



THE FINISH LINE



**New Mad Dog
Mackenzie Bryan takes
Gold at Chilly Willy. 2nd
Place is apparently very
hungry.**

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Established on November 6, 1993, the St Pete Mad Dogs Triathlon Club is a not for profit organization designed to promote the sport of triathlon. The club is comprised of fun loving triathletes who train, race and howl together, with members of all levels of experience and expertise.

The Finish Line is a medium for communicating the latest club news, as well as an informal source for what's happening in the sport of triathlon as it affects us. Articles published in The Finish Line may contain opinions of the author, not necessarily the club.

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Articles, or photos may be submitted to chuck.lohman@yahoo.com. Items should be sent by the 15th of the month preceding the issue.

Advertising checks should be mailed to: St Pete Mad Dog Triathlon Club, P.O. Box 635 St Petersburg, FL 33731-0635. Please make check payable to St Pete Mad Dogs.

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Editor's Column

I know a number of Mad Dogs who are considering buying a new or used bicycle. For those buying a new bike, your choices are either to purchase the bike directly from the factory (B2C) or from a dealer (B2B). In this issue I have included an article by Dan Empfield of Slowtwitch. He goes through the 3 considerations of the B2C process in detail, and how to employ a professional fitter. If you chose to go the B2B route, he talks about what to expect from your local bike shop. This is important reading for any of you tossing big bucks into the game.

please go to page 7..



TRAINING CALENDAR

	SWIM	BIKE	RUN
MONDAY	5:30 - 7:00 AM St. Pete Beach Aquatics Club coached by Leo Briceno	8 am. From USFSP 6th Ave & 2nd St. South. 14.5 miles 20-21 mph.	6 pm. From Northshore Pool Parking Lot (16 miles) St Pete Road Runners
TUESDAY		8 am. From USFSP 14.5 miles 17-19 mph.	5 pm. Track workout coached by Joe Burgasser. SPC Track 5th Ave and 70 St N.
WEDNESDAY	6:00 pm. Mad Dog OWS Meet at Hurley Park. (Starts Mar 2023 with DST)	8 am. From USFSP 14.5 miles 20-21 mph.	8:00 am. Bayway Bridge Repeats. Meet at Sun Blvd & Pinellas Bayway.
THURSDAY	5:30 - 7:00 AM St. Pete Beach Aquatics Club coached by Leo Briceno -fee	8 am. From USFSP 14.5 miles 17-19 mph. 7:30 AM 3 Bridges Ride from Captiva Key Condos at moderate pace. 45 miles total, or 35 miles from 30 Ave, North.	5:15 AM. Bayway Bridge Repeats. Meet at Sun Blvd & Pinellas Bayway. (Burgasser Road Runners).
FRIDAY	8 am. Group swim @ Pass-a-Grill. Meet at Hurricaneman restaurant	8 am. From USFSP 16 miles 20-21 mph.	6:30 AM From Fit4Life 75th Ave. St. Pete Beach SPRR
SATURDAY		8:00 am. From Northshore Pool. Rides staged by speed: 16-18MPH, 20MPH, 22 MPH, 24 MPH +	

TRAINING CALENDAR

SUNDAY	SWIM	BIKE	RUN		
		8:30 am. Advanced ride. From St. Pete Library 9th Ave N & 37 St.	6:30 AM Long run alternating from Hurley Park PAG and Northshore Pool. SP Road Runners		
		Ft De Soto 9:00, all paces, 20 miles Mad Dogs	Following the bike ride a 4-mile run Mad Dogs		

MAD DOG NEWS

Good news — the irrepressible Don Ardell, former National Champion and 2nd in Worlds, is coming out of retirement to join us for St. Anthony's triathlon in the 85-89 age group. He describes his age group as “God’s Waiting Room.”

Generous Mad Dogs...Lenny Aron let it be known that he needed an assist to do St. Anthony's due to failing eyesight. When our board of directors put the word out, not one, not two, not three, but four Mad Dogs volunteered to help Len compete. I'm proud of you all.

