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# Welcome

**W**hen I began working on *220 Triathlon* many moons ago, long-distance triathlon centred on a race entitled The Longest Day. This was before M-Dot arrived on UK shores, and all extreme athletes' eyes focused upon this club-run 226km race. Sadly, after being the only long-distance event in the UK for 12 years (until the full Ironman at Sherborne in 2005), it finally met its end in 2006. The reason: dwindling numbers.



Well, since its sad demise, 'going long' has enjoyed unprecedented growth in popularity, here and abroad. The irony, of course, is that long-distance events in the UK still only number three – Ironman UK, the Big Woody and Forestman – but that figure hides the popularity of long distance, as the number of UK entrants at global events numbers well into four figures.

And that only paints part of the picture, too... How many of us feel going long is a world away but are intrigued and even inspired by the world of the long-distance triathlete? Kona and its mystical appeal may seem an unrealistic possibility, but its vicarious allure motivates you to slip on your sports gear and sweat it out.

That's why our long-distance section (p22 onwards) is designed to inspire all. The training advice may not help you tame your first 4,000m swim, but discovering the stories behind that very first Ironman Hawaii in 1978 (p26) will have you chomping at the bit to 'tri'. You see, the racing philosophy is the same for all levels and distances, namely the things that are most rewarding in life require a great deal of graft.

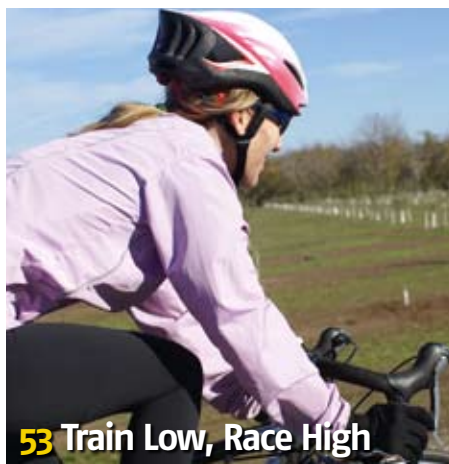
One athlete who takes that theory to simply absurd levels is Miss Chrissie Wellington. This issue sees the first monthly instalment from our two-time Hawaii Champ, who'll be waxing lyrical about all things tri and non-tri related over 2009. Never backwards in coming forwards you can be sure you'll enjoy digesting Chrissie's monthly fix.

As you will the free Ride Shots that accompany this issue. New from sports nutrition behemoths PowerBar, these liquid-filled carb fruit gums could be your saviours on Sunday morning bikes.

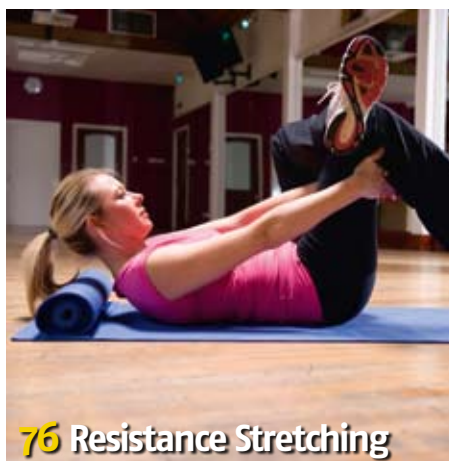
On top of all that, we get our hands (and bottoms) on the new Isaac Joule Pro (p40); investigate the benefits of the latest nutrition strategy 'Train Low, Race High' (p53); and learn the secrets of top triathlon swimmer Richard Stannard. Enjoy the issue...

**JAMES WITTS, EDITOR**

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