

Post Crescent  
From Nobby Tires to a Smokin' Gun  
By Gloria West  
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Back in the 80's when a triathlete was fast or what might call elite, the saying was, "He's an animal." Times have changed somewhat and so have the clichés. These days when an athlete is fast, you hear, "Wow! He's smoking." That is just what this up and coming athlete does. At the age of 26, Jason Olson just keeps getting better and better. At an intense, highly competitive field last Sunday at the Pewaukee Sprint Triathlon, Jason placed high in the overall rankings with a screaming time of 1:03:30. Yes, that is smoking. . He is smoking, not cigarettes of course, but smoking out the statewide talent

Raised in Neenah, Jason began his humble athletic career around the age of 13. He claims he started with a simple running routine of a mile with his good ole dad, Scott.

At the age of 14, he entered a local triathlon rather half-hearted. This first triathlon became his most memorable; one never to be forgotten. He was so amazed at the fast guys and felt fairly inferior as he peddled a bike that looked like a dinosaur including knobby tires. The young athlete was so intrigued with these fast guys that he soon took on a job at Gear 'N Up Bike Shop so he could finally afford a real road bike. Then two very kind, older and seasoned triathletes, Jim and Janine Boldra, took Jason under their wings. The love of the sport of triathlon became contagious Jason. "Little did I know back then, this was the beginning of a sport that now consumes me. I love it."

After his new love affair with bikes, Jason joined the cross country team for Neenah High School. He went on to run for UW-Whitewater, often placing in the top 5. He admits he was never quite good enough to qualify for nationals, but so much spring training left him in top notch condition for the summer. Quickly college track season became his training for triathlons. This gave him the jump start into triathlon season because he then only had to train for two sports; swimming and biking.

Jason soon found himself winning local triathlons from Leopolis, Winneconne, and Wausau to Fremont. "As I started to improve, I targeted bigger races as my new goal." Sure enough the Ironman Madison became his new goal in 2003. To date, at his tender age of 26, Jason has completed 6 Ironmans. He admits there have been no shattering times he has broken, but one for sure record is that every year he does the Ironman with his father and younger brother too. Jokingly he claims, "Now, if I could just get my mom to do one, this would really be a family affair. She instead opts for being my number one supporter and most dedicated "Ironspectator" on the course."

As a talented young rising star, 07'is the year Jason wants a real challenge or what some might just this "plain craziness." He has registered for two Ironmans; that are relatively close in time, meaning little recovery time. They are the Ironman Louisville on Aug 26th and Ironman Wisconsin on Sep 9th. To prepare for his duo Ironman season, Jason contacted Mike Pierson, owner of Your Training Zone, to have a Lactic Acid Step test

done. He admits Pierson has now taught him how to train properly. “In the past I would always train and race without a plan, so I wasn't getting better very quickly. With this new training, I notice my bike and run time has already improved significantly. They typically say your peak fro triathlons in 35 and I am currently 26, so that is another 9 years of improving.”

The other main improvement that Jason feels he made this year is in the swim. He now also works with a well known swim coach in the triathlon community, Curt Buetler. These classes are an obvious help as Jason's swim place at the High Cliff 1/2 Ironman went from 101st overall in 2006 to 16<sup>th</sup> in 2007! The biggest benefit of improving the swim is that he can now get out of the water close to the leaders, make up the ground on the bike and finally let his past running experience work to his advantage.

A final point Jason attributes as his huge improvement in the sport is a new bike, but more importantly is the fit. This season he ordered a bike with all custom geometries so it would fit perfectly. Jason sees the amazing difference it makes when you are comfortable on the bike.

As for his new goal, the young smokin' gun is moving on to qualify for Ironman World Championships in Hawaii. During the season however, just for a bit of “an extra workout” he is competing in the Midwest Sports Events 5 Star Series; hoping to finish in the top 2 or 3. So far Jason has taken 2nd place at the Paper Discovery Duathlon, 1st place at the Green Bay Triathlon, and 6th place at the High Cliff 1/2 Ironman and Pewaukee Triathlon. So beware of this local kid from Neenah who has worked hard to trade in his knobby tire bike for a new one. He will impress you with his attitude of steady confidence, patience and hard work. I would like to add to the list of qualifiers; Jason is quite humble. When I asked him how he kept up such a peak performance season, he casually concludes, “Well, it seems I'm just off to a decent start.”