Congrats to the entire Barrett Family — Larry, Sarah, Madison and Lillian — our newest Mad Dogs.

This week we welcomed Mad Dog Brad Kirley, visiting from Orange Virginia, to sample the good life in St. Pete!

***“If you’re going through Hell, keep going.”
Winston Churchill***

MARCH BIRTHDAYS



Cassidy Knipp	1st
Patti Spence	2nd
Rik Hanley	3rd
Amanda Skillman	3rd
Diane Spicer	4th
Robert Vigorito	8th
Tom Kennedy	15th
Gail Lohman	23rd
Pat Ryan	24th
Paul Talewsky	24th
Rene Vallent	24th

WELCOME NEW MAD DOGS!

#3998	Timothy Knipp	- St. Petersburg
#4000	Caroline McCartney	- St Petersburg
#4001	Larry Barrett	- Gulfport
#4002	Sarah Barrett	- Gulfport
#4003	Madison Barrett	- Gulfport
#4004	Lillian Barrett	- Gulfport

Editor's Comments continued:

For those Mad Dogs excited by, and financially endowed, races put on by Ironman are an attraction. In earlier issues, I have laid out the issues with this organization, including Corporate Greed. Two other companies are focusing on shorter events more accessible to regular triathletes - Super Triathlon League (SLC) and CLASH. I've included a Slowtwitch article in this issue that says, "This, however, feels different. It feels more organic, less corporate." Interesting take.

Finally, I hope everyone is gearing up for the first big local triathlon of 2023 — Escape from Fort DeSoto on 25 March. See ya there!

Mad Dogs Rule,
Chuck Lohman, Editor

UPCOMING RACES



11-12 Mar - Great Clermont Tri
Clermont, FL
Half/Intl/Sprint Distance
www.Sommersportsevents.com



15 Apr - Alpha Win Ocala
Ocklawaha, FL
Sprint/Oly/Half Tri/DU/AB
www.alpha.win.com



11-12 Mar - Clash Miami
Miami, FL
Half/Intl/Sprint Distance
www.clash-usa.com



30 Apr - St. Anthony's
St. Petersburg, FL
Intl/Sprint Distance
www.runsignup.com



12 Mar - Sarasota Bradenton Tri
Sarasota, FL
Sprint Distance
www.srqtrifest.com



13 May - IM 70.3 Gulf Coast
Panama city Beach, FL
Half Iron Distance
www.ironman.com



25 Mar - Escape from Ft Desoto
Ft. DeSoto, FL
Sprint Tri/DU/AB
www.thunderboltmultisport.com



21 May - IM 70.3 Chattanooga
Chattanooga, TN
Half Iron Distance
www.ironman.com

RACE RESULTS

All Mad Dogs are encouraged to submit race results.

E-mail me at chuck.lohman@yahoo.com. There is no automatic program to search for Mad Dogs in results of every race. Thanks.

