

Dear family and friends,

As promised the review of my Ironman Cozumel race of November 29, 2009.

Wednesday 25th Darianela and I arrived in the evening time after taking our flight Curacao - Miami , Miami - Cancun.

With a very nice (and empty) bus they drove us from Cancun to Playa del Carmen for 50 minutes and from there we took a ferry to Cozumel which took approximately 45 minutes.

Thursday was registration day, already plenty of athletes arrived and you see them with their high-tech bikes and eye catching gears spinning through the nice city of Cozumel. Registration went quick and smooth, all was very well organized. There were booths where you can purchase all kinds of Tri products, gears, food etc. I was getting nervous if I had the right stuff with me, if I wasn't missing anything that could help me during the race.

One important tip: stick to your plan and do not try anything new!

Friday morning was the swim training at 7am. However this was cancelled due to high winds and rough sea waters. What's gonna happen? Will the race be cancelled? Will they shorten the race? I was bumped, everybody was! But as per the race officials good weather is expected on race day. Cross your fingers! That afternoon was the race meeting at the convention center. The place was packed with athletes all over the world. I was getting a bit nervous again but enjoying these moments. You can feel and breathe this tremendous energy in the room!

Saturday was the check-in day for the bike at transition 1 (T-1). Again a big day because everything must be planned ahead. Every Triathlete received plastic bags where you insert in each bag your swim gears, bike gears and run gears with food or any special food you need during the race. These bags must be checked in the day BEFORE the race. So proper planning is expected. Again I am bit nervous if nothing is missing, hoping also that my bike is okay and no technical problem will happen during race day. It was an early evening, I had some pasta for dinner. As for the earlier days pasta was the main dish :) and plenty of water!

Sunday - Race morning I woke up at 3am and was ready to race. First thing when I woke up was to check the weather outside. Wind was calm and ocean look much better and calm. Butterflies in my stomach were doing their thing! Have I eaten enough? Did I drink enough water? How's my bike? Am I missing anything? How will the swimming be between 2000 people? Questions that I could not answer however a few things are certain; I have trained in this hot weather and windy conditions. I know how it feels with the sun burning on my shoulders, my feet and back aching after 100+ kilometers, I have trained in hilly roads...here it's flat. I have done the running at 3pm when the heat is at its peak! I have been there, now it's a matter of putting this puzzle together.

Start shot was at 7am sharp. It was one big fight during the swimming, people pushing, kicking, crawling on top of each other to pass...it was battle. I got kicked in the stomach and my groin but I know some swimmers received some kicks from me too, this happened at all 4 turning points. Fortunately there are divers watching and "standing" by for any mis-hap. My swim went much better than expected; 1:07 (vs my est. 1:20).

After the swim it was a frantic transition at T-1. Change into my bike gears and run as fast as I could to my bike for the next challenge. People were cheering and screaming throughout the race by the way,

that really motivates.

The bike went also very well. 3 laps around the island of Cozumel. 1st lap went well, I was making my move, passing bikers, watching my heart beat very close not to do any thing stupid! I kept my heart beat between 135 and 147bts/min with a constant pace I was passing them one by one. I kept drinking my food and enough water during the bike course. The difficult section of the bike course is when we arrive at the most southern part of the island turning back up north! Cross winds!! With no drafting allowed it makes it very difficult to bike with these wind blowing against you. At the end of my 3rd lap I was happy to have finished this section. Looking at my watch I am again ahead of schedule. I finished the bike with 5:42 (vs my est. 6:00)

At T-2 my feet were in pain but were releaved once I put on the running shoes. Here I go for the run. The crowd was cheering and screaming my name. "Vamos Osvaldo...si se puede!" It was great and motivates again. My first 21km went pretty good but then pain in my knees and lower back starts kicking in. I had to walk for 10 minutes, my legs were giving up on me...damn! Every other kilometer there were water station with Powergels, gatorade, ice, bananas, orange and Coca-Cola. That helped alot! I kept pouring cold water on my head an face to cool off. Must continue to run...must continue to run. It was a 3 x 14 km lap on my 2nd things were getting worse..I had to walk a few times again. On my 3rd and final lap it was a battle not to give up, mind over matter. Continue drinking fluids and gels, dont listen to your body, deny pain! Constantly monitoring my time I was looking forward to getting at the finish line. The last 5-8 km were just hard but at the same time I am so high of adrenaline I wasnt aware of this. At the finish line it was one big party, brass bands, mariachi playing and people shouting and screaming! The climax was 10-20 meters before the finish line where you run on the "red carpet" and the announcer calling your name: "Desde Curasao, Osvaldo Marchena....YOU-ARE-AN-IRONMAN!" i am done.

Running was 4:36 (vs my est. under 4hrs?)

Total time 11:37:23 (vs my est 12 - 13 hrs)

Overall position: 253 out of 2000

After the race it was a very painfull and stiff walk back to the hotel.

Will I do this again?....a definately YES! :)

Thank you for all your emails before and after the race.

See you on the street again soon!

Iron-Oz