

Florida Double Anvil 2014 Race Report

Wendy Rose Orlando March 6, 2014 at 7:34 p.m.



Just a record of my journey. Not sure if anyone is interested and it's long so don't feel obligated to read. My hope in posting is for others to realize that we are all capable of accomplishing anything we set our minds to. Thank you to everyone who was a part of this amazing event and for all the support of my family and friends. I cherish you all.

4.8 mile swim: 2:55:59

224 mile bike: 16:53:01

52.4 mile zombie run/walk: 15:03:16

Total Time: 35:22:48

Breaking News- The Turtle Crossed the Finish Line in Time!

This year I was determined to finish. I earned an IRON Plus in 2013 that I was proud of considering my inexperience and lack of training going in. This year though I had done the work and learned so much. I spent time researching foot care (think huge blisters covering the balls of my feet the last 2 races I was in), practicing my nutrition as my stomach is finicky on the bike and just getting the time in on the bike. I signed up with William Pruett and CorioVelo for workouts and just common sense advice that I knew nothing about. Not sure he quite understood what he was getting into when he agreed to help me.

Here we are a year later and the race is about to start. I am worried about being in a too fast swim lane. Last year I finished in 2:52, William suggested I say 2:45 for a finish as I had been training more this year. I think my anxiety and fear of being in someone's way got the best of me. I finished around 2:55 which I know could have been better. I kept stopping to let others pass which ate some time. Around lap 25 my swim cap ripped and I had to swim without one. From time to time I would breath in my hair but it was o.k. Getting out of the pool though we discovered that my hair had tied around my goggles. Good grief – I know it's not a beauty contest but I didn't want to have to cut my goggles out of my hair.

The ride to Flatwoods filled me with anxiety. I was so thankful to have Billy Collier to follow down Bruce B. Downs. Once in the park my strategy was just slow and steady with very limited time off the bike. Last year my time off the bike killed me. I could carry 2 hours of supplies at a time. When I stopped to refuel my plan was no more than 2 minutes to stretch and restock. This worked well for a while. The second bike loop in the dark was probably my lowest point of the race. I didn't have great lighting and all my landmarks that had gotten me through in the day were now gone to the darkness. I pitted for my first substantial amount of time. I needed a mental break. Not sure how long I stopped. Wasn't planning on more than 10 minutes but not sure.

During this race you can't think in terms of hours or miles left -it's just too daunting. Instead I would count down the laps. Somehow I had miscounted and when I thought I had 7 laps left I actually had 8. I am surprised that this depressing revelation didn't get me down more than it did. At the time I thought "suck

it up and get it done". By now my stomach was constantly on the verge of being upset. I am used to this on the bike. My head would say get calories in but my stomach would say no. I played this game for the last 7 hours on the bike. I would force myself to drink the Perpetuem only to start burping. I started singing to myself "burping is better than bonking". Yes, you do lose your mind out there.

The bike loops in the dark are probably the toughest part of the race for me. I spent a lot of time praying and God always took care of me. Each time I thought I was at my lowest he would send a friendly face my way. Even though they always passed me eventually, sometimes just sharing a few words with another competitor can turn your attitude around. My 28th lap- 4 to go – finally I see Angie. Haven't seen her since the race started almost 18 hours ago. I was convinced she had gone back to the hotel. Again, God sent someone to help me through. Her light was AWESOME! She rode up beside me and asked where my lights were and she didn't even realize it was me. She rode ahead and I could keep track of her light in the distance. She finished 2 laps ahead of me and then gave me her light. I finished my last 2 laps in lighting style. When the bell rang signaling my final lap, I literally started crying. I was so glad to be almost done with the bike. I had overcome my demon from last year!

The first couple of run laps go quick as you are just so happy to be off that bike. Last year, as I was still on the bike when the sun came up, I never ran in the dark. This year after the novelty of the run wore off, I started to get very sleepy. My crew had gone to sleep! Each time I passed through the timing station, no one was awake to see if I needed anything. I spent the next 2.5 hours scrambling to figure out what my stomach needed and how to stay awake. Finally I asked Angie's Dad to wake me up after a 10-minute nap in a chair. Best thing I could've done at the time. First sleep I had in almost 23 hours and it rejuvenated me. Now time to finish the run. The sun coming up was incredible and then my crew waking up was awesome too. Angie's Dad got me an XL Dunkin Donuts coffee and Jon made bacon. I was now a happy girl! A few times on the run, I would get dejected thinking of the hours and miles I had left, but each time I started to think this way I just turned it off.

Laps, just think of laps, and I did. I had some incredibly low laps and some high laps. Had to stop a few times to tape hot spots on my feet and change socks but I was happy with the foot situation. This time last year I had a blister the size of Texas on the ball of my foot. The volunteers at the turn around were awesome. Sometime during the run I had passed Angie. Now she was coming up behind me. I remember looking over my shoulder and saying "if I let you catch up will you stop running?". There was no "letting" her catch up, that was going to happen anyway.

We started to run/walk together and she started the notion of crossing the finish line together. Over the course of the next 8 laps, let's just say this notion took varying forms and I think we may have had our first cross words in years with each other. I even had Jon throw strawberries at her at one point and she was ready to tape my mouth shut. Time was tight for finishing and I don't know if I could have pulled it out without her. We know each wanted the other to take second place knowing full and well that our time was slower than any previous second place finisher.

Crossing the finish line with Angie by my side was incredible. I think it's safe to say this for both of us- the race is more about the journey and finding your inner strengths than it is about beating someone else. For me the race is such a metaphor for life. In a Facebook post someone referred to me as an athlete. That is not a word that I have ever used to describe myself. It's not a bad thing but as uncoordinated as I am, I just never thought of myself as athletic. An athlete competes against others-I was on a journey competing with myself.

So yes, slow and steady "won" the race and the turtle crossed the finish line!