

THE LONG DISTANCES: A FIGHT BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE MIND

(by María Zubia del Barrio, psychologist)

There is not any kind of doubt that one Triathlon (it is in the winter or not) or Duathlon probably are two of the hardest and sacrificed sports that exist. Obviously, to have the necessary physical aptitudes is indispensable for an optimum performance; however, to the evidence in the that the long distance predominates, it is very easy to get carried away for the emotions along all the evidence. In the case of the Duathlon, let's not forget that we are in the face of a challenge that implies, in first place, to have a good background and resistance to run on foot, and for another side, force, power and speed in the legs on the bicycle to overcome ports, long stretches in plan ...

These, they are reason more than sufficient to prejudice the physical state of the runner still more. In this sense the mental aspect plays a fundamental paper. It is very easy that rising the port the ramps in the legs, flushes, start fatigue, and that it tells you your head I "can not more" I "will not achieve it, to this rhythm not can continue..." Is certain that the legs will weigh you, will hurt you and will feel than can more, but really it is not like this. In these cases the one that one is making play for you is the head dirty trick, you have to achieve to win it, and this fact is in your hands. You can not make anything to secrete less acid milk, nor for that less heat makes, or for that the opponents run less.

But there are other elements than if you can control. You and your objectives will improve if you focus on the questions that are under your control: your thoughts are under your control. Those that send your attention, your confidence and your performance are these. He or She thinks of the failure and you failed. He or She thinks of the fortress and you will feel fort. He or She thinks that you are capable and you will be it.

On many occasions it happens that before the exit the runner is invaded for one series of doubts, fears and insecurities that make him or her question if really preparation is for the career, if he or she will make it according to their expectations and objectives or if he or she will be capable of achieving it. Put yourself in this situation. Suppose that in the moment of acting your thoughts deviate towards things like "what nervous that I am" or "what terrible it would be for you if you failed when you have been so much time preparing you", what you can make seeds?

- Remember your having trained for this performance and your being capable of making it (because you have made it on other occasions, and if it is the first knock, the training have kept on saying you if you are prepared or not).
- Focus on that that you want it to happen instead of focusing on that ("he or she holds until the end with this step") that you want to avoid or that you do not want to happen ("to this rhythm I will not be able to finish")
- Remember your concentrating in during your best performance in the past, or in your best training.
- Do not think of the result which you wish to obtain. You must think only of a fact as simple as "make it the best possible", without thinking of the possible consequences. Focus on your preparation and on to make your work (that is, what is under your control).
- You must think in your strong points, in the feedback that the training has given you and trust you. You do not have anything to lose and a lot to win, only make it how you have been making in the training. Do not attempt to prove new things on the day of the career. Limit yourself to what you have made until now.

On the other hand, it is very frequent that in full career, at half of a long stage with long esplanades, endless ports and it breaks-legs, etc, a great number of negative sensations in the body of the runner that can diminish their forces and consequently, mistrust their capacity to carry out the test in an optimum way appear.

Once again I remit to the thoughts that they overwhelm to the athlete in these so delicate moments, that not another ago which to reduce their concentration, and consequently, the confidence in itself. Next I set forth different attentionals strategies that can be carried out along a stage of great hardness:

Attention of fatigue/pain

- Associating the sensations of fatigue/pain with the sport performance of the race (for example: the legs hurt me, but "I am about to ending", if I hold until the last control I will be near the finish ", I "am tired, but already port 100 km", " every and the pain, "I have achieved another kilometre, I am tired because I am achieving my objective"...).
- Associating the sensations of fatigue/pain with the successful performance of former careers ("other times I have been tired when this distance remained and I have achieved it"...).

- Remembering other difficult moments of the same race, their having excelled themselves with success

Distraction/attention

- Detecting the concrete sensations of the pain with accuracy.
- Self evaluating the degree of fatigue/pain using a scale of 0-10 points
- Imagining processes that control the pain (for example: that the zone of the pain is anaesthetized).
- Transforming the sensations of pain (for example: that him consequence of a massage).
- Using appropriate self instructions (for example: "I can control my fatigue, I have already made it other times", I "am controlling it

Distraction to the fatigue/pain

- Focus on the technique of the task, in the circumference of the pedal, in the position of the body...
- Focus on the rhythm of the race, in the monotone activity of each step or pedalled, to count out the breaths...
- Self evaluating the intensity of the effort using a scale of 0-10 points: checking out if the intensity obeys to the plotted plan.
- Focusing on the strategy of the race ("which my next objective is?, Which is my objective for the following stretch?, I have to modify my strategy?).
- Remembering the objectives that have already been achieved in the same race

Distraction/distraction

- Thinking of another thing, in something amusing or pleasant (that it|is not stressful) foreign to the race.
- Talking to other colleagues.
- Following the music of the headphones attentively.
- Focusing on the environment; recognizing the streets by those that you are going too far, to appreciate the landscape...

Definitively, a test of long distance is not a task easy to overcome. We are in the face of a great challenge, where the winner will not be only the winner who more qualified physics has, if not that who is capable of winning the battle in worse enemy theirs: their own mind