

Laura Knoblach ~ FaceBook Post 26 March 2017

This one's for my ultra tri family and Boulder, Colorado friends 😊:)

I had the best race of my life last Friday.

However, this “race report” is going to be less about what happened during the actual race, and more about the before and after. In this case, those things were far more significant. 😊:)

Over the course of last year, I slowly began to come out about being molested during my childhood and teenage years. Over Christmas, I revealed that it had been by a close family member. Unfortunately, the news did not go over well.

People living multiple states away showed up at my place in Boulder, telling me that they were there to “teach me a lesson” about the consequences of speaking out. Family members told me that this was an issue best dealt within one's family, and that I would lose mine if I continued to talk about it. Some people even called me to say that they never wanted to speak to me again.

I found myself double-locking my doors, drawing all the shades, and leaving the lights off when I was home. I hid belongings at friends' houses, stashed my bike at the shop I work at, and sometimes spent multiple days away because I was afraid of who might be waiting for me when I came home.

Mid January, I found myself hitting a deep, deep low. It had been so hard to come to terms with what happened, and the backlash I was facing for talking about it was too overwhelming. Everything in life seemed so bleak and so hopeless that I no longer wanted to live. One night, I ended up checking myself into Boulder Community Hospital, where I was diagnosed with PTSD.

The doctor there asked me what I did to cope with the trauma of my childhood. I told him about how I had gotten into ultras, and how running and biking had always been a source of peace and joy for me. He encouraged me to channel what had happened to me over the last few months and years into this sport, and to use it to grow stronger (both physically and mentally).

However, at the time, the idea of getting down to Florida seemed too far away. It seemed like there were too many logistics and too many expenses for me to handle.

It was around the same time that [Kirby](#) called me. He had heard about what was going on with my family, and told me that he'd work with me to make sure I could come down to Florida and race if I wanted to. [Joey](#) and I began talking around the same time and made plans to have me stay with him in Miami for a few days before the race. A friend of his (Mimi Reeves, who I had never met) generously loaned me her TT bike so I wouldn't have to pay to get mine shipped.

Financially, logistically, emotionally, my ultra triathlon family come together to make sure I could race last weekend. But, more than that, I saw them come together to make sure that I was okay. That was important, because I really, really wasn't. Training for this race forced me to go outside when all I wanted to do was stay in bed and cry. It gave me something to look forward to

when I was so overwhelmed with what was happening in my life. I don't think I've ever been so excited for a race, and I think the look on my face while crossing the finish line says it all.

Unfortunately, less than an hour after crossing that finish line, I was passing out and seizing. I'd made the mistake of taking ibuprofen as an anti-inflammatory during the race, but not chasing it down with enough fluids. This, in combination with the hot Florida day and the extreme exertion from the race, pushed my body into something called rhabdomyolysis. In short, my muscle fibers began to die and released a byproduct into my bloodstream which affected my kidney function. [Jade](#) and [Dan](#) took me to the hospital, where they stayed with me until I got better. Because the race medic was gone, [Danielle Winkler](#) (who'd just set a PR and finished second in the double), turned around and took over as the on-staff doctor.

Over the course of the next day (as I was in the hospital), racers staff members, and volunteers offered to help me with medical bills, change fees for my flight home, and hotel reservations after I was discharged but still too sick to travel. In the hospital, I was bombarded with a nearly constant stream of text messages, practical jokes ([Shanda...](#)), kissy pictures ([Joey](#) and [Michael](#), looking at you;)) and food. Oh, so much food.

Specifically, the kind I'd dreamed about eating while on the run course ([Erik](#)).

Ever since I did my first ultra last year, I've been blown away by the overwhelming sense of kindness and community at these races. This year, that feeling of family increased even more.

So, since I had to miss the awards ceremony, this is my round-about way of saying thank you. Thank you to the amazing ultra tri community for being so welcoming, so generous, and so open. Thank you for being a constant reminder to me that for as much as humanity is capable of evil, it is also capable of indescribable goodness, kindness, and generosity. I am so proud to call you family. ❤️<3 ❤️<3 ❤️<3

And for anybody still curious about how the race itself went, don't worry, I'll be doing that write-up soon... eventually...within the next week.

Hopefully;)

