It was an interesting season doing two Ironman competitions. I have been asked which of the 7 was the most exciting and the answer is each had it special moments.

In Ironman Louisville I had my toughest race and ended up in the medical tent but I finished and was happy I took on the challenge of a very hilly course on a very hot day. Even on difficult days there are great moments and at Louisville I had two good friends, Jud and Victor, cheering me on and while running with me singing me show tones. Jud even sang the snoodle song. And at the end of the race my son, Richard was there to take care of his hurting Dad knowing exactly when I was ready to go to the medical tent and then getting me there and taking care of me.

Ironman Florida was special because of the three great guys that competed with me. It was great fun to have Victor, Jim and Bill there. Bill had a spectacular race beating his best time by close to 20 minutes. I had a good swim and at about at mile 12 on the bike I heard a familiar voice behind me. Victor pulled up behind me and we leaped frogged up to the 60 mile mark. Victor lost his Advil and luckily I had some in my special needs bag at the half way mark and was able to get them to him. Helping a fellow Ironman in need is an important part of the Iroman tradition. At mile 60 Victor took off and that was the last I saw of him on the bike. But constantly on my mind was Jim. I just wanted to know he was out of the water and on his way on the bike. We caught a difficult wind for about 20 miles on the last half of the bike, but for the last 7 had a great tail wind. Close to the first turn around on the run I spotted Victor out ahead of me. I eventually caught him and we stayed together for a couple of miles. At that time I was thinking it would be great to finish together. It did not happen but I found out that Victor had the same thought. At the 9 mile mark I saw Jim and literally jumped with joy. For a 60 year old guy after a 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike and then 9 miles into the run jumping was quite a feat. That was my first special moment of the day. I started to have stomach problems on the run and none of my regular methods of nutrition were working. I went to half water and Gatorade and chocolate chip cookies and that worked great. I know Matthew, I said never change you plan in the middle of a race but sometimes when nothing else is working you have to take a chance. We had some interesting aide stations on the course. On the bike we had the Pirates and on the run we had the beer girls. As I finished Bill was there waiting for me. Coming down the shoot with everybody cheering you is an incredible feeling. And having a great friend like Bill there waiting and having already retrieved your big and transition bags and returned them to your room for you is a huge plus. I'm very lucky for Bill's friendship.

I knew that Jim and Victor were about 40 to 50 minutes behind me so it gave me time to eat two slices of pizza and a sub sandwich. The next special moment came as Jim crossed the finish line. Again the old guy jumped for joy. As Jim became as Ironman a chill went through my body and tear came to my eye. After Jim got a kiss and a hug from his wife Dee I congratulated him. I was very lucky that Jim allowed me to be part of his journey. Ten minutes late Victor crossed the line to hugs and kisses fro his wife Laura, and children Molly, Mitchell and Alex. We all congratulated each other and then the third special moment for me happened. We all sat down and had some pizza (yes more pizza) together and talked for about an hour about our day. What a joy to share a wonderful day with three good friends who shared the experience with you. I have now been blessed in my life to complete 7 Ironmans. But the real joy was sharing the experience with good friends, fellow competitors, fans and wonderful volunteers. Without all of their efforts the completion of the race would not be possible.

It was a wonderful day and I would just like to finish by saying one thing and as I prepare to say it that chill is returning to my body and tears are coming to my eyes.

JIM YOU ARE AN IRONMAN!!