



## Sean Snow Interview

Kyle: This is Kyle Battis with Professional Fitness Coaching and Home Gym Secrets.com talking today with Sean Snow. How are you doing today, Sean?

Sean: Good thanks. How you doing today, Kyle?

Kyle: Very good! Thanks for being with us today!

Sean: Thank you!

Kyle: Sean, tell me a little bit about yourself. Have you always lived in New Hampshire? If so, just kind of elaborate on that a little bit.

Sean: Yup...I've lived in New Hampshire pretty much all my life...grew up here...my wife and I moved to Arizona for a few years just for a change of pace. But, I've lived in the Concord area, played hockey, baseball right through...youth right up through Bishop Brady, and I'm living here for the rest of my life!

Kyle: That's great! Tell me how you got involved in training for Triathlons and endurance events.

Sean: Well, I started...like I said...I've been playing sports most of my life and, about ten years ago, I started getting into some mountain biking. When I first started out, I could barely bike? I considered a half hour of training a training run. Basically, I tried my first mountain bike race as a beginner; I had fun with that and pretty much got hooked on the whole thing. I picked up and bumped up to the expert level, and I raced at the expert level for about four years on the mountain bike circuit. Basically I went with 24-hour mountain bike races and a lot of individual stuff. Then, I was looking for another challenge and picked that up with Triathlons...I got into the Triathlon end. I did not know how to swim, so trained with one of my good friends, Jim Bledsoe at the YMCA in Concord and, from then on, I got hooked on Triathlons.

Kyle: That's great! How long have you been doing Triathlons specifically?

Sean: I'll be going into my 5<sup>th</sup> year...it's been a lot of fun!

Kyle: Yes...not too much of bragging rights here...your 5<sup>th</sup> year and you qualified for the Hawaiian Iron Man, Sean! That's awesome!

Sean: Like I said, I've had a lot of...I've been fortunate to be taken under the wing by a lot of people...at the Y...I've had wife... My wife is my hero basically...with all my training...it's been a lot of fun!

Kyle: That's great! Tell our readers about the Triathlon...what it is...what it consists of?

Sean: The Triathlon consists of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and a 22-mile run. I'm in events all over the world including five in the US. Basically, what happens is...the races are huge now...they book up pretty much within hours of the event ending...the next year is already booked up. And, most of the time, people do them for a few reasons. Primarily there is the "wanting to finish it." You know, just for the accomplishment or to go out and qualify for Hawaii. Hawaii is what I would consider like playing Fenway Park in baseball. And, it takes place on the big island on October 15<sup>th</sup>, and it's "the king!"

Kyle: I've seen the Ironman on television a few times now and it is just awesome to watch...the determination of the athletes...the whole atmosphere is pretty cool.

Sean: Yes...it's neat. It...I think it pretty much started in 1980...you know the big event started around '82...so, as popularity goes...when Julie Mosk collapsed ten feet from the finish line, and she was winning the event at the time, on the female end. There was a woman a few miles back from her, and Julie could not finish...she did finish, but the other woman did end up passing her before she could finish...by ten feet. I think people...just saw that and almost more than any event, it really touched people...knowing what people put themselves through just to get to the finish line.

Kyle: As an exercise psychologist, I just quiver about how tough an event like this is on the human body. I'm saying to you guys, feel that when you are in training and competing in these events.

Sean: It is really tough. I think, after a period it really becomes more mental than physical. I think it's not giving in to the pain or stopping. I think that, once you start letting down its over. Once you start and come down to that last half mile and you see the finish, you let your guard down. You've had your head going the whole race and, once you let it down, it's easy for your system to be relieved and shut down. That's why...quite often you will see people that will collapse just before they get to the finish because they let their guard down and they did not finish through it.

Kyle: Yeah...it's pretty taxing on the mind and the body, no doubt about that. Let's talk about the mind set needed to compete in something like this. Going into your first Triathlon or Hawaii Iron Man, what are some of your goals? What are some of the goals you have? What are some of the reasons driving you? Just tell me about the mind set you have going into this.

