

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

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**Top American Amateur Female:**

# **Sarah Piampiano**

**Swim: 1:06:15 Bike: 5:11:38 Run: 3:27:18 Overall: 9:51:17**

In only her second Ironman, Sarah Piampiano was the fastest female American to cross the line at the Ironman World Championships. This past June she earned her spot to Kona by being the fastest female amateur overall at Ironman CDA, finishing in 10:03:37. "To be the top American feels great," she said. "I have become close to a bunch of amateur girls through competing, and we felt that as a group we could really represent the U.S.A. well. I am proud of how we did."

Piampiano ran cross-country in her youth but stopped to focus on becoming a member of the US Olympic Ski Team. She did her first triathlon late in 2009 after ski racing and running cross country in college at Colby.

In her debut in Kona, Piampiano was the 5th female amateur overall. "I definitely had pretty lofty goals coming in, but my coach Matt Dixon kept my thoughts realistic," she said. "He reminded me of all the European and Pacific Rim athletes that I have never raced against before."

Lofty goals or not, Sarah was able to achieve one of her goals of crossing the line in under 10 hours despite being sick and stopping at every aid station for several minutes the whole first half of the marathon. After losing time, she didn't know what place she was in. With 1700 plus athletes on the course misinformation about overall placing is pretty commonplace. "At one point I was told I was the third place overall female amateur," said Piampiano. "It wasn't a perfect race day but overall I was proud of the race I executed. It is easy to get down when you are feeling bad out there, but I was able to hold tough and work my way back up." (Editor's note: The women's 30-34 age group was stacked with four of the top five female amateurs coming from this age group alone.)

The New Yorker is relocating to California in December to train in Santa Monica with the Tower 26 swim program. Piampiano will turn professional for the 2012 season and hopes to be at the start line in Kona as a pro after getting a few years of experience racing at that level under her belt. "I have many long term goals in mind," she said. "I know racing as a pro will be a totally different ball game, and I want to focus on gaining much needed experience my first year." **tri**