

## **Collins makes a strong showing at his first ITU elite race**

Kedzierzyn-Kozle, Poland  
Sunday, September 09, 2007

Ben Collins swam and biked with the leaders for the first 80 minutes of the first race in his professional career. Collins' run was later plagued with nutritional problems and residual stress from two weeks of travel and the Age Group World Championships.

In the week leading up to the race heavy rains flooded the river where the swim was intended to take place. In a last minute decision, the swim course was moved to a lake outside of Kozle. The athletes were presented air and water temperatures both in the 50s, making for a cold race.

Over a hundred athletes sprinted from a deep water start and quickly formed a massive pack that remained mostly intact for the remainder of the 1.5km swim. Collins stayed aggressive, and fought his way to the front of the pack. After the first of two laps Collins had moved up to 6<sup>th</sup> place where he was able to stay for the remainder of the swim. "The swim was an all out brawl. It was far more aggressive than any other race I've done, and I loved it" Collins said of the swim.

With his fast swim Collins had an easy time starting the bike leg with the lead group. The 40km, draft-legal bike leg consisted of 7 laps around the center of Kozle. The course was flat, but very technical, allowing the lead group of 20 athletes to put two minutes on the chase pack.

Collins came off the bike with the lead group, but was unable to stay with the pack. His final time of 1:54:12 was five minutes behind the winner, Ioulian Malishev of Russia.

Overall it was a successful race for Collins, who's only goal was simply to learn as much as possible from his first taste of elite competition and the draft-legal racing format. A week after winning the Amateur World Championships in Hamburg, Collins was still happy, "It was my first chance to see how I could compete with those guys, and I proved that I'm capable."

The rest of his schedule will see him racing in California at Tinley's Adventures in San Luis Obispo at the end of September, in Texas at the Lifetime Fitness Triathlon where he will guide Aaron Scheidies in his attempt to break the 2 hour barrier for a blind athlete and then closing out his season back in California at San Francisco's Treasure Island (ITU format) Triathlon.

You can find out the latest at <http://bencollins.org> where Ben has 2,000 visitors from over a dozen countries each month!