Sean: Well, going into it I would have to say that I'm setting myself up for a tough race...I'm going there to win. I have to believe that I am going to "up" my training. I will expose myself, as much as I can to humidity, to open roads and, because basically, Hawaii is a big lava field.

Kyle: A little different than Concord, New Hampshire, eh?

Sean: Right! Right! But there are areas around that I will get out on the bike and not be surrounded by trees...it can be pretty taxing...so, that's what the game plan is. To try to get a lot of hill training in...and I understand it is a tough race...I understand it will probably be the toughest race I've ever done! But, by the same token, I do not want it into my mind that I can't do it. I plan on going down there as prepared as I can be!

Kyle: That's great! Now, tell me how you structured your training leading up to this event. Can you go into depth on that a little bit? I know we've got a lot of people out there that will be interested to hear how you are training for this.

Sean: Well, one of the things I have to say is...you know it sounds a little bit crazy, but it's really been what I would consider a two to three year build for this race. I mean...it's the patience...a patient thing where it takes time to develop a large base. You tell people they can go out and they can just do it, but I consider myself working continuously...year after year...be able to hold a strong base. And that also helps me mentally...knowing that I am going into this thing with a few years of large volume training. In terms of nailing it down, I am looking at a 30-week program which starts...actually 30 weeks started the first day of spring. So it will be a 10-week base of primarily aerobic conditioning...keeping the rate pretty low with a large volume. Then there will be a 10-week build which will be upping the volume a little but, also, picking up the intensity, and then a 10-week peak. Broken down that will be a 7-week higher intensity with a real large load of volume of training. Then, there will be a 3-week taper down to the event which will be like a 2-week cutting down and, once I get down there...it will be basically...what I did at Iron Man Florida...I did basically nothing...I did a little bit of...very little running...little bit of cycling...a little bit of swimming and I watched all the other athletes train their butts off! It did not make a lot of sense to me what they were doing.

Kyle: From a physiological standpoint...you're getting down there and you're letting your body rest and recover and, hopefully, super compensate a little bit so you'll be able to handle the demands of the race a lot more effectively right?

Sean: Exactly! To me, what a lot of the athletes do is like cramming for test. Since they are not ready...you know...they study the night before for a huge test! I think you've got to build your way into it, then rest...

Kyle: Right! That's very true! So, how many hours a day do you think you put into your training?

Sean: Well...it can go anywhere from a couple of hours to eight or nine hours...a week...you know...on the low end, 15-hour weeks. And, on the high end, 30 to 35 hours...you know, 30 to 35 is not a lot...it's not a consistent measure...but, that would be a few weeks over the course of the 30-week period that will be right up there...and try to break myself down.

Kyle: Do you have everything mapped out or do you have a basic skeleton that you are working from? Do you intuitively train based on how you are feeling that day too?

Sean: Well, I think that most of the time I...I've got things mapped out...I'm not super-structured...I'm not over analytical on everything. I am very set on, early in the season, keeping the heart rate low. That's something I been doing for a few years ago, and I've had a lot of success with that. As far as days...if I have a heart rate that seems lower or higher or what have you...I'm still stubborn...had enough to go out and train. I can usually...I'll drive myself into the ground. That's just the way that I am...I'm very pig-headed on going out...I say I'm going to do something...now I'm going to go out and get it done!

Kyle: I think that mentality serves itself well for high-level athletes.

Sean: It sure does! At times I wish I could back it off, but you know every year I tend to set these goals, and it is fun! I have a good time with it!

Kyle: Just kind of switching gears real quick...with all my personal training clients I am always trying to get people into things like Triathlon training...5 K's...events they can train for the rest of their life rather than going to the gym and just "working out." Honestly, how fun and motivating is "working out?" Not very in my opinion. But, if you are trying to get up for something like the Hawaii Ironman, it's a lot more motivating to train and go to the gym, and people are likely to stick with it for life rather than a typical 12-week, get-in-shape-program.

Sean: Absolutely...to me what you are saying makes total sense. The other end of that, too, is...it puts a little pressure on them. For myself, I know that it puts pressure on me to train. And, I think that you are right on. If you set that goal you tend to have to do it! And, once you get into that...you get around 300 other people, and man you want to be able to perform!

