

SINDBALLE VS. REED

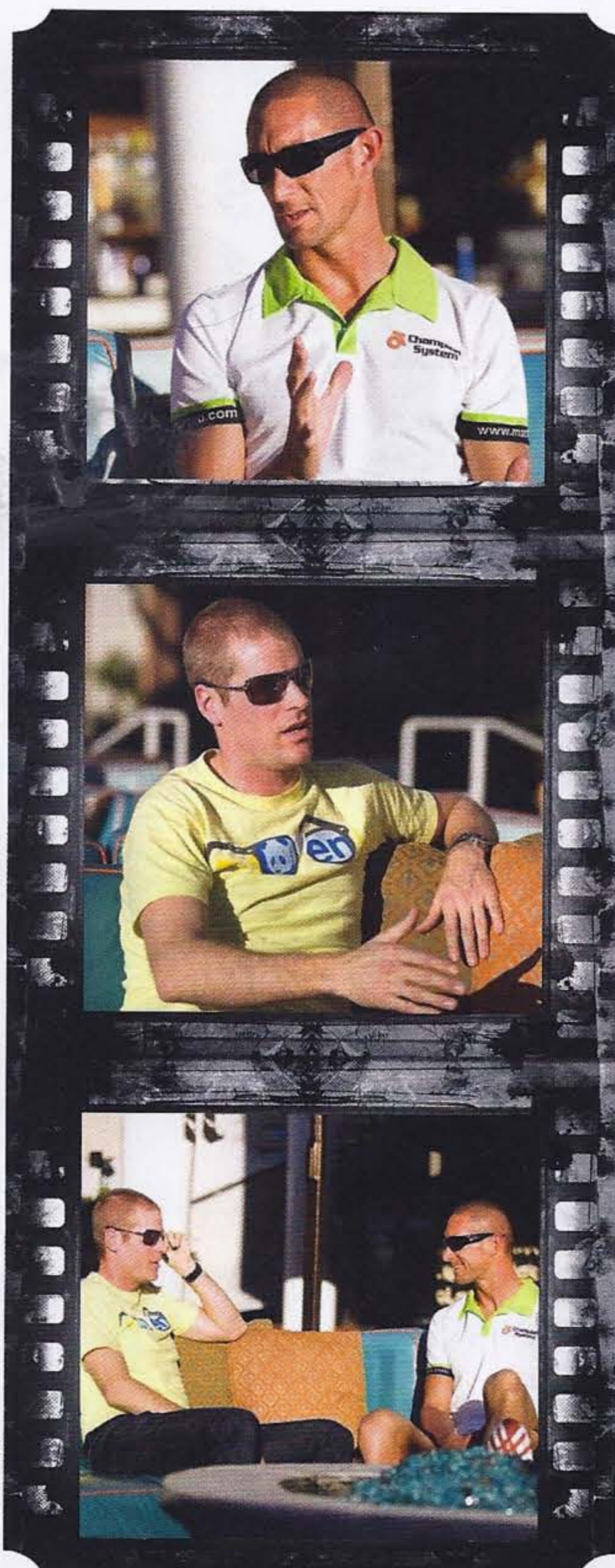
At a combined weight of 360 pounds and a total height of 12 feet 8 inches, Torbjorn Sindballe and Matty Reed are anomalies in the world of elite triathlon. Sindballe turned his size into an advantage in Kona, finishing third in 2007. Now retired, he has plenty of words of wisdom for fellow giant Reed, who will be making his Big Island debut in 2011.

Matty Reed: Since the start of my career I've had people telling me I'm too big for this, but I've always believed triathlon was more of a strength sport than anything else. Sure, guys like you and me are bigger than everyone else, but with that size comes strength and I've always seen it as more of an advantage throughout my career.

Torbjorn Sindballe: I never really thought about being bigger than most triathletes until I went to Kona for the first time. In Denmark I trained with Peter Sandvang, who was even bigger than me. He won a long distance world title, so I never once thought I was too big to go fast. But the first time I got to Kona I realized just how much the heat affects a bigger athlete.

MR: I think it helped seeing guys with a similar body type racing well. For me, it was Simon Lessing. When I was first getting into the sport he was winning every race there was and he was almost as tall and as heavy as me. He knew how to use his size, but even he struggled with the heat in Kona. When you first started racing Ironman, did you have anyone telling you that you were too big?

TS: Definitely not after my first two Ironman races. I think I ran 3:02 and 2:57, but those were colder races. Then I came to Kona for the first time and ran 3:12. After that race in 2004 I tried really hard to make the heat my friend. I was never afraid of racing in the heat; I just wanted to find out how I could race well in it. It took a lot of testing and trial and error to break that code. I had quite a few races in a row at Kona where I ran around 3:12. For me it was all about keeping my core body temperature down, but it took a lot of suffering to figure that out.



JAY PRASUHN

MR: So what worked for you in 2007 when you finally put in a strong run in Hawaii?

TS: Once we figured out that my body tem-

perature was the major issue, we tried basically everything to bring it down. I think filling a latex glove with ice was the most famous method I tried, and it was effective, but it was a combination of things that worked. I started using a white, long-sleeved top to keep the sun off my skin and I covered myself with ice and water at every aid station. But the biggest thing was pacing. My coaches and I found that if I ran the first two miles too hard, my temperature would spike, and then I was cooked for the rest of the run.

MR: Did it ever frustrate you that you couldn't go as hard as you wanted at the biggest race of the year?

TS: Not really, because it just meant that I had to approach the race differently. If I was ever going to win Kona, it was going to happen on the bike, and that's why I always went hard on the bike. I knew I wasn't going to get off and run a 2:45 there.

MR: That's definitely something I took away from watching your races in Hawaii and it really helped me develop my own racing style. I learned not to be afraid to go after it on the bike, because a lot of the time, that's your best chance to win. So do you think it's possible for a bigger guy to win in Kona? If you had a perfect day, what kind of splits do you think you would've been capable of?

TS: For me, the perfect day in Kona would've been swimming and running just like I did in 2007 and then holding on to run a 2:50. A 2:50 run won't always win the race, but that year it would've been just enough to put me at the finish ahead of Macca. **A**

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