



Pen City Current

Monday, October 1, 2018 | 9 pages | Volume 2 • Issue 222

"It hasn't hit me I'm an IRONMAN yet."

-Fort Madison's Wes Holtkamp

Holtkamp now an IRONMAN

30-year-old finishes grueling 14-hour Maryland event on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay Saturday in first-ever attempt

**BY CHUCK
VANDENBERG**
PCC EDITOR

agree....it looked like fun.

Holtkamp, and an entourage of family, trekked to Cambridge, Maryland over the weekend where he completed in the IRONMAN Maryland 2018. A grueling 140+ mile event where the Fort Madison native swam 2.4 miles in the Choptank River, a salt water tributary of the Chesapeake Bay, then biked 112 miles in a dual loop through the hills of Cambridge, and then ran a full marathon through Cambridge, finishing on

CAMBRIDGE, Maryland - "It hasn't hit me yet that I'm an IRONMAN".

Fort Madison's Wes Holtkamp is an IRONMAN.

Not because it was on his bucket list. Not because someone challenged him. Not because he always wanted to be an IRONMAN. But because....and people who know Wes will



Photos courtesy of Bobby Holtkamp

"It's a whole different ballgame at this level. You're not allowed to use audio. You're out there 14 hours just thinking and paying attention to your body. Fighting through the pain and cramping."

-Wes Holtkamp,
IRONMAN participant

the city's historic Long Wharf.

"Two and half to three years ago, I decided I was going to do IRONMAN," Holtkamp said from the family's rented home in Maryland. "I had done a sprint triathlon and I liked it so I told myself I think I can push a 70.3 IRONMAN."

The 70.3 are shorter versions of the full IRONMAN competitions and Holtkamp said he started training in 2016 for the Haines City IRONMAN 70.3 that he said he would know more about what he was getting into.

"It's a whole different ball game at this level," he said. "You're not allowed to

See **HOLTkamp**, page 8

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



Wedding day a physical, emotional chore for dad

Brad Heald was still weed eating 45 minutes before his daughter's wedding. He wanted everything to be perfect for his only daughter, Coral. To the wedding guests, everything was perfect. There was a beautiful display of golden mums, 105 of them to be exact, spilling out of the raised bed of a 1948 Chevy dump truck, like the train on the bride's gown. Brad, who is really an artist in disguise, had hand made the wooden tables for the entire wedding party to sit at, and built the bench that would hold the wedding cake. It sat proudly on two whiskey barrels. He and his wife, Dawn, had strung thousands of lights outside Heald's Trucking shop, that lit up the valley so the wedding celebration could continue into the night. Groomsmen and guests couldn't believe that the building for the wedding reception was a trucking company. Almost out of sight, at the far edge of the 17.5-acre lot, was a berm and a wall of pallets. Behind the pallet wall, Brad had hidden all the miscellaneous odds-and-ends that a trucking company accumulates. Guests commented that the pallets looked like they belonged there, knitting the scene together.

OpinionMotorists on Highway 34, east of New London, pulled to the side of the road to gawk and take pictures of the golden mums and dump truck. It had been Brad's father's truck, and Brad had made many a trip to the quarry with his father in that truck. It would now be the centerpiece flower holder for his daughter's wedding. Years ago, Brad saw a picture of a truck with flowers spilling out of the back end, and wanted to duplicate it. In his words, "I have big dreams, man, big dreams." He tried to use blanket flowers, but couldn't get the quantity necessary. He settled for golden mums, and hired a person to arrange and plant them. So stunning is the display, that on a Saturday, the trucking company parking lot becomes congested with people wanting to take pictures and hear the story of the old dump truck

See **SWARM**, page 2

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Obituaries/Opinion

OBITUARIES

EUGENE THEODORE “GENE” VONDERHAAR

Eugene Theodore “Gene” Vonderhaar, 81, of West Point, Iowa, passed away at 10:55 p.m. Saturday, September 29, 2018.

Born August 15, 1937 in Fort Madison, Iowa, the son of Theodore and Dorothy (Sontag) Vonderhaar. On May 19, 1962, he married Velda Rose Moeller at St. James the Less Catholic Church in St. Paul, Iowa.



