

Washington Island Ultra

Washington Island, WI
July 29 - 31, 2021

Directed by: Craig Braun
Year: 6
Participants: 150
Finishers: 142



WASHINGTON ISLAND
ULTRA RELAY
DU • CYCLE • TRI

It's been just over a week since 10:00pm hit on Thursday night. 27 cyclists and one crazy runner headed off into the night to start the 6th annual Washington Island Ultra. There was a lot to think about during that moment. I asked for y'all to count down to the start with me. 30, 29, 28, 27, and so on. As you guys finished counting down, I ran to the truck, shifted into drive and got to share some of the butterflies we were all feeling. It's been a tough stretch for everyone, but hell with it, we're about to race. Together, we got to send everyone off. Together, we got to count towards the start of something new. We shared the excitement and anticipation of what was about to happen. We were together, and that's all that really mattered to me.

The one thing that continues to stick from last weeks race is the people. It's hard to find a more genuine and kind group of people in the world than the ultra family that's been built around this race. We all got to see old friends and make some new ones too. Although we all raced our own races, we were all connected and moving in the same direction - forward.

For some of us, it was our first race back since the world was put on hold. For some of us it was the start of a brutal 36 hour stretch where you pushed your body and mind to it's limit. For some, it was the start of something new - a fresh start if you will. And, for some, it was just good old fun. Whatever it needed to be for you, I hope it was.

Almost 10 years into this gig, I'm realizing more and more how I much I love what I'm doing. It's a ton of work, and like everything, it It has its highs and lows. But, I love racing and I love creating opportunities for you to grow and find connection with other people. The racing is cool, but the relationships are really what drives this whole thing. Without them, we're nothing.

We launched this business 2 months before covid shut everything down last March. It's been an interesting start to the story. I have big dreams and big visions for the future of these races. I'll keep busting my ass to provide small, high quality and low key races for you to come and experience. Small, unique, quality races in beautiful locations - that's the vision. Thank you for supporting that vision and racing with us year after year.

Cheers to the next adventure,
Craig



2021 By The Numbers

150 - participants

142 - finishers

6,000 - dollars donated in 2021

6 - years racing on the Island

12,484.66 - miles covered in 2021

15 - most miles by a single swimmer

401.6 - most miles by a single biker

84 - most miles by a single runner

207.50 - swim miles complete in 2021

1,946 - run miles completed in 2021

10,331.16 - bike miles completed in 2021

210 - slices of pizza

240 - tacos served

1 - hell of a good time

2021 RACE RECAP (from my point of view)

I drove up to the Island a week before the race, dropped some equipment off and had a few meetings. Before crashing in the back of the truck for the evening, I pulled up to Gislason, poured myself a shot of my favorite whiskey and raised a glass to the start of race week. This is one of my favorite races we produce. There's just something about it that collides with my soul and re-ignites a fire inside of me. I knew this year would be no different and I couldn't wait to get everyone up here and get things going.

NEW SOLO CATEGORIES

I've been waiting for someone to come see how far they could run on our simple 2 mile out and back. We finally got to see it happen this year with solo run entries in both the 24 hour and 36 hour times. Ultra running is my main sport and what I really love doing - I was pumped to get some solo runners on the list this year. After we finished the race in 2020, I was unexpectedly asked if I would consider allowing someone to do a solo 8 hour swim... Now, I'll be real with you - I do not like swimming at all. So, my response was, "I'm not sure why you would want to do that but definitely, let's do it". Long story short, that 8 hour swim turned into a 24 hour solo swim and that just blows my mind. I love ultra racing with all my heart and will support any crazy idea you have, but 24 hours swimming with the snakes just sounds like a horrible time LOL. I suppose when we introduced the solo cycling in year 2, I thought that was crazy and wondered the same thing... Now I don't even think twice about it. It's the ultra mindset I guess. We just do activities for an unusually long amount of time.

