

HAWAII REVISITED RECAP 2009

Sometimes history repeats itself and other times an entirely new chapter is written. Both are true of the 2009 Hawaii Revisited event which raised over \$30,000 for the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF).

A group of 17 athletes assembled in Honolulu on August 9th, to take on the challenge of the original Ironman® course from 1978. Hurricane Felicia, swirling in the waters south of the islands, caused strong currents and unpredictable conditions forcing organizers and lifeguards to opt for the alternate swim course used in 1980 when similar weather patterns existed.

WHERE THE PAST MEETS THE PRESENT

Standing among those 17 athletes was one man who was also at the start line 31 years before, one of the pioneers of the sport who took the dare... met the challenge... and changed history, Dave Orlowski. When asked about the original race, Dave shares that there is little he can remember. In January of 1978, the group approached the day not knowing the epic value, the lives that would be changed, or the movement that would emerge. It is only in hindsight that he, and the millions of finishers that have followed, can look back in wonder at that day. Dave can recall one defining moment which includes suffering near mile 24 of the marathon. Along the curve at the base of Diamond Head is a guardrail to lean on, a place to question one's will and for Dave a place where doubt crept in back in 1978. That is until his support crew appeared to applaud him and urge him on. These many years later Dave found himself leaning on that same guardrail, again the questioning, again the doubt.....and again a support crew that appeared at a moment when he needed them most. They willed him to finish and finish he did in 17:39....so that history could repeat itself. The cool part? After finishing the swim, he went back to his hotel for a little rest and relaxation before starting the bike ride around Oahu. He ended up finishing in fourth place, 31 years after finishing third back in 1978. It's not too bad when you lose only one place every 31 years.

IN HIS FOOTSTEPS

Another competitor was there to write a new chapter. Henry Forrest, III, son of original Ironman® Henry Forrest, Jr. was there to follow in the footsteps of his father Henry, who was one of the original 12 finishers. Losing his dad in November of 2008 to cancer motivated Henry III to participate and share a common experience. Although their finish times differed by five hours (and 31 years!), both father and son finished seventh overall. Henry was aided throughout the day by his loving family and another original Ironman who had raced alongside his father, Tom Knoll. At Hawaii Revisited, Tom ran with Henry,

walked with Henry, cheered for Henry, and finally, celebrated with Henry as the finish line came into focus at 20 hours and 22 minutes. Congratulations Henry Forrest, III, you have truly honored your father and yourself.

THE OLD GUYS

With the relay division being an important part of the 2009 event, CAF was excited to have three strong teams with their own inspiring stories. "CAF Old Guys" was made up of Bob Babbitt, Rick "Koz" Kozlowski and Tommy Knapp, all CAF Board Members. Bob and Rick, two of the founders of CAF, had competed on this exact course back in 1980. Besides being 2009 race directors and hosts, Koz did the entire swim, and tagged off with Tommy Knapp, an above elbow amputee and multiple Olympic distance triathlon Gold Medalist, who rode the first 20 miles. The three then took turns riding 20 milers until it was time for the marathon. "We started out running 30 minutes each," says Bob. "But we cut that back to 15 minutes per person at a time from then on. That is definitely the best way to do a long distance triathlon!"

TAKING THE CHALLENGE

Team Hawaii, captained by challenged athlete Mike Nishimoto, were strong finishers as well and were the second place relay team in 13:07. During training in 2003 for Ironman® Australia, Mike was hit from behind by a bus while on his bike. "My back was broken and nerves were severed below my waist," he recalls. The doctors told Mike that he would never walk again. Through Hawaii Revisited, Mike was introduced to CAF. He was provided a grant to attend the San Diego Triathlon Challenge back in 2004. More importantly, Mike was able to meet other challenged athletes who helped him find out how he could overcome his injuries. In 2007, he did the Waikiki Rough Water Swim and qualified for the ITU World Championship, using a regular bike for the ride and a racing chair for the run. Mike is now signed up to do Ironman® Western Australia on December 5th. "My goals" he says, "were to walk again, to give back to CAF and to do Ironman®." In December he'll be three for three.

THE HEROES

Team Army-Marines stole our hearts and raised our spirits. The combination of John Blue, challenged athlete and active Army Sergeant Major, paired with Marine Major Bill Conner was inspiring. The two men had not met until the race orientation just hours prior to the start. There was little time to create a "team plan," but this didn't deter these two survivors. John Blue, part of CAF's Operation Rebound, was serving in Iraq when his vehicle was hit by an Explosively Formed Penetrator (EFP) and he sustained injuries that eventually led to the amputation of his right leg below the knee. John's teammate "Wild Bill"

Conner had returned home from Iraq just 8 days prior to Hawaii Revisited, completing his fifth tour of duty. Wild Bill was known for completing the Ironman® World Championship last October wearing combat boots, fatigues and cycling with an 8-pound combat helmet, although this last tour of duty left him little time for running or cycling. These two, who were supported by previous Hawaii Revisited competitor Rex Vlcek, truly stole the day and took third in the relay competition finishing in 14:07.

CONGRATULATIONS AND MAHALO

A hearty congratulations to the first individual finisher and top fundraiser, Mac Williamson, who finished in 12:58 and raised \$4,490.01 and to Dana Gilchrist who started the day with no support crew, yet somehow ended her race in 17:50 winning the hearts of many locals, fellow competitors, race organizers and every support crew on the road who all embraced her effort and her smile.

Other finishers included second place individual Kevin Cason (15:30), third place John Bandy (15:59), and sixth place Chuck Pateros (18:15). Mahalo to all who participated in the 2009 Hawaii Revisited and who make it possible for CAF to change lives, one athlete at a time.