Chilly Willy Duathlon - 5 Feb

1st Place -

Mackenzie Bryan

Kim Case

John Hollenhorst

Vicki Linkovich

2nd Place -

Lindsay Bell

Will Pine

3rd Place -

Frank Adornato

St. Pete Distance Classic - 12 Feb

1st Place -

Claudia Junqueira

John Macedo

Bryan McGuire

4th Place -

Tim Runyon

Gasparilla Distance Classic - 25/26 Feb

15K

1st Place -

Claudia Junqueira

2nd Place -

Kerri Dienhart

5th Place -

Jill Voorhis

Half Marathon

1st Place -

Lenny Aron

2nd Place -

John Hollenhorst

Laura Jansik

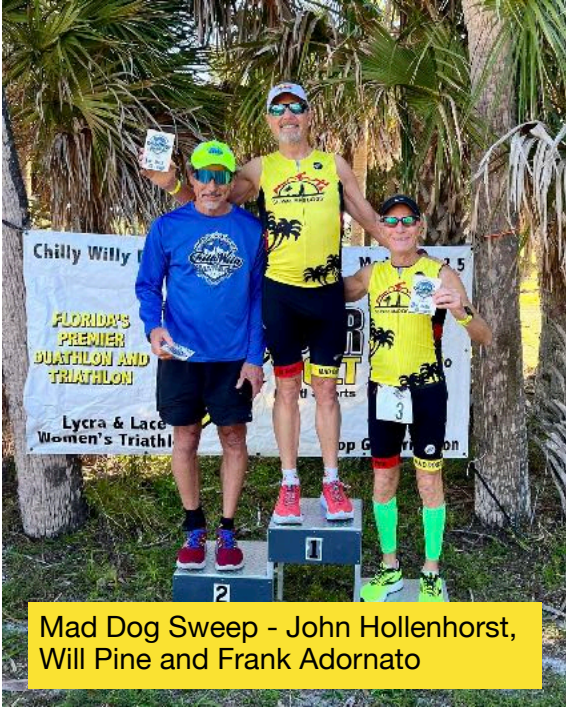
Patti Spence

3rd Place -

Richard Jansik

MAD DOG PICTURES

Chilly Willy Duathlon Pictures from Pam Hollenhorst



Mad Dog Sweep - John Hollenhorst, Will Pine and Frank Adornato



Kim Case takes the gold!



Mackenzie Bryan takes the gold!



Vicki Linkovich takes the gold!
Karen Mathews took 2nd.



Reva Moeller and Paula Shea. Pam Greene and Cindy Perret also volunteered.

MAD DOG PICTURES



Terry Ellis enjoying a sunny bike ride in Tampa.



New Mad Dog Caroline McCartney



New Mad Dog Kara Wilson



New Mad Dog Rick Perrault

MAD DOG PICTURES



New Mad Dog Jeff White and Family



New Mad Dog Robin Krejci

Preparing For The Triathlon Swim.

Physical, mental, and strategic skills to ace the swim portion of the triathlon.

(An excerpt from the Mad Dogs Zoom Coaching Session on May 4th 2021.)

For many triathletes - seasoned racers as well as first timers - the open water swim can be intimidating. Standing on the beach waiting for the starting gun to sound can be a source of anxiety and for some, outright fear. However, there are many things you can do in your training to prepare yourself physically, mentally and psychologically for a better, stress-free swim.

Pool Drills:

- 1. First and foremost, work on biomechanics. Every warm-up in every swim should include stroke and kicking drills. Work to perfect the five elements of the stroke - entry, catch, pull, finish and recovery. The more efficient you are, the more comfortable and in control you will be in the water.**
- 2. Breathing should be comfortable and steady. Don't hold your breath and don't take explosive bursts of inhalations or exhalations. Practice and perfect bilateral breathing. Everyone has a preferred breathing side and an "off side". Learn to breathe on both sides. The benefits of bilateral breathing are balanced torso movement, ability to adjust to choppy water condition, better navigation abilities, and less chance of dizziness in a long swim. Don't worry about getting into a rigid breathing pattern of left side- right side breathing. Just be comfortable breathing on either side periodically.**
- 3. Practice "fast starts". Do multiple 100 to 200 yard repeats, starting out as fast as you can go for 1.5 lengths of the pool. When you're in the middle of your second pool length, slow your**

stroke to a more manageable race pace and continue to the end of the interval. Stay aware of your heart rate and breathing pattern. These drills will help you acclimate to the overly fast start on race day.

- 4. One workout a week should include long continuous sets, for example: 3 x 500, 2 x 750, or 2 x 1000 yard repeats. The actual distances should be based upon your target race distance. Maintain a consistent pace throughout these sets.**
- 5. Closed Eye Drills. Start your swim directly over the swim lane. Close your eyes and swim a full length of the pool. When you open your eyes, look to see if you swam straight or if you drifted left or right. Adjust your stroke to minimize any drifting.**

March 2023

6. Cluster drills. Get several of your swim pals to swim together in the same lane. Start together and get accustomed to having other swimmers close to you and possibly bumping you with their arms, feet or bodies. You'll soon realize that the bumping from other swimmers is most often softened by the water and not a problem.