VONDERHAAR

Survivors include his wife: Velda of West Point, Iowa; one daughter: Joyce (Rick Hudson) Holtkamp of Bonita Springs, Florida; three sons: Tony (Dottie) Vonderhaar of Houghton, Iowa, Tim (Wendy) Vonderhaar of West Point, Iowa and Tom (Leslie) Vonderhaar of Bettendorf, Iowa; ten grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; one great-grandson; three sisters: Imelda Bushman of Urbandale, Iowa, Barbara Holtkamp of Donnellson, Iowa and Rosie (Bill) Brune of West Burlington, Iowa; two brothers: Don Vonderhaar of Mexico Beach, Florida and Larry (Diane) Vonderhaar of Burlington, Iowa. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one sister: Elaine Vonderhaar.

Gene was a United States Air Force Veteran. He worked as an owner/operator truck driver. Gene was a member of St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church and the West Point American Legion Holtz-Geers Post #668. He served on the West Point Fire and Rescue Department. Gene was a simple man who was very proud of his family. Spending time with them was what he truly enjoyed most out of life.

His body has been entrusted to Schmitz Funeral Home for cremation.

Friends may call after 12:00 noon Wednesday, October 3, 2018 at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point where the family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. A Parish Rosary will be recited at 3:00 p.m. and a Christian Wake Service will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the funeral home.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, October 4, 2018 at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in West Point with Father Dennis Hoffman officiating. Burial will be at Calvary Cemetery in West Point with a flag presentation by the West Point American Legion. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in his memory to West Point Fire and Rescue.

Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences to the family may be left at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

Heald’s wedding efforts for daughter draw a crowd

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

with mums—now called “The Mump Truck.”

But there was still one more surprise for the wedding. Truck drivers have a lot of spare time to think while on the road. During long, lonely stretches, Brad had composed a wedding song for his daughter and recorded the verses on his phone through his headset. When it was time for the father/daughter dance, Brad had switched the song his daughter had selected, “Stealing Cinderella,” and replaced it with the song he had written and recorded. Brad’s brother and niece composed the music for, “Leaving Me.” The music drifted out through the speakers as the wedding guests watched father and daughter dance. “From the first time that I held you, to the day I give you away, I could tell you were so very special, unique in so many ways. If I said raising you was easy, you know that would be a lie, cause even when you needed punishment, it was so hard to watch you cry. But that’s being a dad, some days it ain’t easy, hop’n you won’t stay mad, when it comes time to leave me. From a cry’n baby, to a savvy young lady, it’s been fun to watch you

mature, tak’n you fish’n, on all those vacations, are memories I’ll cherish for sure. That’s being a dad, some days it ain’t easy, I hope it’s the good times we



had, that you recall when you leave me. So today I give you this party, today I give you away, so today I give you this dance, where I have this chance to say. I like being your dad, although today it’s not easy, with the bond that we have, I know you’ll never really leave me.”

There wasn’t a dry eye in the building. The mums, as their name implies, lay quietly, their beauty covering the earth with love and happiness. Good job, Brad.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com, or find him on Facebook. Curt’s stories are also read at 106.3 FM in Farmington.

Snowy days are right around the corner



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MON 01 Oct	Rainy High – 79.3° F Low – 55.7° F
TUE 02 Oct	Light Rain High – 69.0° F Low – 67.5° F
WED 03 Oct	Clear Skies High – 81.3° F Low – 77.3° F
THU 04 Oct	Heavy Rain High – 83.0° F Low – 68.7° F
FRI 05 Oct	Rainy High – 66.9° F Low – 47.9° F

