

Lihhas trivedi

Iranman Experience Sunday, 10th November 2013 Perth, Mandurah, Australia

There is nothing "Impossible in life" said Lihhas Trivedi as he crossed the finish line of Ironman 70.3 Mandurah in Perth Australia on 10th November, 2013.

The only way to reach your finish line is nothing but hard work. There is no alternative to hard work & systematic planning to achieve what you desire said Lihhas Trivedi.

Now he set his eyes on something different, something more challenging, something where he loose his comfort levels-A Triathlon (Swimming,Cycling,Running)

No this was no ordinary Triathlon he was talking about, it was "Ironman"(www.ironman.com) the godfather of Triathlons!!! The challenges were so many now as he was only a good long distance runner & never a good swimmer or a cyclist. Ironman 70.3 is an event where you do 1.9km of swimming in sea,90km of Cycling in tough conditions & 21.1km of running. This is not the end of story this all to be done inside 7& half hours.

This time he was not alone he was joined by his dear friend from "Amdavad Distance Runners",Dr.Jagat Patel. Jagat is an accomplished runner & a good swimmer too said Lihhas. It was a bit of pursuance to convince him that he can do it as he was not confident. For the first time Lihhas felt that all his achievements had paid off as he could encourage his colleague to participate with him in this new challenge.

Lihhas said first day of practice in pool, he could not complete the first full lap of 50meters of swimming, he got breathless & could not dare to go on the other side till he could breathe back. He asked the coach at swimming pool wether he could swim 2kms?? Coach looked at him and said do you know swimming? Lihhas replied reluctantly that he had learnt it when he was in school & occasionally did it for fun in swimming pools. Coach said you need atleast 5-6

months to do 2km continuously and at the speed you are asking for it may require more time. They have to finish swim lap of Ironman in 1 hour flat. This is much possible for accomplished swimmers & they could do it well inside the time provided this was the only thing to do. But in Ironman competition you need to cycle & run too.

Lihās & Jagat started to train on alternate days for swimming as they had to do cycling too which was another weak area. All our time got consumed for this two challenges & we had roughly 12 weeks to go for the event. They started practising 3-4 hours a day on alternate days as both of them had to look after their professional work for their living too!!! They would get tired & more tired each day of practice & the rest of the day would be wasted as they could not concentrate on their work.

The training was self designed again!!! The diet the exercise & the rest was all decided by themselves. Both of them were determined to attempt this as they had found new challenge for self. Learning to swim & to take a challenge to swim 2km in sea was madness . They were not so comfortable to complete 2km in swimming pool even after training hard for almost 8 weeks. The time was nearing & so was the confidence going down as the two new challenges were taking its toll on them.

They started the combined practice for all the three together (Swimming,Cycling,Running)with smaller distance to gain confidence but it was not possible to perform all the three together without rest in between as the muscle groups in each aerobic activity used were different. This was a new challenge!!!

Doing all the 3 together in continuity. The time was short & it was a do or die situation. With just two practice sessions of doing all 3 together(A trial Triathlon) with some time wasted in between each activity they were to go for the final challenge in Ironman 70.3 Mandurah,Perth ,Australia.

This time around(November 10,2013) it is summer in Australia & Perth in particular is the hottest of all places in Western Australia. They reached Perth on 7th November to get acclimated to conditions & the time difference.The event was in coastal suburb of Mandurah about 70km from Perth.

The event guidelines were given the day before & the flow of the event & rules was informed to all participants. They were supposed to put their racing bike in the rack the day before the event with all gears ready & to their surprise all participants had Triathlon Bikes which are much lighter & gives you aerodynamic stance which helps tackle windy conditions better & it is so light

that gives you better speed per paddling. They had a normal Roadbike with all Aluminium frame!!!(Haa Haaa Haaa).

The race began with Swimming in very cold conditions in the early morning & all participants in Wet Suits(Wet Suit is a gear you wear to swim in cold & extremely cold conditions to keep your body warm & dry). You need training to wear a Wetsuit as it is body hugging & really tough to wear & once you wear it swimming with Wetsuit is another challenge all together. One needs to really practice with it & you can practice with it only in cold conditions as it is not advisable to wear in temperatures above 15*c(you can be suffocated in that wetsuit). There was no chance to train in wetsuits in India. The first challenge of swimming was completed well & immediately you change for cycling gears running back to the transition area(this is the area where you make transition for cycling & running).Most participants from Australia were ready with their cycling gears below their wetsuits as they train themselves that way so they just remove their wetsuits & are on the way to cycling. They needed time for the change over as they were not trained for the transition like the foreign athletes who would immediately push out to next challenge without wasting a single second as everything counts!!!

Cycling was challenging as it was very windy conditions & uphill ranging from 20 to 30 meters in height & with my road bike even more difficult.You could visualize a tower of 10 floors in front of you to be conquered & it kept on coming again & again. The only thing mattered was to finish the 90kms. As they came in for the final challenge in the transition area Lihass felt acute pain below the abdomen(It is called Stich in sporting terms) he could barely make the change over from cycling to running gears.

As he left the transition area for the final CHALLENGE he was in severe pain could barely run few hundred meters & had to start walking. His dreams were about to shatter.....

Lihass said: i always think what if i could not make it??? But this question scares him a lot....He had enough time to complete run as he had done reasonably well in Swimming & Cycling to give himself enough time to finish running 21.1kms. This was the first time he crossed the finish line almost walking as he could not bear the pain & the subsequent dehydration as he could not intake any solids or fluids during the run due to acute pain. But he was there at the finish with the lady ready to garland him with the Ironman Medal & the song of his choice(The Final Countdown) playing for him.