WEATHER

If I've learned anything about the weather on the Island it's to not pay attention to what the weather apps say. Things can change in a blink and usually do. Take away some of the wind on Thursday and Friday and we literally had picture perfect conditions. The day was perfect, the night was windy and cold. The cold evenings are typical on the Island so that was no surprise and I think most everyone did a good job planning for it. Rain looked like it might become a factor late in the race but as I said before, I've learned to not worry about it until you can see it. Lucky us, we never saw it. The one thing I didn't see coming was the gnarly wind to close out the final 6 hours of the race. Running was Ok, biking was kind of scary but swimming was down right awful. We saw 2.5 foot waves beyond the break. When our 24 hr ultra swimmer came back and said she couldn't navigate the waves, we had to change plans. Just like the thunderstorms of 2019, we didn't stop, but we did make adjustments. Overall I was happy with the conditions. It reminded me of year one which is still the best weather we've had ever for the race. Those 20 participants for year one really lucked out I guess :).

THE 36 IS TAKING OVER

After the first year doing this race, I stood on the beach, looked back and thought, that was fun, but I don't want it to be done yet. So, I jumped on the computer and added a 36 hour option. Why not, right? I figured if no one registered for it we just won't do it. In 2021, we had 20 solos and 8 teams race 36. We had 19 solos and 16 teams races the 24 hour. Slowly but surely the 36 hour event has been gaining on the 24 hour. I'm calling the shot now - someday, we'll have more 36 hour racers than we do 24 hour racers. Maybe you've been going back and fourth... if so, here's the nudge - do 36 ;).

2021 RACE RECAP (from my point of view)

TEAM DIVISION

12 hour teams - 2 / 24 hour teams - 16 / 36 hour teams - 8

41 laps, 503.89 miles and a constant grind for team Mid Race Crisis. They took the #1 spot for the 36 hour team event. We secretly we're timing their run and bike split in the middle of the night because we just wanted to see how fast they were going, and boy was it fast. Unreal performance by that team. We officially need to add a few more check boxes to our timing sheet! Second place was team Honor our Heroes with 35 completed triathlons and third was team BAR Association with 31 total triathlons. The lowest mileage for the 36 hour category was over 250 miles... I think it's safe to say the 36hr timeframe is getting more and more competitive each year.

The 24 hour group had Team Snowdrops Cops Lewis (The Lewis family) take the #1 spot with 18 completed triathlons. A special shoutout to this family team. Gary, who's raced with us for years now brought his wife and two sons up for this year's 24 hour and wouldn't you know it they won the whole thing. Nice work! Second place was a tie between Living the Dream and Stack Attack. Both teams came in with 17 completed Triathlons. A quick shoutout to team Iron Girls for running 48 miles while also completing 16 triathlons!

The 24 hour Duathlon is just as competitive as the 24 hour tri. 7 of the 24 our teams were Du's this year! First place went to Ride or Die with 16 complete Duathlons for a total of 224.64 miles. Second place went to team Relay Slow with 15 complete Duathlons + a run (they just missed a first place tie!). Third went to Red White & Girls Rule with 14 total Duathlons, that's 2 more than last year - nice work ladies!

The 12 hour saw two teams duke it out for the win. "2 girls, 10 Beers" and 10 triathlons gave them the win over Partners in Time. One more bike loop from Partners in Time and we would have had a tie for first place. It's crazy how much one more loop can change things!

Overall we saw record numbers in both the 36 and 24 hour team categories this year. Without a doubt things are getting pushed to a new level and people are finding new strategies to go farther. One of the coolest things about this race are the lack of rules when it comes to how you piece together your race. The options are endless. Is 8 people on a team too many? Is a team of 4 enough or too small to really push it? Run only at night? Get all the bikes done first? So many ways to do it - I can't wait to see how far we go in 2022.

2021 RACE RECAP (from my point of view)

SOLO DIVISION

8 hour solo - 3 / 12 hour solo - 7 / 24 hour solo - 19 / 36 hour solo - 20

I don't even know where to start for the 36 hour solo recap. Ya'll absolutely smashed it! Let's start with our solo runner - Rachel Peterson. Rachel braved the night all alone at 10:00pm and literally ran almost non stop on that 2 mile out and back course until her race was cut short by an injured ankle. She clocked 22 laps and 44 straight miles. We're all cheering you on during your recovery and I know without a doubt (because I talked to her) she's coming back in 2022 for revenge. Go get em, girl!