Open Water Drills:

- 1. The main benefit of OWS training is to **acclimate** to less than crystal clear water, no lane lines, and no wall to hold onto between sets. Increase your swim distance (or swim time) up to and beyond what you'll be swimming on race day.**
- 2. Learn how to **navigate** in open water. Before you start your swim, look for landmarks that you can use to guide you in a straight path to the swim finish. Periodically when your head comes out of the water to inhale, raise you eyes as little as possible, and site on those landmarks.**

3. Swim when water conditions are choppy. **Learn how to adjust to less than optimal conditions**, which might happen on race day. Breathing on your off-side and raising your head to the side higher than in the pool may be necessary to avoid a mouthful of water.
4. Keep in mind that there will be lifeguards on kayaks, surfboards and in boats out on the swim course on race day. If you have a problem on the water, USAT rules allow you to signal a lifeguard and hold onto their craft as long as you don't make forward progress. After you have gotten over your anxiety or physical issue, you can continue the swim to the finish.

Strategy:

1. If it's possible, do one or more training swims on the race course several weeks or more before race day. This helps remove the fear of the unknown for the swim.
2. Wear warm clothing over your race kit. A sweatshirt or a hoodie is a good option. It's better to be very warm rather than chilly while you set up your transition space and prep for the swim.
3. On race morning, if possible, do a short warm-up swim in the swim finish area. Look for a landmark around the finish area. Something you can site on to direct yourself straight into the finish chute. That landmark should be easily seen from out in the water. Sometimes it may be the brightest object and not necessarily the tallest.
4. Seed yourself realistically for the start. (FYI a pace of 2 minutes per 100 meters sits pretty much in the middle of the bell curve.) Whether it's a corral start or a time-trial start, place yourself where there's less of a chance that other faster swimmers will be swimming over you.

5. For a corral start, if you're a slower swimmer or simply not comfortable with the swim start, place yourself on the wide side of the group. That is, for a clockwise swim course, stand far left; for a counterclockwise swim, stand far right. This will put you on the outside of the group at the buoy turns where there are fewer swimmers.
6. Try not to start out too fast. As much as we always say this, inevitably everybody goes out too fast. (See "fast start" drills above!)
7. Get into a rhythm during the swim; think about your stroke, your kick and breathing. And stay within the moment. Don't think about (or stress over) the entire swim distance. Swim buoy to buoy. At the last buoy look for that landmark you identified at the finish; site on it and let it guide you into the swim finish chute.

Train smart. Race fast. Frank Adornato

March 2023



Adopt a Pro!

...but just for the weekend.

St. Anthony's Triathlon is so often the launch pad for the careers of many professional triathletes. But, until they start getting to the podium in their races, they have a lot of expenses with very little income.

This is where YOU can help.

By hosting a professional triathlete for the St. Anthony's Triathlon weekend you'll be helping them to keep their expenses low. But many have told me that with their constant travel, they do get tired of staying in hotels and really appreciate the interaction with others who appreciate the sport.

Responsibilities

The race organization will take care of getting the athlete from the airport to your home and will also get them back to the airport after the race. You may be able to help out by taking them to the grocery store. While they may love to sit down and have a meal with you, they often make their own meals, especially the evening before the race. If you live close to the race site (within 2 or 3 miles), that may be all you need to do. If you live further away, you may need to help them to get to the Saturday Pro meeting (although, even an Uber/Lyft would work).

Duration

Most of the athletes will arrive Thursday evening or Friday morning. Most will depart on Sunday evening or Monday morning.

Benefits

Most of these athletes use homestay programs whenever they can and are quite comfortable with this arrangement. This is a great opportunity for you to talk with these youngsters and get tips on training, nutrition, and conditioning. It's also good to just get to know them, how they are managing their careers, what their goals are, and so much more. Then, if you are like me, you'll eventually have a whole bunch of "kids" from all around the world!

