



**Lac Des Sables
5-K Open Water Swim Race**



**Ste. Agathe Half Ironman
Relay**

I'd made a commitment to race in Ste. Agathe, but when it fell on the weekend following Parry Sound, I had to look at options for how to compete with a body that was still recovering from a hard half IM effort.

Luckily, two options were available to me – the 5k open water swim race, and to be part of a relay team for the Half IM!!! Woo Hoo!

Having to swim without a wet-suit didn't bother me, and I prepared by doing one VERY chilly swim in Lake Ontario, sans wet-suit the week before – not so smart! Race day conditions were much better, and swimming in a smaller, warmer, cleaner lake was a real pleasure! There are some pretty strict rules for swim races through, and the 'no-touching', 'no drafting' rules were something drastically different than what I'm used to.

After trading 'good luck' wishes with my Cadence Team friends Melanie and Samantha, the swim got off to a great start, and I enjoyed working hard through the 5 loops. Two other races (1K and 2K) started shortly after our race, so there was some company out in the water, although the entire field was still relatively small.

My legs started to feel quite heavy during the 4th loop, and I refocused on breathing and pulling strong, and minimizing my kick (or at least I tried!).

Sooner than I'd expected, I was on the finishing leg of my race – I could see a few people ahead of me, looking suspiciously like they were in a pack.....hum, I guess drafting in all races is hard to break-up!

Exiting the swim, I ran up the shore, across the timing mat, and felt great!

Finishing time: 1:22:33 mins – second female, first and only in my AG!
I'd highly recommend a swim race to anyone who wants a change of pace, it was a lot of fun.

Next it was the transition into my running shoes, and a quick warm-up on the bike, while I waited for my relay bike partner to come back to T2. Our swimmer, Kristine, had a good result (40mins), after a morning frantic rush to get her a wet-suit, swim suit and goggles (Thanks to the airlines for losing her luggage!). We were expecting our cyclist Rene to come in around 3:15 – but strong winds had slowed his time, and while I tried to stay limber, we waited till 3:27 for him to arrive.

After taking the chip of his ankle out I went and immediately had to stop running, as I'd ripped my race bib off my shorts....oops. Off again, and onto a nearly deserted run course. As there were only 4 relay teams, and a total field for the Half IM of about 50 people, there wasn't a lot of action during the run. I did see all the faster, individual racers come back into town, and it was great to be able to cheer for all of Team Cadence: Paul, Anthony, Gilbert, Raymond and of course, SUPER coach Christian.

My strategy was to run as hard as I could for the entire race, thinking that because I didn't have 90K in my legs that I'd be able to hold out for the full distance. I also thought, 'well, the way back will all be down hill, it won't matter that I've killed my legs running up hill all the way out' – hum, a perception could never have been so totally wrong – this course was up hill IN BOTH DIRECTIONS! At about 16k the wheels started to come off, and I really struggled to keep a good pace to the end. It didn't help that all the aid station volunteers had left, and the tables were left with just cups of warm water. A very lonely, and humble feeling.

Despite the lack of cheering, I finished the run strong (and soaking wet with sweat) in 1:43:16 – with our team placing 3rd in the relay event.

Again, I'd recommend competing as part of a relay – I'd never done it before – and it gives you a nice opportunity to really focus on one aspect of your race.

Merci chacun.