We had two 36 hour cyclists. The record holder, and the record hunter. In 2020, Heidi Videto wowed everyone in the race by cycling 440 miles straight in 36 hours. In her words, she hurt in places she didn't know she could hurt. It was unreal. This year, Heidi came out with a new purpose to enjoy the island and just take it easy. You may have spotted her standing on the side of the road taking pictures during her "race". Good on you, Heidi - you earned it! Ross Catterton entered the arena with a goal to push the limit on the bike and try to break the 440 mark. He absolutely went for it and busted out 400 miles (40 laps). I didn't want to jinx him so I never asked, but word is he thinks he can push to 500... I can confirm two things. Ross will be back and Heidi is coming back to break her own record. It's safe to say the 2022 36 hour cycling division will be a down right battle and I can not wait to see how it plays out.

The 36 hour Tri is always just plain brutal. To lay down the hammer for 36 straight hours of swimming, biking and running takes a special kind of person. Lucky for us, we have a lot of them at the race. Bobby Miller, who used this race as a "training race" for his 5x Anvil (ironman) race this October took the cake with 26 complete triathlons + a swim. Not bad for a training day. For those of you interested in a 10x, 5x, 3x or 2x ironman (ANVIL), check out www.usaultratri.com. Andrew Shleis claimed the #2 spot in his first race on the Island. Logging 20 complete triathlons + a swim, he says he "learned a lot and wishes he would have taken some time to sleep before it was too late". Well Andrew, there's always next year ;) It sounds like he may make another run for it, or at least come hangout with me at the timing table all night in 2022. Third place was Sarah Bird from Long Beach CA. Sarah is one of those athletes that just goes and goes and goes and never seems to show fatigue. She casually and quietly busted out 19 swims, 22 bikes and 26 runs for 19 total triathlons. She and her one man crew come up each year and just lay down a clinic. I don't know if Sarahs training for something or if this is here A race. I do know one thing though, she's a bad ass ultra racer and I think one of the people that would jump on a 48 hour Tri if we did one... Just saying.

36 hour Du was a one man battle. John McCarthy may have won before the race started but that didn't stop him from pushing it to complete 100 miles biking and 40 miles running. John's coming back in 2022 - clearly looking to go further and push it to the next level. That's one thing I love about this race. Where else can someone casually ride a century and run 40 miles without anyone even biking an eye. This stuff is just next level. Nice work, John!

2021 RACE RECAP (from my point of view)

In some sick and twisted fashion, the 24 hour race has started to become sort of the “sprint or full throttle” event. I don’t know about you, but the idea of going hard for 24 straight hours just gets me pumped. I also don’t know where we went from 24 hours being a monster of an event to 24 hours being a reasonable amount time to just go for it. Either way, this years 24 hour race started with a bang and saw some of the most impressive distances covered in the history of the race.

Let’s start with the 24 hour swim. As previously stated... who in their right mind wants to swim for 24 hours!? Deanna Doohaluk does, that’s who. Deanna casually busted out 60 swim laps... thats 15 freaking miles of swimming. Oh and this was just a training race for her. Deanna is doing some incredible things in the ultra swimming world. Keep an ear out for her episode on our upcoming Mammoth Podcast series that’s all about ultra racing and the people who do it. Congrats on a massive effort, Deanna.

The 24 Cycling had a lone charger in Jessica Brophy. Jessica has been racing the Island since 2017 and is coming back for more in 2022. Covering 150 miles in 24 hours is a massive effort. Once again, the ability to race against yourself and push your own limits around like minded people is something unique and we can’t wait to watch Jessica push beyond 150 next year.