If you are interested in hosting, please contact Carolyn Kiper at cskipper@gmail.com or call/text 727-459-8064.

Jesse Mocha's Marathon Report

The experience of running a marathon is transcendental and life-changing to say the least. Beyond being a physical feat, I admit the mental and emotional aspect behind the effort and journey is of greater importance to me as it took nearly 4 hours to dig deep and answer to myself why I kept on putting one foot in front of the other when sometimes I could not feel my body as it ran on autopilot. I thought about life and our struggles as earthly humans. As I crossed the finish line I wondered, "How did I do that?" Don't we all wonder that at some point as we make it past an ostensibly insurmountable challenge?

Running this race was like a metaphor for life in innumerable ways: There are many ups and downs, so much mileage, time, and distance to get consumed by, but in order to make it through, you must remain present in the moment and intentional about each step you take. No one is going to run this journey of life for you, no one is going to take your steps for you. You have to lean into the discomfort and get comfortable with the uncomfortable because it's up to you to keep going, even if you have to crawl. And when you get through, you realize the struggle is impermanent. There is an end to it. There is a finish line.

The amount of love and support I have received has been overwhelming and I only remain humble and grateful to know I am surrounded by so many good people. To my dear family and friends who took the time to follow me on the course and those who messaged, called, and sent me all your love and good energy online and in person - THANK YOU! All my love to you.



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IRONMAN Announces Major Rules Revamp for 2023

RYAN HEISLER

Slowtwitch Mon Feb 06 2023

IRONMAN today announced a new rules package governing all global IRONMAN series events. Most notable include the creation of a new open category, a new intellectual disability category, and alignment with the World Triathlon standard on how transgender women may be eligible to compete in the women's category.

In a statement, IRONMAN noted that, "In addition to federation alignment, athlete experience enhancement and feedback was, and continues to be, an extremely important consideration when determining the evolution of IRONMAN rules, policies, and resources. The expanded athlete divisions for 2023 build on recent policies and programs instilled by IRONMAN in years past, including the global pregnancy policy for IRONMAN and IRONMAN 70.3 events[.]"

NEW CATEGORIES

The PC Open/Exhibition category has now been expanded to include intellectual disability. This will now become the Physically Challenged / Intellectual Disability (PC/ID) Open division. The newly modified exhibition division will now encompass the former PC Open division, Special Teams, and ID Open athletes. Athletes who compete in this division are eligible for drawing opportunities to compete in respective IRONMAN World Championship events.

"Inclusion in IRONMAN changed my life because it helped me get my dreams by giving me a big crazy goal," said Chris Nikic, the first person with Down syndrome to complete an IRONMAN. "Now I also have a purpose to help others enjoy this amazing opportunity. A huge thanks to IRONMAN for being first and inspiring all the major running races around the world to follow."

In addition to this division, IRONMAN has also announced the creation of the Open Division. The non-competitive division allows for any able-bodied athlete to race without being attached to a gender or age-division. Athletes who choose to compete in this division are not eligible for World Championship slots but are otherwise governed by the Competition Rules.

TRANSGENDER WOMEN POLICY CHANGES

In a change from prior policy, IRONMAN will now align with World Triathlon's ruleset regarding eligibility for transgender women to compete in the women's divisions.

Transgender women, in order to be allowed to compete in the women's division, must not have competed as a male in any triathlon, swimming, biking, athletics, or cross-country skiing event for a period of four years prior to entering a women's field. Additionally, transgender women must maintain less than a 2.5 nMol/L testosterone level for two sequential years prior to receiving approval to compete.

The change comes as transgender inclusion policies are divergent across many national federations. USA Triathlon, for instance, [does not require a transitory period for transgender women](#). Meanwhile, [Great Britain has moved to only allow female-at-birth athletes to compete in triathlon](#).

The rules regarding transgender men competing in the men's category remain the same.

Is Short Course Ready for a US Resurgence?