OpenWeatherMap

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Founded in 2016



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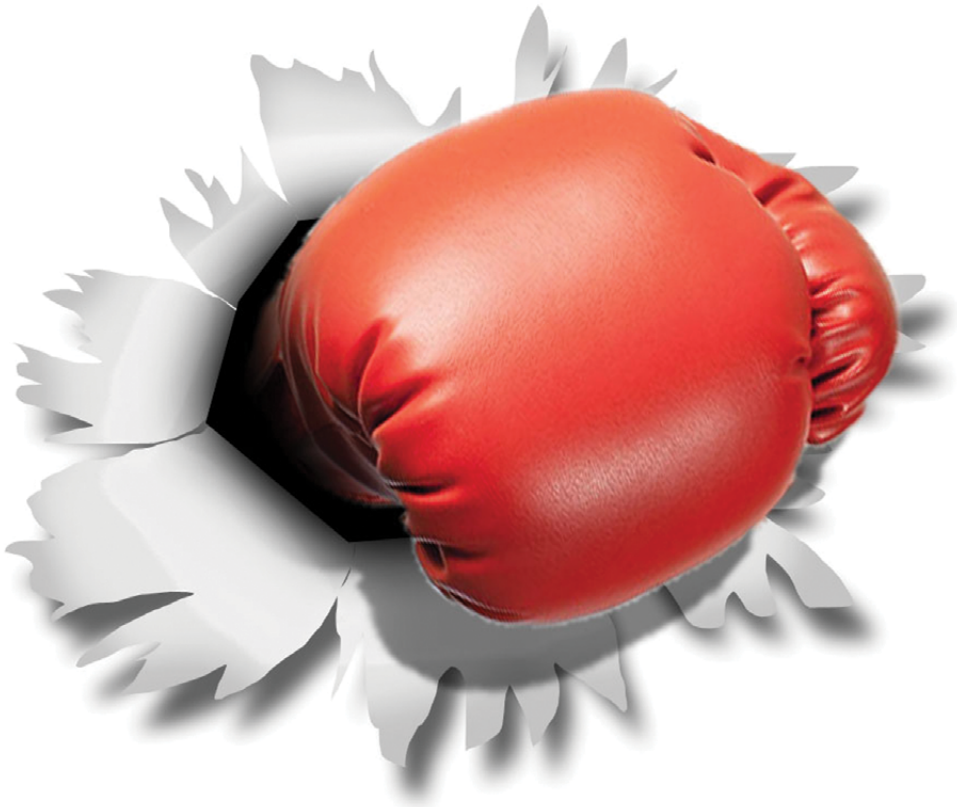
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Lee County Health Department 2018 Flu Clinic Schedule:

10/2 Twin Oaks Apts. Denmark 8:30am-10:00am	10/11 River Terrace Keokuk 8:30am-10:00am	10/18 Hotel Iowa Keokuk 8:30am-9:30am	10/25 LCHD (#3 John Bennett Drive) Ft. Madison Noon-5:30pm
10/4 Newberry Center Ft. Madison 8:30am-Noon	10/11 Trinity United Methodist -Keokuk Noon-4:30pm	10/18 Heritage Center Keokuk 10:00am-Noon	11/1 McAleer Hall Fort Madison 10:00am-2:00pm
10/4 Deer Meadow Keokuk 8:30am-9:30am	10/15 Montrose Public Library 8:00am-11:00am	10/18 Eagle Bluff Apts. Ft. Madison 9:00am-10:00am	Please bring Medicare card to clinic
10/8 West Point Public Library 1:00pm-3:00pm	10/16 Hoerner YMCA Keokuk 8:30am-10:00am	10/23 Rose Michael Gardens Ft. Madison 8:30am-10:00am	Private Pay cost \$25
10/9 Hillview Village Ft. Madison 10:30am-12:30pm	10/17 Donnellson Public Library 11:30am-1:30pm	10/23 Parkview Apts. West Point 10:30am-Noon	Any questions please call (319)372-5225 www.leecountyhd.org LIKE us on Facebook



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Sports/Opinion

CURRENT-LEE

LCHD offering October flu clinics

Lee County Health Department will be holding Flu Clinics throughout the month of October at various locations throughout Lee County. Flu clinics are open to the public, and offered to anyone ages 6 months or older. Medicare Part B, except Humana Gold choice, will be accepted for billing Medicare. Bring your Medicare card to the clinic. Flu vaccines for people without Medicare Part B will be \$25.

Complete Flu Clinic Schedule: Oct. 2, 8:30 am - 10:00 am - Twin Oaks Apartments, 107 Park Ave., Denmark, IA; Oct. 4, 8:30 am - noon - Newberry Center, 728 Ave. G, Fort Madison, IA; Oct. 4, 8:30 am - 9:30 am - Deer Meadow Apartments, 715 Cleveland Ave., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 8, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm - West Point Public Library, 317 5th St., West Point, IA; Oct. 9, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm - Hillview Village, 1102 48th St., Fort Madison, IA; Oct. 11, 8:30 am - 10:00 am - River Terrace, 128 Bank St., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 11, noon - 4:30 pm - Trinity United Methodist Church, 2330 Plank Rd., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 15, 8:00 am - 11:00 am - Montrose Public Library, 200 Main St., Montrose, IA; Oct. 16, 8:30 am - 10:00 am - Hoerner YMCA, 2126 Plank Rd., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 17, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm - Donnellson Public Library, 411 S. Main St., Donnellson, IA; Oct. 18, 8:30 am - 9:30 am - Hotel Iowa, 401 Main St., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 18, 10:00 am - noon - Heritage Center, 508 Main St., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 18, 9:00 am - 10:00 am - Eagle Bluff Apartments, 2803 Ave. A, Fort Madison, IA; Oct. 23, 8:30 am - 10:00 am - Rose Michael Gardens, 4516 Ave. L, Fort Madison, IA; Oct. 23, 10:30 am - noon - Parkview Apartments, 507 Iowa Joe St, West Point, IA; Oct. 25, noon - 5:30 pm - Lee County Health Department, #3 John Bennett Dr., Fort Madison, IA. Visit Lee County Health Department's website here to learn more: <http://www.leecountyhd.org/index.php/flu-schedule/>.

