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Posted by sarianderson on November 23, 2011

## Final Thoughts on the AR World Champs

Posted in: Adventure Racing News, Race Results, Race Updates, Training and racing with kids. Tagged: Adventure Race World Championships, Arnau Julia Bonmati, ARWC 2011, Being away from the kids, Benjamin Medina, Fran Costoya, Ian Anderson, supportive husband, Tasmania, Team Buff Thermocool. 2 comments



After having a few days to process the race while still in Tasmania, then 30 plus hours of travel, I have never been happier to be home. The AR World Champs was a tough race personally for many reasons and I think I have sorted much of it out in my head by now.

I hadn't done an adventure race in a few years and was very excited for the opportunity to race with Buff/Thermocool. I was very aware of how hard it was going to be to be away from the

family for over two weeks, but I never imagined just how hard it actually was.

As Arnau, Benja, Fran and I started racing alongside 80 other teams, we all had the goal of a top five finish which I believe we were capable of as a team. Unfortunately we had a kayak on leg one of the race which continued to deflate, causing us to be much slower and work much harder. We took that in stride as it was out of our control and moved on knowing we had days to make up the time. When we arrived at the clay pigeon shooting, I realized my teammates had decided I would shoot for our team being that I was the American. Or really, because none of us had done this before. Despite thinking I was right on target, I managed to miss all five pigeons so we had to sit out a ten minute penalty.

Although we never said it out loud, we were all getting a bit worried about our position so early in the race. We moved well in the next legs of biking, trekking and kayaking with some mistakes. Racing with two Spanish guys and a Frenchie that speaks Spanish, I often felt out of the loop as they discussed tactics and options in Spanish. Knowing they had the same goals as I did, I trusted their decisions and often completely zoned out the chatter around me.

By the fifth day of racing, I was becoming very sleepy and wishing it was a little easier to communicate with my teammates to help keep me awake on our 150 km bike ride mostly on dirt roads not requiring much attention. I felt bad that I have no Spanish skills and was solely relying on my teammates to use their second or third language to communicate with me. The longer we raced and the more tired we became, the harder it was for Benja and Arnau to speak in English (Fran spoke only Spanish requiring he and I to communicate through one of our teammates). Therefore I began to fall asleep on the bike and could not come back without actual sleep.

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Racing with teammates that have raced many expedition adventure races is great, as they quickly realized I needed sleep and took the opportunity of a covered shelter to sleep for three hours. When it was time to rally, I woke up feeling extremely nauseous. Knowing this is normal in these races, I forced some food down and myself onto my bike. We didn't make it far before I began to feel worse and had to make some pit stops in the bushes. Moving very slowly, we came upon a mining camp that graciously hosted us for a hot breakfast and a lounge to sleep. With almost four more hours of rest and a bunch of trips to the bathroom, we knew we no longer were fighting for a podium position but continued on.

Just a few hours later, I was on the side of the road again and our race was over.

The race may have been over, but I have not stopped thinking about it since then. I've had good races and bad adventure races before, but my team had always finished. It is still hard for me to know that Buff/Thermocool, 2010 world champs, did not finish because of me. I had no fight left in me when I climbed into the explosives expert from the mine's car and headed back to Burnie but I was more bummed than I can remember feeling before.

My teammates were very supportive and caring throughout the race, our withdrawal, and the days after the race. Despite them telling me it was okay, I know they were as bummed as I was. We had plenty of time after the race to discuss what happened and talk about ways to prevent it from happening again. All this made me feel slightly better but only slightly.

Through emails, texts and Skype chats, Ian let me know things were overall fine at home but that Juniper's behavior was less than stellar while I was gone. I felt guilty for leaving both Ian and his mother in this situation and wished I could transport myself home to help. At this point I was feeling sorry for myself and swearing to myself that I was done competing and training. I must have been delusional from the race because I figured since I missed the kids so much and was so ready to be home, that me quitting racing would make everything right.

I've been home five days and had to get out for a short run the second day back. Although I don't feel 100 percent recovered, I have enjoyed a few more runs and had a few days I couldn't drag myself out the door. Running with my friend Elinor, we chatted about how there is no limit to the amount we love our children and husbands and how much we miss them while apart. I know in reality that doing more multi-day races in the next few years is not realistic but I also have come to the conclusion that I am too competitive to give up racing altogether.

Being able to focus on my children this week has been a blessing. It has enabled me to not think about the race every minute and has given me a chance to make up for some lost time we spent training before heading to Tasmania. Both Juniper and Axel are thrilled to have me home, Ian is getting a much needed and deserved reprieve and I am actually taking an off-season before skimo racing begins in a few weeks.

Although I have always preached about being able to train, compete, work and have children, I think I pushed myself and my family to its limits leading up to and during the AR world champs. My family is the most amazing and important thing in the world to me so if that means a little less racing for a little while, then I'll take it.

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Juniper Anderson

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## 2 comments on "Final Thoughts on the AR World Champs"



**sgathletesintandem**

on November 23, 2011 at 6:13 pm said:

Sari you are an unbelievable inspiration for so many of us! I continuously find motivation from reading your blog posts (for perhaps 3years now), hearing about your triumphs & defeats. It's humbling to know what elite/professional athletes feel as they compete during their races & what you learn coming out of them. Thank you for sharing & being such a motivation for myself & I imagine many others. I can definitely relate, on a small scale, to your race & having to quit, but I'm sure it is making you much stronger already & perhaps you have learned some new tactics as well! I hope to see you at a race & be cheering you on from the sidelines! I'm sorry to hear of the defeat, but congrats on the amount of effort & determination you put in the race. Happy Thanksgiving to you & your family as well!

With Kind Regards,  
Stephanie

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