[RYAN HEISLER](#) Slowtwitch

Fri Feb 17 2023

For as much as the IRONMAN Group is taken to task, there is one fact: it is by far the largest organizing body of races globally, and certainly has a stronghold on the American racing scene. Where IRONMAN has classically failed, however, is outside of its truly iron-branded events: for example, the [5150 series of Olympic distance races](#), which remain available anywhere in the world but the United States. But everyone, IRONMAN included, recognizes is that there needs to be a steady pipeline of new athletes into our sport, and a diversity of event types to keep those athletes entertained for a lifetime.

The news yesterday, then, that [Super League Triathlon had acquired two landmark US short-course events](#) — the Chicago and New York City triathlons, respectively, from Life Time Fitness — marks a clear return toward making shorter races a key component of the American racing scene. Super League isn't going at it alone; [CLASH Endurance](#) is also making clear that it is offering a diversified short-course product.

But what it does do, in my opinion, exactly what the PTO has been attempting to accomplish with its PTO Tour events. The difference being that Super League, by buying into these two large events, will have the age group racing component that the PTO sought to have -- at least with their 2022 races. There were over 2400 finishers in the Olympic distance race in Chicago last year. There were over 2000 entries in the sprint at that same race. Comparatively, the PTO US Open had 336 individual finishers of the 100 KM race, and 240 in their 25 KM event.

This can help bring an in-person audience to one of the more ambitious professional triathlon products on the market, enhancing the potential broadcast opportunity. The racing itself in Super League is incredibly compelling, with [some in our forum arguing](#) that it's the most exciting form of triathlon on the marketplace.

The largest logistical hurdle that SLT will face is making non-traditional triathlon fans care about its racing product. And that's probably the biggest critique that I would have of the organization as it enters 2023, as it seems like SLT can't make a determination as to what it wants to be. Is it an individual competition, or a team sport? And if it's a team sport, then why not pursue the mixed relay model as the path forward?

It's not far off from another upstart league attempting to bring teams to a largely individual sport — LIV Golf. And they both have struggled with brand identity as people focus more on the individual performances than they have trying to figure out how the team structure works. I'd implore SLT to try to determine whether the teams or the individuals matter more, and then develop the racing product solely around that aspect.

But that being said, it's probably the most exciting time for short course in America since Life Time entered into the sport. But Life Time also provides a cautionary tale. It was only [six years ago that we were extolling the virtue of Life Time announcing a flat pricing structure and not requiring USA Triathlon membership or one-day licenses](#). And yet it's Life Time backing further and further away from triathlon today.

This, however, feels different. It feels more organic, less corporate. It helps that the people leading the charges at SLT and Clash are deeply invested in triathlon as a whole. There's an understanding of the ecosystem of the sport, and the need for short course racing to be an integral part of it. And there's an understanding that, for better or for worse, athletes have traditionally voted to support larger-scale race producers. By bringing more name value and national exposure to short course events, it gives a greater opportunity at driving new athletes towards a marquee event. And hopefully, they stick around for a while.



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Buy From a Bike Shop or Direct?

DAN EMPFIELD Slowtwitch

Wed Feb 15 2023

I tried as a consumer to buy products from the manufacturer as far back as 1985, the year before I first entered the industry side of triathlon, so I'm sympathetic to the urge to bypass the middleman.

Buying consumer direct (B2C in industry lingo) is a much bigger thing now than it was in 1986. But B2C (business to consumer) is not for everyone nor every purchase. When do you need a bike shop in between you and your product? Let's pick two product categories where I have some specific history: bikes and wetsuits. On the wetsuit side I have an announcement to make on that, so I'll not consider wetsuits today: Wetsuits are Part-2 of this 2-part series. Today is all about bikes and let's tackle the 3 things you need to reckon with before you buy a bike using the B2C channel.