Heels & Wheels Car Care Clinic

Griffin Muffler & Brake Center invites you to their Women - Heels & Wheels free car care clinic, Saturday, October 20, 10am-1pm, 535 Avenue G, Fort Madison. Come learn about many topics including:

What's under the hood - How to check your oil - How your brakes work - Fuel saving tips - Shock absorbers and struts - Check engine lights - What regular maintenance is really necessary for your car

Learn about tires: How to check tire pressure - How to measure tread depth - How to find the tire size for your car.

Boost your car care confidence with this free clinic and enter for door prizes and other gifts! Refreshments will be served. Seating is limited, so call 319.372.2478 to reserve your seat today!

Pen City Current will list your event in this highly visible CURRENT-LEE section in increments of 25 words for \$15. Add a photo for \$5. Non-profit organizations are eligible for the reduced rate of \$10 per 25 words and \$3 per photo. To place your listing, click here or call Lee at (319)371.4125.

HTC splits at Urbandale tourney

Lady Crusaders drop first two sets of the season after going 48-0 to start

BY PCC STAFF

URBANDALE - The Holy Trinity Catholic girls volleyball team went into heavy waters Saturday at the Class 5A dominated Urbandale Invite and came away with a four-match split.

The No. 3 Class 1A ranked Crusaders were 22-0 going into the annual trip to central Iowa and drew a tough pool in the tournament.

Holy Trinity was placed in Pool B which included Centennial, Waukee and Southeast Polk, all rated top 15 teams in Class 5A. The other squad in the pool was Des Moines Abraham Lincoln, which is also Class 5A, but unranked.

The Crusaders took to the court at 10:30 a.m. Saturday with a match against Lincoln and quickly moved past the Lady Railsplitters 21-7, 21-2, but then turned right around and played Waukee who downed HTC 21-13, 21-12 for the Crusaders first dropped sets all year.

After those two matches the Crusaders didn't get a break heading straight up against Centennial, arguably the second best team in all of Iowa and the Jaguars showed their teeth with a 21-4, 21-10

win over Holy Trinity.

Centennial would eventually lose to No. 3-ranked West Des Moines Valley in the finals bracket at the tourney, in a three-set affair with Valley winning the tiebreaker 15-10.

For HTC on the day, Emily Box led at the net with 21 kills on 40-43 attacking and had one of her better defensive days with seven solo blocks. Eryn Anderson was 21-27 attacking with 12 kills and Taylor Boeding had 11 kills. Avery Hopper had four blocks on the day.

Bailey Hellweg led the Crusaders serving going 28-29 with two aces. Boeding had five aces and Anderson had four. Mya Lawlor was 25-26 serving with three aces.

Hellweg also had 32 assists helping fill in for freshman Kassi Randolph who had 12 assists after returning from an elbow and shoulder injury last week.

Elyse Pothitakis had 29 digs to keep the ball in play for HTC.

The Crusaders play host to West Burlington on Tuesday night at Shottenkirk Gymnasium with freshman, junior varsity and varsity matchups beginning at 5:30 with the freshman.



