

Dave Rodda ~ 12 March 1028

Here is my Florida Double Anvil 2018 Race report.

Long post here. So unless you like reading long boring race reports you might want to stop reading and move along.

Sitting here in Florida recovering from the toughest race fight I have endured. So thankful that I had a great crew to keep me going, Cindy, Raegan and Mary are the reason I finished this race. As the clock started showing I had slowed below the minimum pace I needed to finish by the cutoff they kept adjusting and implementing plans that allowed my mind to shut off and allow my body to just run. No more stopping and complaining about how bad my legs hurt every lap. No more having to do math and check my pace. They did all the thinking and just kept encouraging me to keep going.

There were three very distinct points during this race that my mind gave up. Twice during the night I was Hypothermic and even did a complete lap on the bike asleep. When I rode into the crew station, with only two bike laps to go, my eyes could not focus and were glazed over. I was shivering uncontrollably and my race was officially over. The race plan switched from a race plan to a survival plan. Cindy got me in my van and placed me under two sleeping bags with the heater cranked up and after about an hour that got my chills to stop. She then dressed me in every piece of clothing we had packed for the race and told me to go try to do one lap and if I could handle that one then do the other. If I couldn't finish the last lap, then stop and we would change plans. So I set out on my streamlined race bike dressed in 3 under armor compression shirts, a bike jersey, an Epicor windbreaker, a hoodie sweatshirt and a second Epicor windbreaker over the top. She put baggy sweatpants over my race tights and put on two pairs of socks. We were clearly not prepared for the Florida Night time temps. I managed to finish the bike course but as I got off the bike after 17 hours I was once again shivering uncontrollably and was totally wiped out. My race was over.

Cindy took me back to the van and covered me up and we tried to get some sleep. She kept asking me what I wanted to do. All I could think was that my race was over. So I told her that we were done. That we would just go to sleep and not set an alarm and when we get up we can go crew for other racers. Cindy fell asleep almost instantly. She was so exhausted and freezing from the chaos of trying to save my race that when I said it was done she was out. After about an hour of lying there mentally beating myself up over quitting I started getting my body temp regulated again. I picked up my phone and started doing math. I was trying to figure out if there was any way to get back in the game. I had roughly 13 hours to travel 52.4 miles. I would have to move forward at a pace of better than 15 minutes a mile, which at the time seemed like a doable pace. I knew I would have to front load the laps and gain some time buffer, as you never get faster in these races. You start out faster and increasingly get slower as the miles click by. So I got out of the van and crawled into the back where we had laid out my running gear. I put on my gear and went to head out on the course but was frozen again almost instantly. I crawled back in and Cindy woke up and started telling me to put on more clothes. So I put on three layers of shirts and a windbreaker and two pairs of sweats and even had on two pairs of socks. I told her to go

back to sleep as this was probably only going to be a one lap disaster and I would soon be back to warm up.

I explained to her that should I survive long enough to get to the heat of the day I would need her rested and ready to make decisions that my mind won't be able to make. I headed over to the race-timing table to start the run. As I passed the timer he said, "Welcome Back Dave, it's great to see you again." That was a good feeling. I was not sure I was back for long but here I was back in the game at least for now. I started walking as quickly as I could. I was still cold and because I left my run watch on the table in the crew area I had no idea how fast or slow I was moving. I walked the first mile then tried to get the legs moving with a very slow jog. By the time I got to the turnaround I was starting to sweat and I started peeling off layers. I got back to the crew area and it was like a ghost town. I stripped down to a single layer of tights and long sleeve compression shirt and grabbed my watch and drink bottle. It was already daylight so I dropped my headlamp and lights off as I took off for Lap 2. Only 25 more laps or 50 miles to go. As I finished Lap 2 I saw Cindy had gotten up and was in the crew area asking what was going on. I yelled to her that I need laps and pace information, as my head was not working. Simple math was nearly impossible for me at this point and I needed to know where I was, as I knew the clock was not on my side. I did not stop but kept running. On the third lap I stopped and removed everything but a pair of compression shorts and Cindy put on my Superman Compression shirt. The cold morning was slowly changing to the heat and I was trying to take advantage of the weather to gain back a little of the clock before the wheels would come off. I ran the first 10 miles in the 10 minute per mile pace range. However about mile 14 my legs were gone. I was run walking and my run pace was 14 minutes per mile and my walking was 18 minutes per mile so I was losing time. By now Raegan and Mary were back helping Cindy in the crew area. I would come in and they would jump into action. I would sit down and grab something to eat or drink and Cindy would tell me my revised pace requirement as I complained about the pain in my legs. When I would get back on the course, I would see Michael Ortiz each lap and he would keep telling me to "just keep moving - the legs always have a second wind." I kept saying I was doing all I could and I wished I had his legs. He was looking great as he would run up to another runner and hang with them for a while encouraging each athlete to keep going. Michael was a big part of my day. It was always great to laugh with him as we stood up at the swim aid float or to chat with him for a lap on the bike. Having a familiar face on the course a welcome site.