Kyle: Absolutely! One of my coaches Dan John once said, "The best way to motivate yourself is to sign up and send in your registration form!" Sign up for competitions five months down the road and you're gon'na have to train for that!

Sean: I agree!

Kyle: So, tell me about the hardest part of your training, Sean. You know...have you run into any tough challenges?

Sean: I would have to say that the hardest part of my training would be the winter months. A lot of people...you get a lot of different philosophies. A lot of people kind of back it down a little bit and do a lot of indoor stuff. To me, the winter months in NH are great! Colorado has altitude...Arizona has their heat...different areas have different challenges and you always read about the advantages. It's something that I don't think you read about too often but I think that the advantage we have here in New England are the adverse conditions during the winter months. I think that if you look at somebody like Bode Miller...he goes out and he skis on Cannon Mountain which a lot of people tend to avoid. And, look where he's at!

To me, if you can expose yourself to these adverse conditions instead of staying on the treadmill or working out on the indoor bike all the time you can expose yourself to the elements outside, even in the worst of conditions the mental tenacity that will develop over the spring,

summer and fall are immeasurable! And, that's something I started a few years back, and I tend to feed off it. I cannot say that I enjoy it! You know...I'd be lying...I come back and my wife will look at me like: "You're crazy!" And I'll say, "Yeah..." I agree! It's not fun! I can't sit here and say it's fun...but I will say that...you know...come spring and summer...it pays off. If I am suffering pretty bad, then I will go back and feed off the fact that I ran 70 miles in a week that school was closed a couple of days. And, you know...it's something you can really tap into in this area as long as you have the mentality to do it.

Kyle: That's great to hear you say. You know I was talking with a fellow strength coach out in Arizona and there it's 85 degrees, sunny and beautiful. He is telling me about how he was outside training on a nice green field. Meanwhile I was out going for a walk the other day with an 80 pound weighted vest that I had under my winter coat, it was miserably cold outside, and I loved every second of it! I was slipping and sliding in the snow and I saw that as an extra challenge that would help me rather than a nuisance. It was kind of fun in fact! I think I actually walk more in the winter outside than I do in the summer just because I am like that. I think like you said going against the elements and getting that extra adversity into the puzzle is a benefit.

Sean: Yeah...it's kind of nice because...they can have all their warm spells and, as far as I am concerned...I think at times you need to put yourself through the tough challenges. I recall one workout that I had last year...in the winter...one of the only times I can remember school being closed because there was a 20-below wind chill! I'd never heard of that before...you hear about the snow closing school, but they actually closed school because of the temperature, and I said, "You know what man...they're saying '...don't go outside and expose yourself...blah...blah...blah!'" So I went out and I ran 20 miles that day, and I will never forget it. I parked at the YMCA and I had icicles dangling off my eyes. And I could not peel them off; that's how I knew they were stuck on! So, I walked into the locker room...it was right around lunchtime...everybody was in there...and, at the time, I knew I was crazy, but I could not peel them off! Basically, they all looked at me like and said, "Sean, what the heck did you do to yourself now?" But in my mind, that is the type of stuff that pays off down the line!

Kyle: You've got it! When you listen to stories about great athletes, and they are all doing stuff like this, so it's awesome to hear! So, I imagine it must be difficult balancing all the training you have to fit it during each week, a full-time job, and a family life. Can you touch on that a little bit?

Sean: To me, out of everything we have discussed that is probably the most important aspect to touch on. I think it is tough find the balance, but I think it's really important to do it! I guess I would say I'm pretty decently balanced. Obviously, I am obsessive/compulsive about the training, but I have a wife...my wife (Nan) is an unbelievable support! Her encouragement over the years...I could never see where I am without that! She is just the greatest person for putting up with me! And, my daughter, Stephanie...she is 8 year old...she is just...she expects...it's tough...she wants the medal every race...and the expectations are pretty tough. But, that's paid off...she has started hockey this year, and I don't push anything on her. It's whatever she wants. In fact, she just learned to ride a bike at the age of 6. So, I don't push anything on her, but she definitely has that edge that you cannot teach! As far as balance, I try to keep everything to work...I've been working with Grappone Companies...I started there in 1986...they are a great

