

No holding back

Leon Griffin takes an old school approach to training. He tells Andrew Wright why

When I first met Leon he had just come off a 3 month injury break so I thought it was quite strange when he agreed to join me for a hard 6x5km interval ride. After being dropped by him in the first minute I realized why he had the reputation for being one of the strongest riders in the sport.

This session was just the first of many that make me think he is one of the most talented guys I have ever come across. For this reason and the fact that he is also the most laid back person I have ever met make this article worth writing.

Back when I was training with you there was no programme, no HR monitors, no power meters. What is your training philosophy these days and did it ever differ in the past?

Correct. I'm not much of a 'numbers' athlete, and I kind of have an 'old school' philosophy to training and mostly go on feel. I have tried using power meters but I think they can be just as detrimental as they are beneficial.

Athletes get too wrapped up in always trying to produce higher outputs and then they end up overtraining.

However, since I have placed more of an emphasis on racing longer IM and IM 70.3 and other long course triathlons I have been basing quite a lot of my running sessions by Heart Rate using a Garmin. The idea has been to hold myself back and do a lot more longer tempo type running and keeping a low HR. I have found this the key to more consistent training, and thus better results.

Although you have some great results the consensus is that you should be better. Do you think this is true and why?

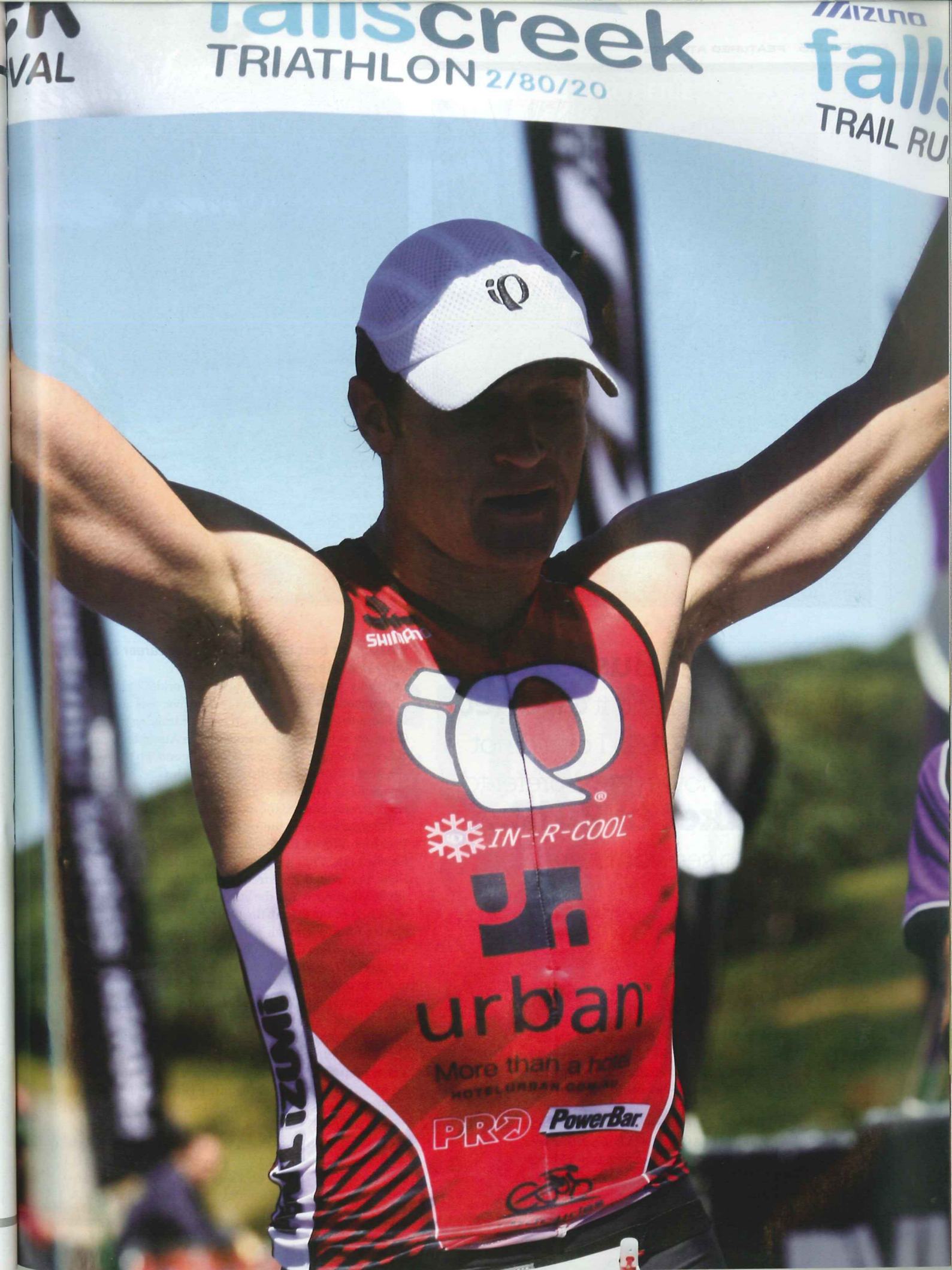
No one is a harsher critic on me than myself, and I totally agree that while showing plenty of potential with an ITU Duathlon World Title in 2006, I haven't yet reached the heights that I should have. There have been varying factors why my career has trended sideways, and arguably maybe even backwards. That's just life and I just haven't had the opportunity to give it 100% of my focus.