HELLWEG



POTHITAKIS

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Back-to-School Fair committee thanks volunteers

To the Editor:

On Saturday August 4th the Fort Madison Kiwanis Club along with countless volunteers held a Back to School Health Fair at the Fort Madison High School. 150 children, ages preschool through 8th grade received free haircuts, DNA swabs, health screening, socks, shoes and backpacks with classroom specific school supplies. Developmental Screening was also done for 3-4 year old children. This was made possible due to donations from the following- Nutra Blend, LLC; United Healthcare Services; Scotts; Lee County Bank; Fort Madison Community Hospital; Connections Bank; Beta Sigma Phi; Larry Kelch-Edward Jones; Shottenkirk Inc.; First Baptist Church; Truck Repair; Pilot Grove Savings Bank; Dave's Marine; Group Benefits Partners; Johnson Trucking; Pinnacle; B.L.E.T. Division 391; Tri-State Court Reporting; Jim Baier Inc.; Thomas Klann Insurance and Fred Hoenig CPA. This year we also received a grant from United Way. Thanks to Davette and Tina of Hidden Beauty Salon and Rhonda of Midtown Hairstyling Salon for providing haircuts. Many thanks to Iowa Fertilizer Company for purchasing the backpacks. Churches that collected supplies were: Harmony Bible Church; Union Presbyterian; Denmark UCC and First Christian

Church. Vendors that participated in providing information for the families were: Counseling Associates; Proteus Inc.; Certified Child Safety Tech Mary Margaret Wagner; Domestic Violence Intervention Program; Lee County Health Department; Girl Scouts; Fort Madison Community School District; Lee County Conservation; Families First; Boy Scouts; Lee County Extension; Great River Waste Authority; Rape Victim Advocacy Program; National Alliance on Mental Illness; Community Action, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Fort Madison YMCA; Fort Madison Library; Iowa Works, Fort Madison Police Department and Alcohol Dependency Services.

Each year we see an increase in the number of children that are needing these services and supplies. If you would like to get involved with next year's event, contact Dawn Johnson dawn.johnson@fmcsd.org or Mary Hellige mary.hellige@fmcsd.org. Sincerely,

Fort Madison Kiwanis Back to School Health Fair Committee

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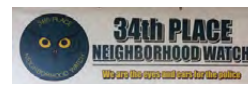


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**Dr. Mark C. Pothitakis
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From the Front/Lottery Numbers

Not finishing was not an option as the day went on

HOLTKAMP - Continued from Page 1

use audio. You're out there 14 hours just thinking and paying attention to your body. Fighting through pain and cramping."

He said the family got out to the location on Friday and started setting up itineraries as to where he would be at certain times during the day. The day also provided an opportunity for Holtkamp to set up gear for transitions and started to mentally prepare for what Saturday would bring.

Saturday morning was an early rise at 4 a.m. with a light protein breakfast of hard-boiled eggs and peanut butter toast. Holtkamp said he didn't want so much in his stomach that it became an issue during the day.

"Once we got there a little after 5, I got stretched out, and then I just

watched the water and got my heart rate down," he said.

At about 6:30 a.m. he said he put his wet suit on. The water in the bay was about 73 degrees which permitted the swimmers to wear wet suits for warmth. Participants were lined up based on how fast each swimmer thinks they will complete the course. Holtkamp said he planned on a 1 hour, 45 minute swim, because he'd been training in a pool and not in actual water, but he knew his time in the pool was quicker.

"Once I got in the water I felt great and I made the course in 1:21. You have to swim two loops on the course which is like a box and you go through a chute where they get your time for the first half. You have to hit a time or you

can get a Did Not Qualify and I didn't want that so I pushed it. When I saw the first time was down, the second lap I swam in faster."

After exiting the water and running to the bike, Holtkamp said he felt fantastic and having the family there cheering him on pushed him to get on the bike and start the 112 mile ride.

"Coming out and hearing the family screaming was a feeling I just can't explain. It was awesome," he said.

The bike course was a looped course as well, with a total elevation gain of about 1,500 feet throughout the course that started and ended at the same point. Holtkamp said he was able to meet up with the support crew at 24 miles and again at



Photo courtesy of Bobby Holtkamp

Fort Madison's Wes Holtkamp celebrates his finish with the IRONMAN Maryland competition held Saturday in Cambridge, Maryland. Holtkamp said the reward of the hard work was worth the challenge.

60 miles, and each time it provided him with a renewed adrenaline. At the 60-mile point he was able to stop and snarf down a PB&J within three to four minutes and then headed back onto the course.

He said he set a goal to get the first 20 miles out of they way before he would consider a break, but he pushed through to the first 24-mile support group meet up when he chugged a Gatorade in 30 seconds and then took off. Then every 10 miles after that he would grab a water and do a quick leg stretch on

the bike and be off again. He finished the cycling portion in under seven hours and then moved to the 26.2 mile marathon.

