

Caledon's Bob Knuckey wins Ironman in Kona World Championship

Written By JOSHUA SANTOS

Bob Knuckey crushed the Ironman World Championships placing first in his division in Kona, Hawaii.

The Caledon native finished swimming in one hour and 18 minutes, biking in five hours and 47 minutes and running in four hours and 38 minutes for an overall time of 11 hours and 55 minutes. He is 70-years-old.

You really can't imagine how unique and big, Bob Knuckey's victory was at Saturday's (Oct. 13) World Ironman Championships. He was the only 70-year-old man, to break 12 hours. To put things in perspective, the first professional athlete to win Kona, went 11 hours and 46 minutes. Bob's time of 11hrs 55min was just 9 minutes slower, said Barrie Shepley, Caledon triathlon coach and owner of C3 Canadian Cross Training Club.

Knuckey swam four kilometres at a pace of two minutes per 100 metres, biked 180 kilometres at a pace of 31 kilometres per hour and ran 41 kilometres at pace of 10 minutes per mile. He is the only Canadian to win in Kona this year.

Bob's success and our success is the C3, Caledon's secret. We have the world class James Dick Quarry that has helped him be a world class master swimmer, a decade of hard swimming at 6 a.m. He has biked tens of thousands of kilometres on the hilly roads in our great town, said Shepley.

Shepley said Knuckey ran every trail and side road from Alton to Caledon East to Bolton to Palgrave Conservation Park in preparation for the event.

A GoFundMe page was set up by Shepley to alleviate the financial cost of the expedition. It raised \$10,360 by 54 people in three months exceeding the \$7,500 goal.

Funds went towards medical physio-massage for injury prevention, accommodations, pool usage, flights, transportation, equipment upgrades such as a race suit and chain for his bike and a thank you t-shirt to all of Knuckey's supporters. Net proceeds went towards the C3 youth training program.

A video by Marketa Schusterova surfaced online showing fans cheering and supporting Knuckey during the race. There was a dramatic twist of events as Knuckey fell 400 metres before the finish line. Leaving fans worried and unsure if he would finish, Knuckey stood up to cross the finish line collapsing at the end. He had to receive medical treatment.

What he accomplished on Saturday night is a life of commitment to being great. With his wife, who came in as a surprise at the last minute to support, and our C3 gang on the course, Bob executed the toughest, most gutsy performance I have ever seen at any age, said Shepley.

We are proud Caledon residents and the Caledon factor was 200% flowing on Saturday night at the 40th Anniversary Hawaii Ironman.

Shepley said the most difficult part for Knuckey was the 26.2-mile marathon course.

Bob had an exceptional swim and the day's fastest bike. After 7.5 hours of racing in the heat and humidity of Kona, starting a marathon is a massive task. So, the run, by being the third and final leg of the Ironman is very difficult, said Shepley.

Made even more difficult by the fact that Bob was in the lead, and knew he had two to three other past World Champions trying to hunt him down. Everyone goes through some dark low energy spots in an Ironman marathon and you have to keep your mind on the task. Bob did a great job with that.

The team helped Knuckey perform a lot of core workouts, focusing on abs and back, yoga for flexibility and strength training to keep his mass on. They also made sure he had an equally important massage and chiropractic work on a weekly basis.

Bob also water ran some days, in place of road running and tried to keep much of his running on the softer Caledon Rail Trail, said Shepley.