The 3 Considerations When Buying Bikes B2C

Sizing expertise:

Here is where the pendulum begins to swing away from the bike shop and I know I'm going to break some china here but over a 15-year span the major bike industry brands got heavily into ecumenical bike fit only to more recently (according to my observation) retreat from it. By ecumenical I mean a fit process that produced a brand-independent outcome. You got a set of fit coordinates from a fit session, followed by a list of complete bike solutions that matched those coordinates, regardless of which headbadge was riveted onto that bike's frame. Ecumenical solutions are less in vogue at your local bike shop than they were 5 or 10 years ago.

We here at Slowtwitch began a *thing* back in 2002: Dynamic Bike Fit. The idea is that you are fit aboard your bike as you are pedaling it, rather than getting fit based simply or mostly on your limb and torso lengths and/or your range of motion. Dynamic bike fit tooling and in most cases the protocols were more or less descendants of F.I.S.T. (our bike fit protocol

brand). Companies involved in this were Cannondale (with the GURU brand); Specialized (with its purchase of Retul); Trek Precision Fit (using Purely Custom's excellent fit bikes); Shimano (with the introduction of its excellent fit bike); and to some degree Giant. I now don't think I see any of those brands advocating for bike fit with the ardency they did at their zenith (though I'm happy to hear and report if any of these brands think my observation misses the mark).

As a result I am left with the following: If it's a highly individualized high-end product (a bike must fit you; a floor pump is less individualized), there's less reason for the shop to middle the transaction if it's not wedded to fit as a pre-sale discipline. If getting the right bike, in the right size, set up correctly, is important then the shop has to be better than a B2C transaction. Nowadays I question whether that's the case for the great majority of bike shops. If a Slowtwitcher can go to a good bike fitter, and/or place his fit coordinates in one of the Fit Assistance threads on our Reader Forum ([Cervelo](#); [Canyon](#); [Quintana Roo](#)); can get a bike built to exactly match those fit coordinates such as the [Fit Ready](#) process (the template for which is shown above); and can be hand delivered ready to ride to your door (see an image below of a THRU van getting loaded for delivery); is the bike shop a value add or a value subtract?

If I can generalize the major bike brands, in my view, figured out during the pandemic that bike fit only gummed up the works. People just wanted bikes. There were in many shops transaction rooms where you paid, your bike was placed in a clean room by the bike mechanic post-assembly; and after he exited you entered to retrieve your bike. There's not a lot of bike fitting going on in that environment. But for bike transaction purposes the pandemic is functionally over now; we're in the middle of a bike glut (except for tri); and the value of the bike shop reemerges. Or not. This is why the independent Bike Fitter is the business model to watch, and it is in my view a perilous time for shops to abandon fit (although those shops may not see their peril now).

Mechanical expertise

This is where the bike shop remains as relevant as ever. With the advent of hydraulic disc brakes bikes got really hard to work on, unless you know

how to bleed brakes and you're literate with hydraulic line, barbs, olives, compression nuts, and you have either SRAM or Shimano bleed kits (or both) and DOT fluid or mineral oil (or both). My Centerlock Lockrings affix with either a 41mm, 16 notch spline tool or the same 23.4mm, 12 spline tool I use for my cassette lockrings. Fortunately I have both. Do you even know what I just said? If you buy an electronic bike are you literate in either the SRAM AXS or Shimano eTube Project apps? Do you know how to change the coin cells in your road shifters and do you have those at home, at the ready? That's what bikes have become.

This is why the most useful Bike Fitters are also mechanics and offer full service repair. This is the class of business that bike shops need to be wary of. Of course, bike shops can flank and outmaneuver the Bike Fitter by, simply, being the Bike Fitter. Don't give up that expertise. Don't be fooled by the false economy of the pandemic. But I digress. You will need to get your bike worked on and the very first bit of mechanical work is in getting this bike you just bought to match your fit coordinates. This is the biggest problem in the road, gravel and tri bike environment today: You're not buying a bike anymore. You're buying a motorcycle. If you're riding around on a new bike and it just doesn't feel as comfortable as your old bike, well, this is why. Because these bikes are so hard to adjust you must make sure you've got a bike shop that'll work on your bike; or a Bike Fitter who's a mechanic; a mobile bike fitter; or you just became your own mechanic.

