

RACE REPORT: Virginia Triple Anvil ~ Dan Duran 7.2mile swim, 336mi Bike, 78.6mi Run - 60-hour time limit

This is the first race report I've ever done and it's pretty long so if long is not good for you, you better stop reading now:-)

First and foremost, a HUGE thanks to my crew which consisted of my beautiful wife [Jennifer Duran](#) and my son Hunter. Jen was spot on with my nutrition, clothing, changeouts, etc, but most importantly, her support. There is no question whatsoever that I could not have finished without her (more on that later).

A huge thanks as well to [Steve Alan Kirby](#), [Teri Smith](#), and all the staff/volunteers who put on a great race and kept us all safe.

Pre-Race: On day two of the three-day drive I experienced some sharp pain in my right hamstring during a quick run at a hotel. This REALLY worried me as I was feeling 100% (other than some lingering jetlag) up to this point. I believe it was from over 40 hrs of sitting on planes and in airports and three days driving. This pain continued up until race start...

SWIM: The water was just right and the swim went pretty well. I had budgeted 5 hours for it and that's exactly what it took me. I had three bottles of water and fuel plus 3 bananas and I finished all but one banana. What I didn't realize at the time is that it really flamed up my torn rotator cuff (more on that later).

BIKE: Transition went smooth and I started the bike feeling strong and 30 minutes ahead of budget. I was worried about my hamstring during the run so I pushed through the first 112 miles a little harder than I'd budgeted. Once darkness came it cooled off fast so I had to keep adding layers. I ended up with boot covers, gloves, helmet cover, several layers of shirts/jackets topped off with a duck hunting jacket. Somewhere around 2am I started getting very sleepy. This surprised me having done the Double Anvil with zero issues so my plan was to go without sleep the entire first night. I had to stop and take a 20-minute nap so I didn't crash. Jen was spot on in waking me up and it felt like I never went to sleep. After a couple more hours, I had to stop again for a 20-minute nap. After that one I begged Jen for another 20 and she gave it to me. Total sleep night one was about an hour. I concluded that the reason I was struggling with sleep on night one was lingering jetlag from my return from Dubai less than a week prior. It was a long, boring night and I really slowed down. My left shoulder started getting mad a couple hours before sunrise...

As the sun began to rise I felt my shoulder begin to lock up. I was in excruciating pain and finally determined it was an angry rotator cuff. One of my fellow racers, an amazing gentleman named [Cole Braun](#), offered up one of his support crew, Andy, a physical therapist. Andy did some stuff to my shoulder (I still don't know what) but it was enough for me to get some mobility and get my shirts off to prepare for warmer weather. Jen taped me up and I was back on the bike. The rest of the ride I had to internally rotate my left arm and lay my forearm across my tri bars rather than along them, but it was enough to allow me a finish right on budget of 5pm, day two.

RUN: This is where things went a bit sideways... I completed the first 26 miles right on budget, power-walking the climbs and jogging the flats and downhills. I had to pin my left hand in my fuel belt like a sling so it wouldn't swing and hurt but I still managed. Sometime after midnight I finally had the hallucinations I couldn't wait for :-). They weren't as cool as what some of the others experienced but seeing the grass under my feet turn into various shaped rocks was a real treat! I figured it was time for a

nap so Jen gave me 30-minutes. Before I was half-way through the second marathon, I felt some hot spots on my feet so we did a quick foot lube and sock change out. One lap later (1.75miles) I felt that a blister had formed. Jen put some moleskin on it and I went back out. This is where things got ugly... The pain from that moleskin driving the blister into my foot got worse and worse and it really began getting into my head. I was fully prepared for leg pain and there was no let down there as they hurt worse and worse throughout the race, but again, I was mentally prepared for that pain. I'd never experienced running with any significant blisters and I certainly wasn't expecting them, especially since Jen and I made foot health our #1 priority. All I could think about was having all the skin wear off my feet and running on bloody stumps. Weird the things you think about out there!

