

## The Power of Positive Thoughts

I must be honest in saying that preparing for this race was not at all easy. I was under tremendous amount of stress with selling my home, buying a new one and construction. Making a long story short, I set a goal for myself at every training session: make each training session count, learn to take recovery serious both physically and mentally. Ok, so I didn't recover at all. The week leading up to the race, I closed escrow, remodeled my new home, moved and unpacked-in a week! Don't ask how I slept, I didn't. Let's fast forward to race day.

Nerves hit the day before. 1. I have never done a Du. 2. I am tired. 3. My own mental struggle because I am new to this distance in the triathlon world. I set my alarm at 3:30am, woke up, arrived WAY early because I don't like to be stuck in race traffic and I've never done this race before. I unpacked my breakfast and I could barely eat it. Either it was the nerves of the 3 days of diarrhea. Setting up transition honestly intimidated me. I saw so many people with these stud-ly bikes with disc wheels and fancy equipment, I almost felt out of place. Almost. I was not going to let that set me off. They were racing their race, I was racing mine. Actually, I raced to the port-a-potty more times than I cared to count.

**Ready for the start.** I had the idea of putting my gels in my back jersey pocket. I thought it was a good one at the time because I would not have to worry about it at T1. I positioned myself in the front of the pack so I would not have to dodge a lot of people. We received our instructions and the horn went off! I started at a perfect pace. I was comfortable. Happy....and then...my gels fall out of my jersey! Damn. I had to run back to get them, I can't believe I didn't get trampled! The front pack was gone. I was last. I grabbed my gels, and ran keeping that same happy pace. I quickly began to pick people off and got the turn-around. I saw my teammates at the first water station. All I could do was smile and thank them. They had no idea what just happened to me. Negative thoughts really wanted to introduce themselves right around this point. I said to myself "shake it off, it was still a decent 1.2 mile time given the circumstances."

**T2 went smooth.** I was a little winded but hey, I got this right? "Kid, you got this." (I call myself that all the time) Onto the canyon I go. Good thing I was in the right gear because that really helped. My bike ride felt great. Those down-hills were damn-right AWESOME. No fear, I took them as fast as I could. There were no surprises until I accidentally passed the right hand turn, the volunteers looked like they were waving, oh well, my bad. I turn around and get back on course. Nope that did not open a negative thought. I did not allow it. I would not. I went as fast as my legs could take me. I had just finished my first water bottle and gel. Just as I was about to reach for the second one, it falls. Of course it does. At least I still have my thumb. Off I go retrieve that. Oh well. Back on the bike I go and then I see Donna Gelnett pass me, but she always passes me. I said myself "Kid, keep her close." That's exactly what I did. It really helped. My second water bottle was just about finished by the time I got to Cooks Corner. It's all downhill to T2. I see Martha...freaking RAD. I couldn't wait to run.

## **The Run**

I did not expect my run to go this way. The first mile felt ok, I felt my legs coming back to me. Shortly after...BAM! Right quad seized, wow that hurt, oh wait, right hamstring was cramping, then the left quad! A moment of panic set in. I hydrated, nutrition went as planned, what happened? Should I stop? Can I keep going? What if? I walked for a minute as other runners were passing me. What if? No, do or do not. There is no try. I said "Brace yourself kid, this is going to be a tough run." "One mile at a time, your race, your pace." My goal was to finish as strong as possible, but damn that's so hard when you're in pain. There is no shame in walking (something I'm not used to doing in a 10K). The sooner I accepted that, the stronger I felt. Cramping let up enough to run/walk. By mile 3, I looked in pocket to get a gel and I was so happy I found a salt packet!!! It was old but it was there. My savior! Within minutes I felt better, not even close to 100% but better. All I could do was smile, enjoy the moment because it showed me how lucky I was to be there inspite of the pain. Healthy, happy and strong. I stayed positive, thanked all the volunteers and ran to the finish. I finished. No one saw the pain I was in, only that I was happy and was having fun. I really did have fun. This run needed to happen to teach me a lesson, and that is to pack the freaking SALT! Not only that but it needed to happen to show me that negative thoughts have no room in my mind. Amy Buch said to me at the finish line that at one of our trainings she observed me beating myself up mentally. She said that at that moment she wanted to intervene but was unsure if she should. She chose to tell me today. She said "You do not deserve to talk to yourself like that. I see you train, push, work hard. You do not deserve beat yourself up like that." She chose the perfect time. I nearly cried. I chose to not let one single negative thought enter my mind throughout this race. That was my biggest accomplishment. So...

I got on the podium? First place? Really? Really? Ok now that's crazy. I had a less than stellar race but I was flying higher than a kite! I can't thank this team enough. I am grateful to all of you. I got home, I cried of happiness and because my legs really really hurt. Happy. Strong. Alive.