

Race Report
Pucon IM 70.3
Gollnick Podiums

I was excited to be heading to Chile for the first 70.3 of the year. Last year was a long frustrating year of injury. After several discouraging months and a few MRI s later, I discovered that I had a torn glute medius muscle, (a fairly small but important muscle in stabilizing the hips). It plays a large part in biking and running but my doctor also had me take off swimming as well. For those who have had an injury such as this you quickly understand that it is a time for patience. Thankfully I was able to focus on work and family but man was I antsy.

My doctor would not even let me go for a walk for the first 4 weeks, (he knows me well and understood that if he did it would turn into a power walk). After 6 weeks of recovery, I added swimming and walking, then cycling and a few months later running, so needless to say I was excited to take the start line at my first pro race in 8 months.

Travel to the race site is always an adventure but the venue is well worth the trip. The days leading up to the race were beautiful – typical summer in Chile, it's truly an amazing place. For instance, when breathing topside while swimming you see the snow covered volcano – an incredible site, but on race day, not so pretty - torrential rain and wind ripped through the city. It was so windy in the morning that they could not place buoys and had to cancel the swim. I was very disappointed as for months all I could do was swim and this would have set me up well on the bike, (I was also bummed that I didn't get to wear my TYR Hurricane Wetsuit !!) But for safety reasons the decision was made and now we were faced with a run-bike-run. Wow, a duathlon - it's been a long time since my last du.

The 5k was tough as I lost ground to my competitors. I entered the first transition, hopped onto the bike and took off in fourth position. Right off the bat we were challenged as the winds and rain were coming down so hard it became scary. We even experienced a point on the course where we were showered with hail – not something you can adequately prepare for. At one point on the second loop of the bike my hands became so cold that I could not even break effectively and wondered to myself, “what was I doing out here”. Linsey Corbin and I agreed after the race that it was a well earned pay check for all.

Ok - back to the race, I finally got to the run portion and was very happy to be off the bike and was hoping I would warm up. My feet were numb until mile 4 and I still found myself in fourth place. From the beginning of the race I had my mind set on a podium finish. It took some clear mental focus but I put my run in another gear, tracked her down, made my pass and finished my first race of the year with the podium spot I coveted – a welcome start to 2011 !!

I want to extend a special thank you to my wonderful sponsors starting with K-Swiss. They are a true innovative leader in our industry and I am proud to be part of the family. Erik, Ivette, Ben & Jon - thank you for providing me with the best running shoes and clothing available anywhere !! To Morgan Clark and All3 Sports – you're the best and your ongoing support is truly appreciated. To Robert Kunz and First Endurance – your array of quality nutritional products always put me in a position to succeed. Steve, a big thank you to you and Kestrel for my sweet ride and to Tanya and the gang at Flex Power thanks for believing in me – here's to a successful 2011. Ryan and TYR – can't wait to give the Hurricane Wetsuit a good workout in my next competition. To the great folks at Fuel Belt, GU and TRY Chips – your support means the world to me. And a very special thanks to Tom Labisch and InStep Physical Therapy for your assistance over the past several months. I am off to compete in the Abu Dhabi Tri in a few shorts weeks, until then – my best to all !!

Heather Gollnick
5x Ironman Champion