

By Cid Cardoso, Jr.

## **Blue Seventy Pointzero 3 Swim Skin: \$200**

Every year, around late May and then again in mid September, we start getting calls about the water temperature at upcoming races. Those are the times of the year when lake and ocean water temperatures tend to be around 78.5 degree, a mark that means nothing to non triathletes but so much to those of us who swim, bike, and run...and love our wetsuits. For all of us who now race in triathlons but come from a non swimming background, triathlons are just more fun with wetsuits. Not only do we swim faster and come out of the water fresher, but we also feel safer. Manufacturers such as Speedo and TYR have been making suits for years to make Olympic swimmers faster by using slicker fabrics and different compressions. Blue Seventy however, is one of the first manufacturers to make a suit especially geared for triathletes, swimming in non wetsuit legal races...**the Pointzero 3 Swim Skin.**

**The Pointzero 3 Swim Skin** got its name from its drag coefficient of 0.032, which is 50 times lower than human skin and more than 4 times lower than other swim 'skins', according to their website. The suit uses a special SCS coating, similar to that used in high end wetsuits. The thought behind the **Pointzero 3** is that it is made for swimming only, unlike other triathlon apparel that are made for biking and running as well as swimming. Although this limits its use to longer non wetsuit races, it allows the manufacturer to do certain things that will make it faster in water. The seams are made to work in sync with a swim stroke, without having to take into consideration what happens when it is used on a bike. The material used is solely for reducing drag and achieving neutral buoyancy without worrying about breathability while running. To achieve flexibility without compromising slickness, the **Pointzero 3** uses the characteristic double hoop of high stretch material around the shoulders, introduced in the Helix wetsuit.



I liked the **Pointzero 3** from the minute I jumped in the pool wearing it. I expected the slickness but I did not expect the subtle buoyancy, which I had always hoped for but never gotten from other swim skins. That may have been a more psychological thing since Blue Seventy does not claim that the suit actually makes the user float. Note that in this case, it is important to have realistic expectations of buoyancy. The **Pointzero 3** is not a wetsuit so the buoyancy experienced will clearly not be the same. If it did, it would not be allowed by USAT in non wetsuit races. Nevertheless, the **Pointzero 3** does have a layer of compressed rubber between the nylon jersey fabric and the SCS coating. **The Pointzero 3** is described as "neutrally buoyant" by Blue Seventy, which means that when the garment is saturated in water for an extended period of time and then submerged (after squeezing all the air out), it does not sink to the bottom nor does it float like a cork. This means that the suit will sit just under the water surface, neither sinking nor floating. In comparison, most other apparel pieces, when soaked to the same extend, will sink further under the surface.

The sizing on the **Pointzero 3** can be a little tricky. It is currently available in XS, SM, M, ML, L, XL, men's sizes, and femme fit in WS, WMS, WM, WL sizes. At 158 lbs, I would fit better in a Small, but at 5'11" I would fit in a Medium. I tried both and as expected, the Small fit better on the legs and overall thickness (or lack there off) but it was just too short...I had too much downward pressure on my shoulders. Personally, I wished they offered a SMT (small tall), which is actually the size I wear in their Helix wetsuit. Also, the legs were a little long so I ended up with some extra material on top of the knees. Other customers I helped at the Florida 70.3 experienced the same issue. We solved that by pulling the legs up slightly, until the opening stretched over a thicker part of the thigh.

I would use the **Pointzero 3** for sure at Over the Mountain, Bandits Challenge, and the Duke Half and most definitely in Kona. The zipper in the back and the pull cord make it easy to peel it off, especially in races with long runs between the swim and the bike. At \$200, it is an expensive skinsuit, but it is also in line with most other skinsuits and entry level wetsuits. At this time, the **Pointzero 3** is undoubtedly the closest thing to a wetsuit for those non wetsuit legal races.