

## RUNNER'S PROFILE

by Joe Howell

It is now August and many of you have noticed an annual phenomenon in Santa Barbara. Perhaps friends who you didn't even know were swimmers have started talking about how warm (or cold) the ocean is this week. Others who concentrate on shorter distance running events seem to be doing longer training runs. You may be surprised by comments about a "dream bike" or "fantasy components" that are coveted by a fellow runner. Most noticeably, an increasing number of local athletes appear to be exhausted and running on empty, whether you see them at morning, noon or night. If you haven't already guessed it, these are clear signs that Santa Barbara athletes are preparing for the Santa Barbara County Triathlon. On Saturday, August 23, the 16th Annual Santa Barbara County Triathlon (one of the world's oldest) will be staged.

The subject of this month's Profile is an ideal one for August. Steve Issaris is a local athlete who is good in a variety of events and even better in triathlons. Like many local triathletes, Steve spends more time year round focusing on one or two events (running and swimming in his case) with less time on the third event (biking). However, as the triathlon season begins, Steve and others somehow find the time to devote hours of training to swimming, biking and running. In Steve's case, he traditionally competes in the Mike & Rob's Triathlon (half Ironman distance) in Ventura in early August, followed by his perennial appearance in the Santa Barbara County Triathlon (one mile swim, 34-mile bike, 10-mile run) in late August. Those who know Steve marvel at his ability to devote time to his wife Roberta and new daughter Katie, handle the challenges of being a software engineer, and somehow train and so effectively compete in triathlons. Steve, when you are ready to write your "How To" book, please reserve a copy for me.

### Basic Information

**Name:** STEVE ISSARIS

**Age:** 40

**Family/Employment:** Wife Roberta, daughter Katie age 1

Software Engineer at Condor Engineering

**Other Sports/Interests:** I enjoy competing in short to half ironman distance triathlons. I someday hope to participate in the Hawaii Ironman and just finish

it. I run 3 or 4 days a week, swim 2 or 3 days a week and bike at least once a week (more when time permits).

I also have a lifelong love for surfing, which I still enjoy when I can escape the crowds of surfers. During college at UCSB, I competed in many surfing contests and usually made it to the finals. Highlights of that time included an overall win against Pepperdine University at Zuma Beach and an 11<sup>th</sup> place overall in California at the winter collegiate championship at Huntington Beach in 1979. One of the biggest thrills in my life was surfing in Hawaii at some of the big wave spots on the North Shore of Oahu (Pipeline and Sunset).

### Running Highlights

**Favorite Distance & PR at same:** 10 miles (not too long or short)

PR 1:05:25

**Favorite Local Race:** The Chardonnay 10 mile run. This is a good distance for me. The race is well organized and well attended. I like running along the ocean. I was happy with my time this year (my 1:05:25 PR). I also enjoy the Wednesday Nite Moves races.

**Best Race & Why:** A half ironman distance race, Mike and Rob's Triathlon. I surpassed my optimistic times in both the bike and the run. I was particularly happy with my half marathon time, averaging 6:58 miles after a really hard 56 mile bike ride.

**Worst Race & Why:** My wife and I decided to vacation by visiting the Grand Canyon and Zion national parks. I thought since we were going to be in the area, I should run the Saint George Marathon and maybe qualify for the Boston Marathon. I thought it would be a good match for the long distance training I had been doing over the summer. I was wrong; the Saint George Marathon has a net decrease in altitude, which makes for a fast course. Hiking every day (even at a easy pace) was not a good idea before this marathon. During the race I never felt in sync. At the half-way point, I knew it was going to be ugly. All the downhill were already starting to hurt my quads. I have never wanted to quit a race as much as this one. I did manage to finish, but it was a miserable experience.

### Additional Information

**Why I Run:** I run because I enjoy it. I like being outdoors and with my desk job I'm stuck inside a lot. Most of my runs are during the week at lunch,

which provides a good break in the day. Santa Barbara is a perfect place to live for a runner.

**Training Tips:** I find training with friends is good motivation. I also think that setting realistic goals is important. I always set three times for myself when I race: a slow time I know I can do, the time I expect to do, and a time which is possible if I have a great day.

**Running Hero & Why:** This was an easy question to answer. I'm sure many of you know or have heard of Duncan Thomas. Duncan is a local legend for good reason. He currently holds the age group record 45-49 for the Ironman Hawaii, among many other accomplishments. I admire Duncan not only for his athletic ability but also because of his great enthusiasm and attitude. He has raced for many years and overcome injuries that would cause others to stop training altogether. He has succeeded in races short and long. He has done all this while juggling a full time job and a family. His wife Terry is pretty great too. Last year at the age of 47, his marathon time at Hawaii was 3:17 after a 2.4 mile swim and 112 mile bike with high humidity and heat at the age of 47.

**Suggestions for local races:** I am very impressed with the quality and quantity of races available. I don't have any suggestions for improvements.

**Goals 1997:** Finish top 5 in my age group at Santa Barbara Triathlon or establish a new PR for this race. Go under 18:00 for 5K.

**Wild Goal by 2000:** Qualify for the Hawaii Ironman

Go under 3:10 for a marathon

**Quote:** "Set attainable goals"



## RANDOM THOUGHTS

by Desmond O'Neill

I sat down recently and watched track on television. Actually highlights of two track meets, big international meets in France and Spain, which were shown on Fox Sports (Channel 37). I don't know who the announcer was, but it was, for once, a pleasure to watch well-presented track on TV. The competition was good, and while the field events did not receive a lot of attention, the races were well presented, and the announcer, who obviously had a good statistician working as well, provided intelligent commentary, very different from the scatter-shot and inane chatter which accompanies most American TV on track. It didn't matter that I already had the results of the meets; it was just nice to have somebody presenting these meets as athletic contests with individuals, rather than as an entertainment circus with inconsequential verbal background. Hey, we even got an intelligent discussion of the steeplechase and what the record should be and why the Kenyans are currently so dominant in the event. You wouldn't get that from ABC, now would you?

While on the subject of news coverage, I am about ready to give up on World Records entirely. I know; these are indelible records of human achievement, charting progress through the years, enabling us to compare performances of the here-and-now with those of yesteryear. That's not really true, and never has been, particularly as technological developments make advances possible, and I'm not even talking about pharmaceutical enhancement. However, the problem with world records is that these get overemphasized, to the point where, I believe, the average member of the public somehow feels that only a world record performance is worth watching. I've seen a number of world record performances, in person and on television, in my time, and I can tell you that a lot of them were runaways, presenting very little in the way of competition, and I personally believe that two 10.6 sprinters battling it out can be more exciting than one guy running 9.89 and beating everybody by 0.2 of a second. The problem is, of course, that competition isn't appreciated any longer, and if fans expect world records every time that they go to a track meet, well, folks, it just can't happen. Even in an Olympic year you might get two or three; actually the chances are better for a world record in a non-Olympic year, of course, but they're still pretty rare events and mostly