Return threshold

My wife is a big returner. I am a non-returner. She enjoys the return process, whether in-person or online. I hate it. My threshold for returns is either low or high depending on which one of those means I'm least likely to return what I bought. If you're like me you're not a great candidate for buying (for example) wetsuits over the internet. How much worse if we're talking bikes. For this reason I'm a really big fan of boxless complete bike delivery for those engaged in B2C transactions.

I tell the brands who're contemplating this: The big thing is not the delivery; it's the retrieval. Brands are experts at packing bikes. Consumers are not. If the bike needs to be returned for any reason (wrong size, warranty, recall) the process is a lot better for everyone if the consumer simply hands the

bike to a driver, as with Tri Bike Transport. Just, this thing – your personal return threshold – is something you should consider before you engage in an important B2C transaction.

Role of the Bike Fitter

So far the most important B2C bike brands have not embraced the Bike Fitter into the sales process. Consumer direct bike brands haven't shunned the Bike Fitter channel as an important resource; they just aren't part of the sales process. One company that I will be talking about some this spring is [Kú Cycle](#) and you may like and want a bike from this brand or you may not. The reason I mention Kú in this context is there should be a logistical handshake between the Bike Fitter and any B2C bike brand and this brand understands this and has a granular pathway to purchase that embraces and includes the Bike Fitter.

It's a regret of mine that some brands that I really admire – like Canyon and Quintana Roo – do not have this handshake in place. It is on some measure the fault of the Bike Fitter community for not embracing and pursuing this; in some measure it's my fault because certain of these brands have expressed willingness and I have not sufficiently pushed through. (More work to be done here.)

Role of the Bike Shop

Finally, let's consider the case of Cervelo. This is the co-number-1, along with Canyon, most wanted tri bike brand by triathletes who read Slowtwitch. Cervelo prefers the more traditional B2B channel, that is to say, Cervelo sells not to you but to businesses. Bike shops. Cervelo relies on the shop to assemble its bikes; to make sure the customers are safe, powerful and comfortable aboard their bikes. Cervelo requires that the shops have the expertise to do all this and to work on its bikes and handle any warranty or recall issues. Cervelo carefully selects its retail stores and it has the brand command and gravitas to get its pick of the best shops. How long that remains a viable plan depends on whether these shops retain their attachment to fit expertise; whether they remain committed to triathlon; and

whether they remain independent (e.g., how many of Cervelo's retail chain will end up a Trek or Specialized store?).

Not to belabor, but can I refer back to mechanical expertise for a moment? Today, the biggest problem in the bike industry is bikes that go out the door not properly fit to the customer. This didn't used to be a big deal because you just changed the stem or did some other ministerial fix. Today what was ministerial now raising heaven and earth. Not so much with tri bikes, but with road and increasingly gravel getting your new bike to fit you often means pulling and reinstalling internal hydraulic lines, front and rear, rebleeding, new olives and needles, and you can't do that. This is how the shop makes its margin. If the shop isn't willing to do this it doesn't deserve its margin. Conversely, if you need this done on your B2C purchase you might have just blown the savings you thought you got by going consumer direct.

So to recap, if you choose to buy from a shop, demand that this shop earn its margin by selling you not a motorcycle, but a bicycle, fitted to you with the correct amount of mechanical housing or hydraulic line. If the shop employs expert fitters using modern fit tools – like a conforming fit bike – you might need to pay extra for the fit session. But you shouldn't pay extra for the mechanical work to make a new bike fit you if you're buying that new bike from the shop. If the shop is unwilling to make the bike fit you at no extra cost to you, that shop gave you a great reason to buy a Canyon, a Ventum or a Litespeed. But if you choose to buy a Canyon, Ventum or Litespeed use the tools here on Slowtwitch (such as the fit assistance threads); make sure you know your fit coordinates; and buy your bikes with a plan in place for getting that bike to match your fit coordinates. And, have a plan in place for how to service your bike when necessary.



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