



MIRINDA CARFRAE & PAULA NEWBY-FRASER

THE DEFENDING CHAMP AND KONA'S MOST DECORATED CHAMP

The reigning women's world champion shares a candid conversation with the woman who was queen—an unmatched eight times over.

PAULA NEWBY-FRASER: From seeing the Ironman and having a perception of it, to actually going and doing it, what was the difference for you?

MIRINDA CARFRAE: Early on, when I knew it was years away, I thought, "This is going to be great! I know I can do X-Y-Z and that will put me in the front of the pack." But then getting close to actually racing—and I mean days before the race—I thought, "I can't do this distance! This is ridiculous!" But in the moment, I was so well-prepared that it wasn't as hard. ... I was definitely a little bit shocked at how—not how easy it was, because it's not something that's easy—but how in your mind it seems like a mountain in the days leading into it. But when you're actually out there racing, it's different.

PNF: How many hours a week do you train? ... It seems people train so much more than they ever did.

MC: Right now in the peak of it I'm at around 32 hours. I swim about 20–22K. I ride around 450K. And I run only 100K. ...Those are my bigger weeks.

PNF: Wow! We used to think 20 hours was hitting the big, *big* time. I remember when Michellie [Jones] did Ironman and we were like, "Whoa! You did 24

hours of training this week! That's so big! It's amazing!" We were blown away, because the average week was more toward 16–18 hours. ... I don't think there's a right way and I don't think there's a wrong way. There isn't. As long as you believe—if you believe in yourself and you think, "I just want to go out there on race day and I don't care how fast anybody else is. I just want to have that day that I have in training." You know those days you have where you go, "Oh my god, I rule the world! I *rule* the world!" I used to sometimes get off my bike, by myself, and go, "That was the *best* ride! That was awesome!" And that's all I wanted.

PNF: Don't look at your log from last year. Put it away. Because ... it will grind you down. Get a new book and start there. Don't pull baggage. It's gone. It will never be the same as it was last year.

MC: So then, how do you make the steps forward in training? Do you just believe that the years building up on each other is enough to get faster every year?

PNF: Yes. And the biggest lesson that I learned, that turned it all around from that level where we were going around 9:40 and then made a jump right to the nine-hour level, was learning to differen-

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tiating my training. That when we go out easy, it's so easy. It was to a point that we would be dropped by age-groupers. But then when I went out to really go, I would go! I learned to make my training a little bit more black and white in terms of intensity, which I think is a big issue in triathlon: a triathlon epidemic, the perpetual hammering. But that's ego and greed every time. Nobody is going to give an inch, so give them a mile. Because then when your time comes you're a mile ahead of them.

PNF: Do some of the parameters that Chrissie's set—run splits, bike splits—do you and [coach] Siri [Lindley] look at that and plan accordingly?

MC: I watch all the results in Ironman racing across the world, and I see what people are doing. There are certain races, Roth's obviously one of them, where times are fast. So I don't put as much weight into a race like that. Obviously you look at it and think: Wow, she's running fast. But let's look at what Chrissie's done in Kona. I'm going to race her in Kona, and she's never gone faster than X-Y-Z. In fact in my second Ironman, my first place last year was a lot faster than she went her second year. And she's done 10 Ironman races; I've done three. So you see those results, and if you don't pull yourself out of that "wow" factor, you can be written off right then. You may as well not go. Kona's a whole different ball game.

