

Tuesday, June 27th, 2006

Blazeman,

I have covered a lot of incredible moments in sports over the years including Super Bowls, NBA Finals, US Opens, Final Fours, Tours de France and ten Ironmans, but your performance in 2005's race was the most incredible I've ever witnessed. I have never seen an athlete with more guts and determination as you showed on race day man and I'll never forget it. You kicked Kona's ass when it could have beaten you into the ground and left you by the side of the Queen K Highway. The way you gutted it out to make the bike cutoff time was no less than superhuman considering how far you were behind at the turnaround. As I told you we would, we stayed with you throughout the run to cheer you on and in doing so, I witnessed what true heart and perseverance really are. Even with the ALS disease trying to shut down your body, you walked on through the night never giving up, never giving in to the pain. Man, I thought you were done about mile 13, but you sucked it up and pushed on. I know you must have felt like shit out there but you never let up, you just kept going.

Walking that last mile with you into the finish line is something I never will forget and I was honored to be walking with you and documenting your efforts. All the cheering fans supporting you must have given your feet wings as you started running again as soon as we heard them chanting Blazeman. What an unbelievable feeling it was as we came down Ali Drive into the lights and frenzy at the finish line. I can't describe how emotional it all was for me, and can only imagine what it must have felt like for you. When you log rolled over the line and into the arms of your waiting family, I just about lost it. I was so happy for you. It must have been everything you could have dreamed of when you entered the race and there couldn't have been a happier ending to the day.

We all go through life facing difficult challenges, but none tougher than your fight. Whenever I find myself down and almost beaten, I will think back to that Ironman day and say if the Blazeman didn't give up, how can I? You showed me what true determination and belief in yourself can do in those moments when things seem the hardest and the darkest and I will draw on that lesson for the rest of my life in whatever I do. You showed all the doubters that even a disease like ALS can't hold someone back from achieving their dreams. Thanks man for showing me the true meaning of sport, to overcome all obstacles, and to push through when it would be so easy to give up. You are the MAN Blazeman and I wish you all the best in the future.

I will never forget our friendship and I will always be there when you need a little support. I will never forget the lessons you have taught us all, not just in sport, but in life as well. Keep the faith my man and keep up the good fight.

So I think that was the gist of my former blog dude. I mean every word of it too. I have never seen anything like what you did at the Ironman and never had a moment like crossing that finish line with you. Keep me posted on your War on ALS. Keep the faith Bro...

Talk to you soon,

Wooman