company to work for. I pretty stick with everything that I start...time to balance to whole thing...it can get tough...it can get real tough. Steph starts travel team next year for hockey and I say to myself, "Okay...now, how can I do this?" I am going to have to start running at 3:00 in the morning and during the weekends. I guess what it comes down to it, "How bad do you want it?" And, you've got to keep it all in perspective if you have other areas of your life like you need to keep intact. It can get pretty challenging fitting it all in. But, the bottom line is that, if you want it bad enough, you will find a way!

Kyle: I think you are right! You hit the nail right on the head there! So many people I run into on a daily basis say they do not have time to work out and time to do stuff. And here you are training more than some people actually work in their jobs during the week! Not to mention you have a full-time job and you are able to be a loving father and husband at the same time, and that is awesome to hear! I think you nailed it saying you have to have that burning desire...and, if that's there, some way or another you will figure out how to balance everything. You juggle your schedule, you wake up at 3:00 am to fit it in, and that's what it takes sometimes.

Sean: You've got to want it bad enough! That's for sure!

Kyle: So, tell me about your training, just to go back to that a little bit more. You know...do you go inside at all? Do any kind of cross training at all? Any spring training? Any kind of spinning classes? Do you ride your bike on rollers at all? Any kind of supplement for all the training you are doing outside?

Sean: Well, my swimming is, obviously, pretty much in the pool. Running is all outside. I do not do any indoor running. It's not that I do not recommend it...I don't feel that there is any need to...as far as running goes...people go off and...I don't get out of work until 6:30 at night. I'll be out there at 9 o'clock at night in the ice and people say, "What are you crazy?!" And, as far as I am concerned, with running, as long as you are sure footed enough, you can do it.

Kyle: Yeah!

Sean: As far as the bike goes, I get outside occasionally but, during the winter, it is tough. I do teach a spinning class and I also do an 8-week hour and one-half spin class, and that kind of puts me on the bike. It's not a lot during the winter, but I am probably able to get probably about five hours of training on the bike. I also spin by myself. I do have rollers. I used to do the rollers a lot. I probably should do that more than I do...most of my winter training is based on the run. I love teaching the spinning...I've been doing that for about seven years now. As far as weight training, I do upper body stuff. I probably should do more leg work, but I also do a lot of toe work on the bike and on the run. So, it's kind of challenging to me. I would much rather pull in a 15-mile run than work the weights on the legs. That is one thing I would have to say...every year, I tell myself I should do more weight training. I am low as far as the legs go, and that's where my stubbornness gets in the way...I would much rather see the volume up there and sacrifice the weights. I am still not...I am just starting my 30-week plan now, so now I am hoping: "Okay...now it's time...to, you know...okay...with the weight training..."

Kyle: Well, to support what you said there are plenty of research studies that show that high-intensity strength training and, sometimes, plyometrics can help advanced endurance athletes perform better. Typically for people in endurance sports it's a go...go...go...and go as long mentality but one thing to keep in mind is that whoever crosses the finish line first is the winner...it's whoever gets there first. So I agree, there are definitely benefits incorporating some lower body strength training.

Sean: I agree! I do upper body and I notice a significant improvement. And, I have friends that do the legs and, man...I tell you...they come out in the spring and they are firing! So, there is a lot to be said about that! I think it's something that...basically I need a good kick in the butt: "Okay! This is what you need to do!" Because, like I said, I drive myself into the ground and I just assume...I should start picking up that...it does...there is no doubt, you can see the difference!

Kyle: It brings to mind...I was listening to one of my coaches the other day, and had this great statement is always comes back to: "What's working? What's missing? What's next?" It is a just a great way to look at everything! It not only applies to business, but it easily applies to training for something like this: "Ask yourself what's working for you? [You know all the stuff that's been working for you in the past!] What's missing? [It is a positive way to say, "Okay...how can I improve even more...because that might be the next level..."] What's next? {How do you implement it all and get it going?}

Sean, I have talked to a lot of people lately and it seems Triathlons and even sprint Triathlons are getting pretty popular...they have been popular for a while, but more and more people are asking about training for these. I wondered if you have any words of wisdom for people just getting started with sprint Triathlons or even full Triathlons?

