

Challenge By Choice Coaching

The Adventures of Jen Segger. Jen is a professional endurance athlete living the dream...traveling the world adventure racing and experiencing the things that some people only dream about. Jen is a running coach and personal trainer – specializing in goal setting and endurance training systems. Visit www.challengebychoice.ca

Monday, November 16, 2009

Learning to Fail...again

Well, this bog post wraps up the 2009 race season. I've just returned from 2 tiring weeks in Portugal racing at the adventure racing world championships. My apologies to start; I know the race website was a complete disaster to follow. Feel comfort though in knowing that the race was a completely chaotic experience for everyone and we spent 7 days on the race course not really knowing what we were doing, confused and guessing.

But, let's keep this in the positive shall we! I got to see incredible areas of Portugal. We were so remote in these crazy villages, wedged high on hillsides, cobblestone roads, little cafes in every nook and cranny. We purchased bread from moving trucks as we went, we tried to speak the language and we got to see lots of old race friends. It was quite the way to see the country. We had a mix of rain and sun which kept it interesting. I rarely took off my arcteryx beta LT and managed to only wear tights 1 night. I think we climbed and hiked every hill in the country. Actually, it's pretty safe to say that maybe 40km out of 900km in total was actually flat. We had a great guy by the name of Mecca who so kindly volunteered to crew for us, leaving his regular Portugal team to do so. We were so fortunate and very grateful. My achilles held out (YEAH) but, the road to recovery now will be long and slow. I will not run again until I am 100% better as I suffered a great deal on this race course to make it through. My feet are in excellent shape except for 2 bad toenails, thanks to my Salomon XT wings and my SOLE Footbeds.

Ok, so the race itself. As we knew going in, we would be racing European format style and it would not be a typical adventure race. In other words, it would not be the fastest team that would win. Going from our 6th place finish at last year's worlds would be very hard to duplicate. And we were very right. This year was a race of strategy combined with luck. Faced with an overwhelming amount of checkpoints (and I should mention that if you want CP3 to count for example, then you need to get 3A, 3B, 3C and sometimes 3D just to get 1 point) cut off times and rules that seemed to change and bend non-stop. I felt like we spent out entire race strategizing, not really knowing what CP's to go after, not knowing what position we were in and do we make those cut-offs and then what happens? Hmmm, this was a game, not a race! I found it to be very frustrating, as did many of the international teams. I can see, though, that when you understand what you need to do, it could actually be fun. So I guess this race was just a big learning experience (albeit it an expensive one!) It was rogaine format so yes, the goal is to get as many CP's as possible. But there were so many other factors involved that we spent way too much time analyzing and debating. Even this year's winners, Helly Hansen, didn't complete the race course last year. It's a type of format that you just need to learn by doing.

As far as my team, nuun-FeedtheMachine, it was great to go through the experience with my trusty team mates. We had no bike mechanicals which is always a plus.

Salomon Flight Crew



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Besides my achilles, Matzke suffered some bad knee tendonitis which took its toll on him as we began a canyoneering section early one morning. And of course, there was the usual "sore ass" issue as we spent almost 2 straight days on our bikes due to the mess of a race that we got ourselves into. Rinn and Matzke had a good wipeout on their rollerblades during a death trap session through some bustling Portugese town. I thought we were all going to die for sure as we flailed our way around round-about and cobblestone crosswalks. But wait, no, it would be the crazy downhill sections of sheer terror where you couldn't see the next turn or even worse, STOP if a car suddenly got in your way. All in all, we have had some good laughs out there and we crawled our way to the finish line on Saturday afternoon (having not brought the map with us that would take us to the end, it was a long long, very long ride to the end.)

My mindset now is to just take this race as a chance to have learned a new skill as a racer and to put it behind me and move forward. I've decided not to dwell on it because 2009 has already been a great year of racing, exploring and pushing my own boundaries. I am excited that today marks day #1 of R&R and I thank everyone who has given me support and encouragement to always move forward.

"If we do not fail, we do not learn" and to this I can truly attest.

Pictures to come as soon as we collect them all together. We have some awesome ones.

[Pique article](#) that came out prior to leaving!

Posted by Jen Segger at [8:06 AM](#)

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