The fact that I could not get my pace any faster was becoming an obvious problem. I kept saying how I had never hit this point during a run so I had no idea how to get them back. I just kept saying how hot I was. I had stopped sweating and even though it was overcast the heat was wiping me out. This went on for hours. Finally Cindy asked me if I would eat some ice cream if she went and found some. I said no the milk would make my stomach sour. She then suggested a Popsicle. I said ok. She ran to the store yet again which was a long drive out of the park to find a Popsicle. That was the best Bomb Pop ever and feeling something cool helped me know that was what I needed. I told Cindy if I could just cool off somehow. She grabbed a towel and tore a strip off it and dipped it into the cooler and put it around my neck. It was at this point Cindy made a decision that changed my race. She looked me square in the eyes and said, "You can't stop here anymore. We are losing too much time with you stopping to get aid. We are not going to make it." I had a half marathon left to go but had lost so much time that at one point

the math said I needed to do sub 11 minute miles and she knew that if I was going to have a chance I needed to keep moving. She handed me another caffeine pill and told me that they would change things to keep me moving.

On the next lap as I was coming around the corner to run into the aid station I saw Raegan standing there. She ran up to me and asked what I needed next. She then grabbed my bottle and ran ahead to get everything. I ran right through the aid station and then Raegan caught me as I passed the timing loop and handed me my bottle and yelled keep going, and that my pace was getting faster. Each lap it was the same either Raegan or Mary or both would meet me, grab my bottle, then run it back to me as I left the aid station. Their energy was infectious. The fact that they were working so hard to keep me going was making me push it a little harder each lap. Raegan would ask how I was feeling and I would say I was dying and she would say, "Yes but you're doing great. Just keep going you are catching the others." At this point my body was on autopilot. My mind kept telling me I could not keep this pace going but my legs kept moving. I could feel the excitement as all the crews in the village began cheering for me, and the other athletes still on the course, as we ran through the village. Cindy had found a way to gain back the time I had lost and not only was I going to finish, I was finishing the race running. As I crossed the finish line I was totally exhausted and barely had the energy to stand for the finisher pics with family. I could not have gone any further.

In a race like this people look at the individual results and say great job. However there are so many things that happen that you never quite know what the one thing is usually. However on this day having family and friends that were willing to do whatever it was going to take to get me to that finish line was that one giant thing. On a day when I was not at my best they were able to pick up the pieces and put them back together in a way that allowed me to finish the race. They were sitting outside freezing as well waiting anxiously for me to return for my next lap. We packed expecting a hot race in Florida. We were so unprepared for what we would experience. All races have a Roller Coaster of Highs and Lows but I have never had one like this.

Going into this race we all knew that I was not even close to being trained for the race let alone the extremes of the cold and hot. Life has been so crazy that I had to skip 60% of my workouts. I had not done a swim at all since the Double last October until a week before the race. I had a total of 3 hours of laps in the pool within a week of the race. I never got a long run in and had only one bike ride longer than 2 hours leading up to the race. Talking with my coach I could tell he was nervous about this one. Moving into a new house and setting up a new shop as well as working two jobs and family time had made time for working out nearly impossible. I spent 2 months sick from something that the Doctors never really found an answer for. I was doing a treadmill stress test in January just to rule out any heart issues then wore a heart rate vest for 48 hours to see if they could find out why the fatigue was so overwhelming. I was getting my shoulder checked out the Monday before I left for the race for a possible tear in my rotator cuff. I just kept telling myself that I just needed to get past this race even though everything was telling me that I should not race.

It's amazing what the human body can withstand. Your body has the ability to keep going even when the mind is telling you to quit. The Brick Walls are there to allow you to show how bad you really want it! The Florida Double Anvil was a 281.2 mile Giant Brick Wall!

