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TRIATHLETES**

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IRONMAN TOUGH

A serious workout for triathletes 4 weeks from the Ironman

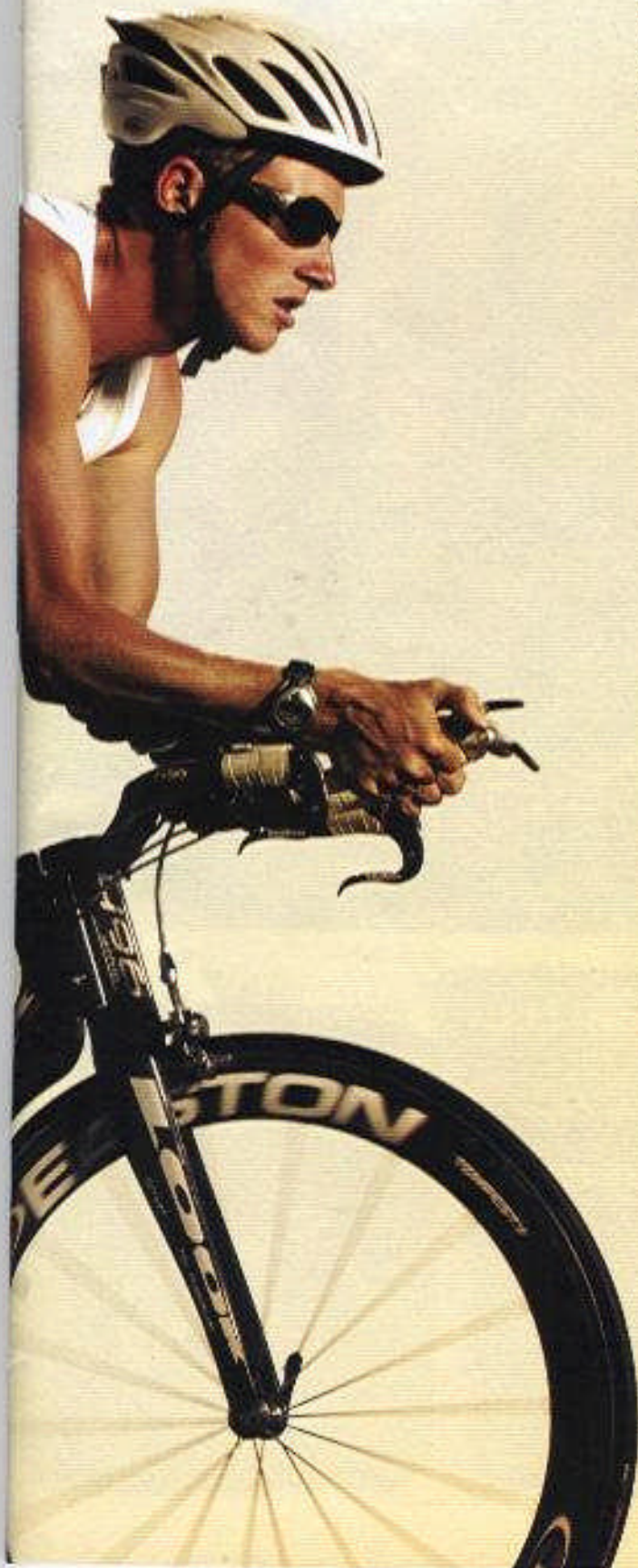
By John Platero, CPT, RTS

The 2006 Ford Ironman Triathlon in Kona, Hawaii on October 21 is basically the world championship of triathlons. You must qualify just to enter. If you're not a pro then you must compete in a qualifying race and place high enough in your category. It's a grueling race consisting of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run (a full marathon).

Add gusting winds, sweltering heat, dehydration and a crowd of people trying to swim over you while you try to not drink the entire ocean and you get the idea of just how grueling this elite competition can be. Someone read me a description of the swim as "trying to swim while someone throws lawn furniture at you." Talk about a hard day!

This is a race of survival. It's definitely an endurance race. However, in any race, there will be periods of anaerobic efforts in combination with the aerobic pace making. It's always recommended to establish an aerobic base for about 6-8 weeks before training anaerobically. This workout is for an athlete about four weeks away from the actual Ironman competition. ▶▶





Monday Rest

Tuesday Warm-up 300 yards. Easy.

Speed swim: 100-yard laps of each stroke: free-style, breast, back-stroke and butterfly with 15 seconds of rest in between each 100 yards.

Main Set: Three sets of 50 yards with 5-second rest between each set and one set of 150 yards with one minute rest. Do this six times!

Next, 8 sets of 100 yards each with 30-second rest on laps one and four. Rest 15 seconds on laps five and eight. Go Hard! Cool down with 200 yards at an easy pace.

Weight training: Exercises for the lower body; one set of 12 reps to failure. Hit the core as well. Don't forget to stretch!

Wednesday Speed Bike: 15 minute warm-up, four sets of 15-second intervals with 10-second rest. Two minutes easy. One 4-minute interval with 2 minutes of rest and four 30-second intervals with 15 seconds rest. Now repeat all the intervals again.

Moderate run: 1 hour and 35 minutes

Moderate swim: 3,000 yards

Thursday Weight training: Exercise for the upper body with one set of 12 reps to failure; core training.

Speed Run: 10-minute warm-up of sprinting 100 yards and jogging 100 for 400 yards.

Easy four sets of 400 yards; two sets of 800 yards; four sets of 400 yards; recover should be half the time it took to perform each interval. Cool down 10 minutes.

Easy bike: 1 hour

Friday Long swim: 4,500 to 5,000 yards

Saturday Bike: 5½ to 7 hours

Run: 30 minutes

Sunday Long run: 3 hours

Moderate bike: 3 hours

NOTE: It is very important to work on the bike-to-run transitions on Wednesday and Thursday for muscular adaptation. The swim is the shortest leg of the whole event. It's better to hold back in the swim and reserve your strength for the bike, which is the fastest leg, and the run, which you need to survive. **GOOD LUCK!**