That is about to change I hope though with a new sponsor in the US that is going to provide me every opportunity to reach the heights I'm yet to attain.

What events are you training for and how many hours are you putting in per week on the swim, bike, and run?

At the moment I'm focused on the inaugural Ironman Asia Pacific to be held in Melbourne in a few months' time. I also have a few lead up half ironman events to compete in through February.

Hopefully I can do well enough at IM Melb to score enough points to set me up to race my first Hawaii Ironman World Champs later this year in October.





FACT FILE

DOB
16 July 1980

PLACE OF BIRTH
Bendigo, Victoria AUSTRALIA

PROFESSION
Money Markets Dealer with Bendigo Bank / Part-time Pro Triathlete

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR
Make it to Hawaii Ironman and resume as fulltime Pro Triathlete

- TOP 5 RACES OF ALL TIME**
- 1 - ITU Duathlon World Champion 2006.
 - 2 - Australian Long Course Triathlon Champion 2008.
 - 3 - Geelong Ironman 70.3 Champion 2008.
 - 4 - Buffalo Springs Ironman 70.3 Champion 2008.
 - 5 - Shepparton IM 70.3 Champion 2011

- BEST 3 RACES OF 2011**
- 1 Shepparton IM 70.3 (VIC Aust), 2 Falls Creek Long Course Triathlon - State champs (VIC Aust), 3 Challenge Cairns Half Ironman (All Win's)

SPONSORS:
Orbea, Orca, Urban Hotels, Shimano

“ Last year I raced **Busselton IM** in Australia and it **clashed with Phuket** so I could not come over, however I'd prefer to race **Phuket in 2012...** so I hope to see you there ”

Whats your best race result in your career and how did you achieve it?

Definitely was my ITU Duathlon World Championship Title in 2006. It was my first season overseas and leading in I completed a month's high altitude training in Boulder, Colorado in the US. I trained with the Australian Institute of Sport during that time...and weirdly enough that was the last time I trained with them. I wasn't invited back despite being one of Australia's brightest talents because I think I was basically labelled too old, already turned 26...

The year before (winning the championship) I raced the Duathlon Worlds for the first time, held in Australia, and finished 5th. This gave me the confidence it was something that suited my strengths (bike/run) so I dreamed about winning it for the next 12 months. Maybe that's what helped me to grab the title.

Also funnily enough I have never raced another ITU World Duathlon Championship as I could never afford (\$) to travel to Europe to do so while not receiving any financial help or assistance from my National Governing body - Triathlon Australia, or our Institute of Sport (AIS).

Do you have any advice for age groupers who have limited amount or time to train?

Try to keep a balanced training program. I try to give each leg as much attention as the other i.e I complete about 4 training sessions of each swim, bike and run whilst I hold down a full time job.

I load up my training on 3 working days a week (Mon/Wed/Fri), and the other 2 are recovery days (Tue/Thurs). I then load up Saturday with a super long bike ride (150km+) and a relatively shorter Sunday (long run 90mins). **TMA**

Do you plan on doing any training or racing in Asia in 2012?

I would love to get to Asia this year, however with the new sponsor and Team I'm joining in the US (Orbea-Orca) this may make it a bit harder. I have contacted the organiser with my interest to race the new Sri Lanka 70.3 but have not heard back as yet.

The big one I'd really like to compete in Asia at years end will be the Asia Pacific IM 70.3 Champs in Phuket. Last year I raced Busselton IM in Australia and it clashed with Phuket so I could not come over, however I'd prefer to race Phuket in 2012...so I hope to see you there

info@thebikeboutique.com
+65 6225 1728

FAST GUYS

RIDE

James *Cunnama*

Rev 3 Quassy - 1st
Ironman 70.3 Singapore - 2nd

COBB CYCLING

WHAT DO YOU?