OK, the turning point :- (Jen FINALLY laid down for her first nap 45 hours into the race which was about 48 hrs of being awake. Right after she laid down I started doubting whether I could finish. The pain was overwhelming and she wasn't there to keep me going. I finally convinced myself that with only 4 laps to go in the second marathon I would stop and rest then walk out the last 4 laps over the next 10 hrs for a triple swim and bike but only a double marathon. I fully justified it in my head and just needed to let Jen know. As I came up on the tent, she was still asleep so I slogged out another lap in pain only to return and she was still asleep! Dang her for sleeping! I did enough mental warfare and decided I had to wake her up when I got to the top again. Hunter happened to show up around this time and when I told him I was going to quit he was adamant that I keep going and said, "mom's not going to be happy." Boy was that an understatement!

I have NEVER quit anything and pain sure as hell wasn't ever going to be a reason, but it happened... I woke Jen up and told her I had two laps to finish the second marathon and I was quitting. She jumped out of bed, glared at me, and said, "NO YOU'RE NOT!" She said things like, "[William Ironox Pruett](#) didn't quit last year when he was bent over in pain from back spasms, and [Will Turner](#) is still out there fighting through his back spasms and [Johan 'Taz' Desmet](#) BLED for you (he had popped his own blisters with a tactical knife and kept going). She yanked off my socks, grabbed more moleskin and sent Hunter in search of a pin. She said, "you're going to have to run a few hard laps and I don't care how much it hurts, you're going to finish." Oh boy.... That's when I suggested we have an actual medic look at it. Thank God for [Jade Kent-Medders](#) and the other medic who showed up within ten minutes, popped the blisters and put duct tape on them. Jen kicked me out on the asphalt and pushed me through two hard laps where I'm not ashamed to admit, I actually cried a bit. Humility was the name of the game...

A quick side note: Jen was also crewing for a fine young man named Serhot Ozturkt who was doing a Double. She pushed him so hard that at one point the only way he could take a nap was to hide from her by sleeping 20-minutes in a porta-potty!

Anyway, that was the start of the real battle. I slogged out lap after lap, watching the clock and knowing I was barely going to make it, if at all. I developed blisters on the other foot and when we tried to redress them the tape wouldn't stick any more so I had to just keep going with both feet blistered and untaped. My hamstring finally decided to wake up and it was knotted up, preventing me from any good running or long strides.

I was encouraged non-stop by some of the best ultra-athletes in the world like [Adolphus Hoch IV](#), [Johan 'Taz' Desmet](#), [David Jepson](#), [Erik Hanley](#), [William Mark Blore](#) and [Tim Robert](#) (most were doing a Quintuple!), who I'm honored to call my friends. [Michael Ortiz](#) was cranking out his hard laps and we took turns encouraging each other. The other racers out there like [Lisa Wei-Haas](#), [Shanda Hill](#), [Ruth Sleeter](#), [Laura Knoblach](#) and speedy [Joey Lichter](#) were equally as encouraging as was the entire AnVillage (the aid/crew area). [Cole Braun's](#) crew gathered and prayed for me and Cole dedicated an entire lap in prayer for me. I've NEVER experienced so much support and I couldn't let them all down.

Note: At one point I told Jen, “I’d rather die than go three and half more hours.” Ouch... Embarrassing but true.

On my last lap, [Vasilis Toxavidis](#) joined me to make sure I made the cut-off, pushing and encouraging me all the way. Michelle, Jen and Hunter joined me as well. We crossed that finish line together with only 12-minutes to spare. Way too close, two hours longer than expected, but I made it – WE made it. I was humbled beyond all belief and it felt great.

POST RACE: I had the post-race convulsions again (like after the Double) and it was AWESOME! Although my legs hurt like hell I slept hard the first night. The next day my blisters hurt like crazy and I had the normal total body soreness. On the second recovery day I started getting some edema around my ankles and it lasted three more days. Here I am four days’ post-race and the only things really bothering me are the shoulder, hamstring and a little edema. (Note to self: Don’t take a hot Epsom salt bath when you have edema):-)

This was the hardest challenge I’ve taken on both physically and emotionally. It was also the greatest, most humbling experience of my life.

Full credit for my completion goes to my wife and son along with all the amazing members of my ultra-tri family. I love you all very much and I’m truly blessed.

Time to put some muscle back on...

Hmmm... Quintuple???

#dotFIT #growstrong

