's CHEATING! Forget for a moment that you're cheating your peers and fellow athletes, and loudly announcing that you're about to do so. Why on earth would anyone cheat themselves the pride of knowing they completed an event in its entirety? Wouldn't you have a nagging little voice in the back of your head every time someone congratulated you on your race saying [in a squeaky little Gollum voice] "oh but you didn't really do the race, now did you sweetie?" Rant over, back to the event...

SWIM: The 550 yard swim is a rough "U" shape starting at the "North Boat House" of the mansion grounds. Upon starting, we swam east for about 100 yards to the first buoy and then south for another hundred(ish) yards to the second buoy which proved to be a guide around the small pier at the property. From there it was a straight(ish) line in to the golden finish arch.

Beyond the usual triathlon gear, one piece of equipment I would highly recommend for this event would be neoprene booties. While the water temperature is fantastic, waiting for the swim start as well as running back up to transition via the roughly quarter-mile combination of asphalt and dirt covered with pine needles, pine cones and rocks is made much more pleasant (and speedy) with booties to protect the feet.





BIKE: The 10 mile bike ride travels out of the transition area and south along Highway 89. The course is comprised of rolling hills with a total of about 500 feet in elevation gain. It is open to vehicular traffic, but still provides plenty of opportunity to take in views of the area including Meeks Bay. As an out and back course, the turn around point is about 5 miles from the transition area. Don't forget to thank the volunteers and Highway Patrol as you slow down to make the turn around and head home.

RUN: Be still my beating heart! Oh how I love this part. It's two miles and as John Mellencamp would say, it Hurts so Good! Although the course has a mere 100 feet of elevation gain over the entire 2 miles, for whatever reason, it sure feels like a lot more. As you run out of transition and on to course, there's a steep(ish) descent on pavement which will make those legs feel a bit more rubbery than normal. Once you're past that, there's a bit of trail, a bit of

sand and then before you know it, you're running back up that steep hill into the finish. While you're out there though, ignore the fact that your heart feels like it's going to beat right out of your chest and look east out over the lake for more of those beautiful views.



Running into this finish is so fun and exciting. The crowds are awesome, the announcer is hilarious and the race staff and volunteers are ready to trade you your timing chip for a finishers medal. The post race goodies are plentiful and range from fruit and bagels to a full BBQ and beer!

Cortney and I both had great races and have yet another fun day of racing memories to share. We wore our finisher's medals along with our Sharpied body markings for the rest of the day!!!!