Entering the running portion, Holtkamp told himself it didn't matter how long it took, he was going to finish

"Once I got off the bike, I just knew I had 26 miles, I was going to get there. I don't care how long it takes me I'm just going to keep going forward. Even when I stopped running it was a walk. I never stopped moving forward and knew I was getting closer," he

said.

"It's one of those feelings - I made it this far, but I have so far to go. You see mile markers and I set goals every 10 miles where they had tables for volunteers handing out nutrition. The end goal was just to finish for me."

He said at that point, his forearms were burning more than his legs because of gripping the handle bars and that was different than what he expected, but shaking his hands out as the run started helped

See FINISH, page 9

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Pick 3 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 3 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 4 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm



9/29
1 6 9 28 33
Star Ball: 2
All Star Bonus: 3



9/29
9 17 34 59 64
Powerball: 22
Power Play: 2



9/29 MID-DAY
1 7 1
9/29 EVENING
0 0 3



9/29 MID-DAY
9 7 4 3
9/29 EVENING
0 3 8 4

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.

Local News

Family support gave him energy to get across line

FINISH - Continued from Page 8

bring feeling back into his fingers.

The pain then shifted to his legs and calf muscles, but he said he didn't get that pain until about 15 or 16 miles in and he was feeling pretty good up to that point.

"We had a stretch that shifted from concrete to a grassy area and I don't know if that transition threw my legs to a different feeling, but that's where it really started to hurt and I started cramping," he said.

"That's where the mental battles started and it was a rough last half hour for sure."

He said he fought for the last hour or so and then the last mile was a siege on his senses.

"I fought through it four an hour and then the last mile it really hit me, but I was bound and determined to get across the finish line. I told myself I could cry after that, but I was gonna make it," he said.

"The last mile you run though the downtown

area, and the atmosphere was electric and was awesome ...and then you hear everyone chanting. -- 'You're an IRONMAN... You're an IRONMAN. I have to get there.'"

As he ran through the town he saw people who had collapsed and couldn't finish the run.

"I saw a lot of people go down along the way and I didn't want to have that happen. My heart was breaking for those people, because the athletes themselves are spectacular. They work together to get through the race. I had a local guy run with me for a couple of miles and that was good for both of us to help each other through that part."

Fourteen hours, two minutes, and one second after running into the cool Chesapeake Bay waters, Wes Holtkamp ran under a banner and passed the high tech gadgetry that recorded his final time into a database that recorded him in 872 out of 1,462 participants, 641st out of all men,

and 68th out of 104 men ages 30 to 34.

Wes' support group included Sandy and Dave Holtkamp, his mother and father, Bobby and Jessica Holtkamp, his brother and sister-in-law, Scott and Abby Holtkamp, his oldest brother and sister-in-law, and his girlfriend Jenny.

"You hit this wall - and then you hear someone call your name and you push through. They were awesome. They were loud and I always knew they were around, even if they weren't physically with me, I knew they were there and if something went wrong and I didn't finish, they were going to be there celebrating with me for what I did get done. It was very emotional for me at times and it helped me find that next level."

Holtkamp said he was also humbled the outpouring of support from back home in texts and social media posts.

"I had a lot of messages and phone calls from people in Fort Madison who

wished me luck the night before and that's awesome, too. Knowing that whatever happens happens and all these people have your back. That pushed me, too."

"It was a lot of thinking and knowing I'd set this goal nine months ago," he said. "I started training and part of that was training mentally. I'm gonna do it. Whatever it takes I need to to cross that finish line."

The 14-hour time was pleasing to Holtkamp but he said his goal now is to deal with the soreness and make sure he's healthy, but he said he felt good and was going to celebrate with a bottle of champagne and have an easy day.

"I haven't done a lot of research on how to come down from a long day like that. I'm sure today's going to involve a lot of Icy Hot and walking. I don't want to sit because I don't want to stiffen up and need to keep the blood flowing. My toes have been numb since the end, but I have read up on that and they



say that's normal and will return with time. At least that's what the Internet says," he said with a laugh.

The future may hold some shorter distance events that involve three or four hour works.

"The all day thing, I don't see myself doing another one. Obviously, with the sweat and tears I put in, the outcome was fantastic. But I may look

at doing Warrior dashes or something like that. I see these things and pick 'em as I go. I say, 'Hey that looks like fun,' and then I set goals and just try to achieve them. I don't even know what the next thing is."

Holtkamp said this isn't something you do everyday and probably won't ever do again.

...But you never know.

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