

Race Report Robin Cucinotta

Date: 10/10/2014 11:03 AM
Type: Race
Course: Virginia Double Anvil Triathlon
Distance: 281.2 miles
Duration: 32:42:31
Weather: 60° F, Rain

Notes: ask me why? I say why not. My life is mine. My life is short and I don't have time to ask. This race is living. Want to live? Want to see what your life really is? You'll find the answers to all your questions here. You'll see it all, hear it all, feel it all, smell it all, taste it all and then you will know why...every answer to every question...experienced, not just talked about. Where will you be in the end? Will you be ready? Or will you ask why?

I found this race through an accomplished friend (Flash) Scott Jordan. We share that same desire to seek answers to the questions we ask; so the journey began. I was grateful to have Flash for the few training days I did as our schedules often didn't match. These included a few long rides and one long run. I was also very grateful to our spouses (Chris and Aimee) who made many sacrifices for us both just so we could get these workouts in.

My questions regarding the race, registration and even some advise and welcomed help from Steve Kirby (the race boss) was awesome. He is without a doubt the most attentive race boss on the planet, taking care of everything and making sure I was all set with gear and anything else I might need. I rented a very small Camp Cabin months prior right in Lake Anna State Park. It was perfect for what we needed it for, and close to the bath house.

The morning before race day, we made the 10 hour ride down, checked in the camp, met up with Flash and Aimee, did race check in and set up our aid station area. Met up with all the racers and staff for the pasta dinner and information meeting where we all met and shared a few words and it was early to bed. My last words to Flash was, you can win this thing...don't disappoint me...and he laughed at me.

woke up at 4am but lied there till 5:15. I was relieved at how good I slept (only woke up twice but was able to go back). did the morning rituals and we all headed over to the beach area for a good breakfast, last bike checks, group photo and swimmer timer assignments. the swim would be 12 laps around big red buoys in water that was waist high in many spots. there would be 3 timer people in a boat at the shore turn around counting laps to the people they were assigned. when we finished a lap...we would call out our # and the lap would be counted. we said our good lucks and toed the line.

the swim; at the anvil strike, we were off. I took this start very slow. I did not want to have a non explainable "panic attack" episode like I did at lake placid so I just swam very slow put a song from dream theater in my head till I was sure it would not happen which ended up being about 2 laps. after that I swam very steady as I felt really good. us 4 girls competing all had bright green caps so I knew where I was sort of in the pack of them. at lap 10 a green cap went blasting by me on her last lap and I was amazed. I think I said, "*blub* holy shit *blub*!" anyways...I was out soon after and feeling awesome. Chris was right there to see how I was doing and if I needed anything. never saw Scott...knew he was long gone.

t1; I really took my time. next time I will not do that. Chris stripped off the wetsuit and I told him to get out my nutrition as I fought with my damn socks and other gear. sucked down the fuel, good lucks again and off I went.

the bike; the bike was to be 45 laps of a 2.5 mile out and back with chip timed monitoring on each side. the volunteers manning these stations and everywhere were awesome smiling faces that I looked forward to. most would think this lap course layout (they call it a squirrel cage I guess) to be grueling. it wasn't. it was very good. I kept seeing the same riders and I would again have an idea of where I was in the pack. everyone was so happy and it was infectious. then the rain came...then the hard rain came...then it would stop to tease us only to start up again and the whole ride was like this. it was chilly but I was ok with a raincoat. Chris was doing awesome at crewing. each lap I would put my order in as to what I needed and he'd have it for me the next time I came round...worked great. saw flash as he repeatedly lapped me many times throughout the ride (I was in awe). all the girls seemed to be humming along as well. one really fun moment I had on bike was when I met up with Mosi, a guy from North Carolina with an impressive resume at around mile 100. this of course cause a surge and we both just found ourselves hammering out the lap for no apparent reason than to just do it. after we got that out of our system we chilled and had 3-4 more laps of fun and laughter. I then found out he was doing the triple and on his last laps and I almost shit a brick that he was playing dumbass with me at what was for him, mile 310ish on the bike. then he was done and it was into the cold wet rainy darkness of the night. this is where I found myself really alone with headlights as seeing actual others wasn't possible. it wasn't long around this time when flash finished the bike or at least it didn't seem long. my Garmin died so I had to depend on time as to were I thought I was in mileage. I could have asked someone to find out...not sure why I didn't have Chris get that info as it was driving me mad not knowing for sure and I would get angry if I didn't hear the last lap telephone noise that sounded when you hit your

last lap. this also caused probs. as Chris didn't hear the telephone so he didn't know I was done the bike till I actually was and this ate up some time as I would have had him get my run gear ready before hand.

