

Two Friends...

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO, NOT ON WHAT YOU CAN'T

Nate Carroll, age 32, and **James Blaskowski**, age 34,
are two men who share a lot in common:

- A. They both work at The Wisconsin Resource Center
- B. They both live in Oshkosh
- C. They are running buddies
- D. they both NEVER swam, until this year
- E. Neither one owned a bike, until this year
- F. triathlon was not in their vocabulary, until this year
- G. They shared the same dream, cooked up during a training run
- H. they now own the same bike, Trek Equinox
- I. they now own the same watch, Nike Triax
- J. they are veterans of TRI 101 and very active TRI FOXES
- K. They now are both IRONMEN for the rest of their lives!!



Nate and James, both married with kids, decided one day while running that marathons and xc skiing were not enough. There was another great Wisconsin adventure they had heard about and thought they should do...the problem was that they never swam more than a lap in the pool and had NO triathlon experience. But that did not stop Nate, a Marine for 7 years, and James a recreational therapist, from taking on the challenge of a lifetime, IRONMAN WISCONSIN. In fact, Nate says, "I'm not Mr. Conventional... I signed up for IM, and thought I'd figure it out!" James said the guy at the bike shop asked if he had ever ridden 50 miles and his reply was "no, but it can't be that hard!"...He laughs now when he remembers finally doing his first 50 mile ride 1 week before the High Cliff 1/2 and wondering how in the heck he was going to be able to run a 1/2 marathon after that! Both men quickly say that training for the Ironman, especially as complete newbies, was a very humbling experience. But with what they learned in TRI 101 and with support from fellow TRI FOXES, they kept at their training in spite of Nate's vertigo from swimming and a new baby, and James' family commitments with kids ages 2 and 4. They also found that Dick and Rick Hoyt's story served as inspiration. On those long and hard training days when their dream seemed to be slipping away, they found a very simple solution:
"focus on what I can do, not on what I can't", said Nate.

Simple, yet profound. And now that both of our TRI FOXES are Ironmen, what do they cherish most about the day and the adventure? Nate: "What moved me at the Finish line is that the day draws out every human emotion: fear, pride, anger, tears, and joy...RAW EMOTION! I felt like I was on a cloud and I was thankful for

my family and for my health....3 minutes after I finished I collapsed...it was my drive and my belief that kept me going for 16+ hours and now I know sheer joy!" James: "During the race, I was just happy I started on the journey. There were times I was filled with self-doubt, but at my darkest moment, I'd see someone in my family or someone would yell ' GO TRI FOX' and that would fuel my spirits. And now that I am an Ironman I am also a better person...more patient, more self-assured, more determined, and more tolerant. If you live the tenets of Ironman, you'll have a good life!"

The Fox Cities Triathlon Club congratulates our fellow Foxes, Nate and James, for starting on the journey and living their dream. They plan to share their experiences with our fresh crop of newbies at TRI 101 this winter. We can't think of better role models.