

MACCA'S KONA-WINNING RIDE

By Aaron Hersh

Chris "Macca" McCormack is one of the fastest runners in Ironman triathlon, but he isn't the fastest. A strong cyclist, Macca knew he would need an advantage after the bike in order to win the 2010 Ironman World Championship over pure runners such as Andreas Raelert and Craig Alexander. Macca worked with the other cyclists to push the pace in the middle segment of the bike leg to get that advantage over Alexander. Raelert was still hanging tough, though, as the bike leaders approached town, so Macca attacked again in the final miles to earn an 80-second lead on Raelert at the start of the run. He orchestrated the decisive breakaway aboard this Specialized Shiv.





SPECIALIZED SHIV FRAME

The Specialized Shiv is a marvel of integration. The nosecone protruding off the front of the bike conceals the front brake and smoothly connects the aerobar with the frame. Specialized says this design is particularly aerodynamic in cross winds, which is exactly what Macca faced on the Queen K Highway. The Shiv is offered with two different seat posts, one for steep positions and one for shallow positions. Macca uses the shallow seat post because he prefers a more road-like position over the super-steep position that has been embraced by most triathletes. Macca prefers a laid-back position because he says he has a “big arse” and sitting rearward helps him utilize his glutes. You won’t find a power meter on Macca’s race bike because he says the tool is “counterproductive” in a race environment, and he prefers to “flow and use his racing brain” to gauge his effort on the race course.



HYDRATION

Most of the top athletes in Kona brought as much to drink as possible on the bike. Nearly every pro carried four bottles, but Macca went for a leaner setup. Through laboratory testing, Macca has found that his body can only absorb 1.325L of fluid per hour, and two bottles can meet his needs. He carried a single bottle on the frame and a second bottle in a Profile Design cage mounted between his aerobars with zip ties. He also had two Saltstick capsule dispensers attached to his aerobars to carry electrolyte supplements.



ZIPP 808 FIRECREST WHEELS

Macca rode Zipp’s 2011 Firecrest 808 tubular wheels with custom decals. The stickers are a nice aesthetic touch, but the real story behind these wheels is the rim shape. Zipp was able to drastically reduce the aero drag on these wheels compared to the previous generation by shaping the rim to create an aerodynamic unit of the wheel and tire in combination, not just the wheel itself. They accomplished this by widening the rim, and the result is lower drag in cross winds.



SRAM RED COMPONENTS

Macca’s component group included a Sram Red crank, rear derailleur, chain and cassette. His front derailleur has a steel cage, rather than the standard titanium cage, and he uses carbon Sram 900 Shifters in place of Sram’s top-of-the-line R2C Aero shifters. He was pushing Speedplay Zero Stainless pedals with custom length spindles that extend his left pedal 3mm further away from the bike than his right pedal. Every component on Macca’s Kona-winning Shiv can be found in a bike shop.

Left: Photo by John Sogesta. Right: Photos by Nils Nilsen