Kristen Fish-Peterson showed up, ran 84 miles and casually took a bow. What a beast of a run! 42 laps, 84 miles and a new record for the race. This was Kristens first year racing with us and I hope she comes back for more in 2022. There’s a serious battle brewing to be the first to break 100 miles running on the island. I’d say after 84 quick miles this year, Kristen is well equipped to break that 100 mark next year. So gnarly and so cool to see the running competition heat up.

The 24 hour Tri category is the race that started it all. This year we saw Nathaniel Oertel take the #1 spot completing just under 200 miles and 16 total triathlons. That’s 4 miles swimming, 160 miles biking and 32 miles running. Not to shabby for a days work! Second place went to Jamie Jeromin who clocked 184 miles for 14 complete triathlons. Kim Neitzel wrapped up the podium with 13 complete triathlons covering 170 miles. The races for the top 5 were within miles and laps of one another. Once again, an extra lap here or there can make all the difference in this race!

Four athletes battled it out for a podium spot in the 24 hour du. 1st place went to Eric Spinn with 10 complete duathlons + a run for 144 miles in total. That last run made all the difference as second place, Jackie Koenig came in with 10 complete duathlons. One more run for Jackie and we would have had a tie for first place! Third place was a tie between Scott Vermullenn and Nicholas Hauptmann, both clocking in a ton of bike laps and one set of runs.

2021 RACE RECAP (from my point of view)

Our 12 hour division saw 7 solo athletes race the tri, du and cycling events. This is a special distance and I feel like it sometimes gets overshadowed by the 24 and 36. However, 12 hours of being active is a heck of a long time and when you look at the numbers these athletes lay down there's without a doubt a massive effort being put out each year in the smaller but equally brutal category.

The 12 hour tri was won by a very popular team. Rebecca and Chris race as a team with Rebecca pulling and pushing Chris through the course. The two work together to tackle the swim, bike and run and without a doubt Chris is the one encouraging and pushing Rebecca to keep going. The fire in her eyes and pure joy the two of them get from racing together is something so special and I love watching them come up and race as often as they can. 6 total triathlons + a swim loop got Chris and Rebecca the overall for the 12 hour tri. Marco Nadeau came in a close second with 6 total triathlons. .25 miles separated first and second this year. I don't need to say it, but squeezing in one more loop somewhere is a HUGE deal. Big congrats to both you guys for the efforts!

The 12 Hour du had Sheri Guba and Lone Olson racing this year. Sheri logged 100 bike miles, and 14 run miles for first place. Lone grabbed second with 50 bike miles and 10 run miles. Both ladies have raced before and I anticipate them both racing again. The pure joy of racing against yourself and pushing your own limit is just the best. Shoutout to Lone for stepping in to help during the race :).

150 miles for the 12 hour cycling was enough to take first place. Anthony Cantrall, who comes here year after year to hammer out the bike laps was the one who did enough for P1 this year. Jeannie Tennant (50 miles) and Scott Tennant (60 miles) came in 3rd and 2nd to round out the podium this year for the 12 hour cycle.

Our 8 hour event had 3 participants each racing against themselves and the clock. The ultimate sprint from the time we say go at 10:00am on Friday. Trent Hopkins was able to complete 120 miles on the bike for first place in the 8 hour cycle. Nora McAndrew grabbed 1st place in the du with 3 complete duathlons, just over 40 miles of work. Tom Kissner has been a huge supporter of this event and the Island in general. Tom was able to bust out 1.5 miles of swimming, 60 miles of biking and 22 miles running in only 8 hours. I'll let you do the math - but that's a huge effort by Tom!

FINAL THOUGHTS

I could go on for days about this race. As I'm sure you know by now our number one focus is you, the athletes and the people who race our events. We care about you and your goals and want to help in any way that we can. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for participating in our event and supporting our mission. Congratulations to everyone who raced this year. We've got big news coming in a few short months. Keep an eye out for race photos and a short film from this years Island race.

Safe training and best of luck on what is next for you.

Hope to see you on the Island in 2022.

As always - Don't Quit,

- Craig Braun.

MAMMOTH