



Event Briefing – Santa Cruz 70.3

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*This Briefing is provided by Ironman Certified Coaches from Total Intensity Sports.
If you have questions or are interested in personalized coaching for your next event, contact us at
www.totalintensitysports.com*

Distance: Half Ironman
Location: Santa Cruz, CA
Time of Year: Early-Mid September
Website: www.ironman.com/triathlon/events/americas/ironman-70.3/santa-cruz.aspx

General Info

- This race was formerly known as Big Kahuna. The current course is identical to the Big Kahuna course.
- The ocean swim is a unique rectangle around the Santa Cruz pier. There are a lot of sea lions in the area and they enjoy swimming along with swimmers on race day. Sea lions are very tame and do not tend to attack humans.
- While bikes must be dropped off into transition on the day before the race, all other gear can be brought in on race morning.
- Sometimes there is fog over the water in the mornings – this can affect the start of the race and swim course.

Swim

Start Time: 6.50am age groupers only race
Start Type: Rolling Start, Self-Seeded
Distance: 1.2 miles
Venue: Pacific Ocean.
Insider Info:

- One loop on a rectangle shaped clockwise course.
- **Water Temperatures:** typically low to mid-60s F.
- Get into the water and get acclimated before the race starts. When you get in for the race start, it won't feel so cold if you've already been in it.
- Since this is an ocean swim you will have the added buoyancy of the salt water but this also means that you will feel salty upon exiting. Rinse off the salt if possible after you exit.
- It is typically cool in the morning prior to the race – having someone prepared to take your pre-race clothes or using the race's morning clothes drop off option is recommended.

Bike

- Distance: 56 miles
- Course Type: Roads, generally good surfaces.
- Direction/Laps: ▪ This is an out-and-back course riding primarily on Hwy 1.
- Insider Info: ▪ No significant climbs of note but it is definitely NOT flat. Rolling hills are the rule on this course.
- The course runs parallel to the Pacific coast and as such, typically has some consistent winds blowing. The direction of the wind varies from day to day.
- Great crowds will be on the roads in Santa Cruz. Don't expect a lot of crowds outside of this area.

Run

- Distance: 13.1 miles
- Course Type: roads and bike trails.
- Direction/Laps: Out-and-back with a 2-mile loop before you return on the out-and-back.
- Insider Info: ▪ Course is very flat.
- There is very little shade on the course and it can get hot.
- The finish line and the final ¼ mile or so is on the sand. It's very soft and deep sand, so it's a challenge after running 13 miles.
- Crowds concentrate around the roads in Santa Cruz.

Transition Area

- IMPORTANT!** Due to the size of the race field, transition area is quite large. Make sure you familiarize yourself with the logistics and directions of the ins and outs of T1 and T2. Determine exactly where you will be going as you enter transition and look for your transition spot and as you leave transition. The directions you run through transition can also be a little confusing. Check this out on Friday and Saturday to be ready on race day.
- Because you will be running through sand out of the water, you will want to have a water bottle in transition to use to spray on your feet and remove the sand before putting on your bike shoes.
- LONG (well over ¼ of a mile) run from the swim exit into transition. You definitely want to use this distance to begin to remove your wetsuit. You may want to wear shoes for this (leave and old pair at water's edge pre-race).

Race Cut-Offs

- Swim: The swim course will close 1 hour and 10 minutes after the last athlete enters the water via the rolling start. Each athlete will have 1 hour and 10 minutes to complete the swim. Individual athletes who take longer than 1 hour and 10 minutes to complete the swim will receive a DNF
- Since this is a rolling start, the time of the last swimmer entering the water determines the exact cut-off times.

Athletes must be out of transition and starting the bike course 1 hour and 20 minutes after the last athlete entered the water.

Bike: The bike course will close 5 hours and 30 minutes after the last athlete enters the water via the rolling start. Each athlete will have 5 hours and 30 minutes to complete the swim, T1 and bike course. Athletes who take longer than 5 hours and 30 minutes to complete the swim will receive a DNF.

Since this is a rolling start, the time of the last swimmer entering the water determines the exact cut-off times. Approximate time is 1pm.

Athletes must be out of transition and starting the run course 5 hours and 40 minutes after the last athlete entered the water.

Run: The bike course will close 5 hours and 30 minutes after the last athlete enters the water via the rolling start. Each athlete will have 8 hours and 30 minutes to complete the entire course. Athletes that take longer than 8 hours and 30 minutes to complete the entire course will receive a DNF. Approximate time is 4pm.

Other Important Topics

Pre-Race Check-In While this event allows you to pick up your packet the day before the race, there is a lot to do pre-race so it is better to check-in two days before or as early as possible. At check-in, you'll get a wrist band that you must wear all weekend. This gets you in and out of transition area, post-race food, and into everything IM-related (except the VIP tent). You'll also have to sign a medical information release form and double check your emergency contact and health information card. You'll get your race bag here with your swim cap, bib number, three gear bags (explained below), and some goodies. You'll also get your chip just before you exit the Ironman check-in tent.

Ironman Gear Bags Gear bags are not used at this event – all gear can be placed at your transition spot for both transitions.

Schedule of Events

- Always use the official Schedule of Events (put online 4-6 weeks before the event) for specifics.
- Practice Swim (1-2 days before race day)
- Mandatory Bike Check In (day before race day)
- Athlete Check-In (2-4 days before race day; Important: Athlete Check-In will NOT be open on race day.)

Race Day Parking

- Parking is near the finish line / transition area.