Sean: Well, I would say that I agree...I run into a lot of people and it is really intriguing to them. I say, "Do it! If you want to do, you have to do it!" And, you have got to want to do it! You do not have to go out and do a huge Triathlon, but don't shy away from it! I spent a couple of years, myself, saying, "Man, I'd love to do a Triathlon!" And, you really just need...I think one of the most intimidating things for people is the pool...I was saying, "I've got to show up at the pool...and I've never swum before...and here I am...I'm going to make a fool out of myself!" Well, go down and make a fool out of yourself for about week, then all these people take you under their wing...so many people are willing to give a hand and help out! I say, you need to find a small race that's four or five months out and get into a pool...take some lessons...hook up with a friend who consistently swims, and learn that end! Even the bike and the run...just repetition...if it's something that you want to do, you just have to...just have to go out and do it!

Kyle: There is no substitute for getting yourself out and immersing yourself in it! Also, it has been said that when the student is ready the teacher appears. The key is to start.

Sean: Right! It does not have to be a big race! There does not need to be intensity or anything like that! I think that, once the person does it the first time, I think they just get hooked...it is a great family atmosphere too! To see the different kinds of families cheering and the challenge of

the three sports and having to make the transition! I think that so many people would like to get out there and do it, but they just get intimidated by it! I just, "You've just got to put a sign up and then figure it out from there!"

Kyle: That's sound advice! Sean tell me about the day of the race. Now that you've prepared and laid it all out on the table how do you envision that day playing in your mind?

Sean: Well, obviously its going to be a lot of pressure...I do know that! It will be an early morning wake up. I am just going to rely on everything that I've done leading up to this event. My mentality going into it is that I know what I've done to get there, everything is mapped out, my key points of the past three seasons are written down on a piece of paper and really focusing on what I've done and accomplished to get there.

Basically, from that point on, it will be trust. I will not go extremely hard from the get go, but (like I said before), I am going down there knowing that I deserve to be there and my intent, honestly, is to win, I am not going there just to finish.

I am going down there to win my age group! So, I know that it is going to be a tough day between going to a place a well-known place for the heat and the very strong winds. But, my intention is to train in the very strong winds up here in New England and be ready for it when I get down there! It will be very nerve wracking but I will have family down there. I have quite a few family members and friends that are going down, so that will be nice. I will just basically get up and go!

Kyle: That's great, man! After the Iron Man is all over, do you have any future plans?

Sean: Well I guess my future plans after the Ironman will be figuring out how am I going to get all this training in with my daughter Stephanie being on travel team hockey but my focus will be on the Iron Man and more Iron Man events. Definitely planning on Hawaii again. Hawaii is like playing in Fenway Park. After all, how many times would you want to play in Fenway Park? As many as possible of course!

I also want to tackle the Mount Washington Hill Climb which I've never done either the run or the bike and for one season I'd like to key in on that!

The Boston Marathon is definitely high on the list. I've never done Boston and that is a dream! I also plan on competing in both short and long courses for the Triathlon and just set the goals high each year and continue setting one race to after another! I want to make my future challenges tough ones and who knows, maybe when my daughter Steph is a little bit older, I can convince her and my wife Pam to put together a team for the Eco Challenge!

Kyle: Well, Sean, I just want to say from everyone in New Hampshire that we wish you the best of luck and we will, definitely, be watching you compete!

Sean: Well, I appreciate everything, Kyle, and I just want to thank everybody for their support. It has been unbelievable to me and so many people have touched me in different ways...in terms of support and encouragement...honking their horns for me...I just cannot thank you enough. And, that's the most important thing I can say...for all the people in the New Hampshire area...all the great Triathletes out there...there are so many unbelievable athletes who are doing great stuff...I want to thank them and say, "Everybody, keep it going!"

Kyle: Thank you so much for your time today, Sean! We wish you all the best!