

# Beat the Clock

February 28, 2009

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Today I did my first bicycle time-trial called "Beat the Clock". It was a 9.7 mile out-and-back course on a fairly level road. The total elevation gain over the whole thing was about 450 feet, but a lot of that was in the final two miles, so I was a little nervous about the early pace since I didn't want to blow up at the end.

I have, of course, done time-trial-like races in a triathlon, but those are pretty different since I'd never go all-out with a run staring me in the face at the end of the bike leg.

It was really well-organized, and just like the TT's you see on TV: there was a guy to hold your bike up at the beginning so you could start off clipped-in with a little push on your butt to get you going, a starter who counted down the final seconds on her fingers for you, and folks along the course officially to control traffic, but who also served as a great cheering section. There were some very hot racers there, so I figured it would be a good way to

totally humiliate myself. The entire event was a benefit for cancer research, so even if I was humiliated, it was at least for a good cause.

I tricked out my triathlon bike completely with a deep-dish carbon front wheel and a full-disc rear wheel that I'd gotten second-hand from a pro triathlete who had

only ridden it a dozen times or so. It had pretty high gearing (11-23) which was perfect for the course, but made the ride home after the race a little unpleasant, since I live at the top of a 500 foot climb where the last quarter mile is about a 15% grade.

I rode from home to the start (about 16 miles) as a warm-up and got there about 25 minutes before my start time. I think that was about right. A bunch of friends and my wife were volunteering to help with the race, so I got a chance to say hello to all of them before I started.



I unloaded everything I could at the start: no water bottles, jacket, spare tubes/tires, tool kit, et cetera. The bike feels different when it's completely unloaded. Due to the disc wheel, it was probably the heaviest it's ever been, however, but I'm sure the disc cut off

a few seconds, and it sure makes an interesting noise to accompany your race.



There's not much to tell about the race itself. We started at 1-minute intervals and I was pleased that it took the guy behind me more than two miles to catch me. Two more riders caught me during the race, and one of them must have been very fast since the two passed me at almost the same time.

My legs were screaming at me for almost the whole race, but my lungs didn't start to give out until the end. I was pleased to see that my cadence was a pretty constant 90 rpm, and my heart rate gradually increased through the entire event.

(Actually, I was surprised that the cadence measured at all -- the disc wheel must have a magnet in it, mounted in roughly the right place.) My power meter is on a training wheel, so I have no idea how that looked.

I got fantastic encouragement from a friend who was stationed at the turn-around (Thank you Debs!) and the trip back didn't hurt as much as I feared it would.

I don't have the official times yet (my computer said about 27:50, but the official time might be a few seconds less for a couple of reasons). I'll probably do it again, and we'll see if this experience helps much when I try it a second or third time.

My official time was 27:51, 41st out of 48 riders. I probably won't be standing on the podium soon.