t2; trying to change clothes was difficult as I was cold, wet and things weren't working i.e.; fingers, hands and arms. got major encouragement from Chris and Aimee as they got me everything I needed out for fuel and such. definitely learned something here.

the run; I don't really remember too much in the dark. it was a 26 lap of 1 mile out and back. I just knew I was second women off the bike which was cool but I also knew Stacey (who had just done Oregon) was going to catch me even on my good day being the accomplished runner she is. and I then thought I had better relax about that cause I had a long way to go and I didn't want to not make this, not on #1. so I decided I had better just get it done and I played that thought over and over in my head in Kirby tone. I looked forward to seeing flash as he looked awesomely strong. he would say hello and tell me to keep plugging it in...or along those lines so I did and it didn't seem too long before the sky brightened and I could finally start to see the same faces again. again Chris was awesome all night getting me my fuel and nutrition and was always awake to do so...which I was so grateful cause it save me a ton of time. on one pass with flash I asked him if he was going to win but he said he was going to be second. I said that sounds like a win to me, awesome man! around 8 or so flash finished his race and it was cool cause timing was so I could see it only to have keep going. I just kept going and at certain points it felt like I could walk faster than I could run so I would do that for a bit then resume running. I did that on a lot on the hill. somewhere Stacey got by...wasn't sure when, I just knew she did. I know she looked fantastic every time I saw her so I had to raise my glass. the run part in the light for me seemed to be the most moving part of the whole thing cause I could share some conversations and be inspired by all the others. Mosi was one of my favorite people to see...maybe because I was very comfortable vocalizing my foul mouth around him, I don't know. I was so happy when he finished his triple looking absolutely like he just started the race or something, it was amazing. I also loved seeing Gatorboy, YES, "the" Gatorboy (Paul) kick the living shit out of his dark place...that was awesome! so cool. Aimee and flash came back to see the finish and somewhere around mile 40 of the run, I got a surge. it surprised the hell out of me so I took it. I was running 11+ minute miles I believe and it was forcing the co2 exhales. it lasted about 6 miles but then I could feel it draining. Chris informed me I was only 7 minutes behind Stacey with 4 miles to go. I told him my surge was gone and she's running too damn fast in a throwing of the arms, no words spoken. Aimee made me a peanut butter honey paste to see if it would help the crash and I think it stabilized me which was good cause I felt ok. seeing Stacey out on the course with 1 lap to go as I was getting to mine, I told her I tried to make it interesting for her but I couldn't. I congratulated her massive accomplishment. here I got to run a bit with Shangrila who had one hell of a night but there she was plugging it out with great spirits and smiles. and then it was my turn to finish. what an awesome feeling it was. here when you finish, you get to carry your national flag to the finish line while the national anthem plays and you receive applause from tent city. so heartfelt. then you get to make 2(if you did the double) hammer strikes on the anvil. massive pictures get taken and your done.

Sunday was the full catered open wine bar award ceremony where each of us got to share a few words. it's amazing how close you can feel to people in such a short time. I really feel one of the family here with each and every one of the competitors and staff. each one has touched me in a very profound way and it's indescribable. I'm going back for 2015. I don't even need to think about that. I never once did.

Massive thanks to all volunteers and staff and I really have to say thanks to my husband who really stepped up for me here. he talks a lot of crap but when it comes down to it, he is the one who is there. he stayed up the entire time and made sure I wouldn't have to stop or need for anything not to mention he drove all the way down and all the way back and I am so grateful for that.

There are no real words one can say about doing the anvil races...I can say only one that comes to mind and that word is monumental.

I had this song in my head a lot...I think it's perfect.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkeXOEVfEu0>

swim; 2:51:00

t1; 16:23

bike; 15:37:43

t2; 15:47

run; 13:42:31

finish; 32:43:24