

LOMBOK 2007 TRIATHLON

Race Report

The inaugural Lombok Triathlon proved to be a real sports festival. The event consisting of the 6km Senggigi Run and "the toughest triathlon in Asia" did not just appeal to seasoned triathletes from all over Asia and beyond, but attracted a lot of interest from Indonesian athletes and spectators as well.

It's sun rise on race day and the Senggigi beach has turned into a vibrant festival of sounds and colours with the Gili Air Hotel showgirls leading the parade from their boat, the local spectators excited about the idea of witnessing the 1st International Triathlon on their beautiful island and the athletes warming up in their colourful swim caps surrounded by the village's fishermen boats.

The start arch, a gapura built specifically for the occasion, adds to the feel of authenticity that is already an apparent trademark of the Lombok Triathlon.

The extremely low tide (because of the full moon much lower than anticipated by the organizers) requires last minute amendments to the swim course - the extra 400m beach run from swim exit to the transition area ends up fitting perfectly well in the tough course of the Lombok Triathlon.

At the sound of the horn, the athletes speed off for the 1.8km swim in the flat waters of the enclosed bay of Senggigi beach. Despite the appearance of a calm sea, there seems to be a current. Australian Assad Attamimi and German Dirk Sandrock lead out of the water into transition, conveniently located at the host-resort the Sheraton Senggigi Beach Resort, followed closely by Christopher Carson and Sebastien Calle. Next were the first woman, Chermaine Fung from Singapore, and first Indonesian, Antonio Chandra.

If the athletes were not impressed yet by the course profile on paper, a few kilometers on the course is sufficient to give them a good impression of what awaits them. The rolling coastal road presents a real challenge for the top contenders and a real fight with the elements for everyone else going round on the course. The steep climbs at 8km, 11km and 14km into the bike especially drain the energy from the legs of even the best cyclists. Ex-national long distance triathlete Dirk Sandrock and one of the Lombok Triathlon 2007 favourites has sensibly equipped his bike with a compact crank and is storming through the course until he punctures in the first few kilometers and drops back a few spots. Back on the road after quickly changing his tube, he nearly catches up with the no. 2 in the race, Sebastien Calle, when he faces another setback. A second puncture at km 35, just before reaching the top of Mt. Pusuk, spoil his chances of winning the race.

Also the leader in the race and another race favourite, Assad Attamimi, strikes bad luck and falls in the big downhill from Mt. Pusuk after taking a turn too fast. Fortunately he is able to continue the race with only a few abrasions and hold his lead on the bike. Behind the leaders it is New Zealander Rob Palmer, Lombok resident Kadri and a few other Indonesians who put in very strong bike rides. Further back in the field the athletes are fighting their own fight, going from one hill to the next till reaching the downhill of Mount Pusuk and the last flat bit of the course.

Attamimi starts the run with almost a four-minute lead on Frenchman Sebastien Calle. The strong runner from France is in hot pursuit and manages to take back two minutes in the first lap - his 60kg being definitely an advantage on the undulating run course. The 6km run lap

takes the runners twice over a hill, 350m long with a 5% gradient, includes a 100m beach run into a coastal palm grove.

Very aware of Calle closing in, Attamimi manages to dig deep and pick up the pace. The suspense is high among the spectators' crowd. Will Calle, with his strong running background, be able to close the gap?

He won't. Attamimi crosses the finish line as the 2007 Lombok Triathlon Champion in 3 hours 12 minutes and 25 seconds, with loud cheers, encouragement and high fives from the lively crowd gathered at the gate of the Sheraton Senggigi Beach resort. Sebastien Calle admits defeat and takes pride in his second place as he runs across the finish with his young son, one minute and forty seconds behind the winner. Rob Palmer from New Zealand passes Dirk Sandrock early in the Run to finish third in 3:18:55. A big surprise was the strong performance from home-favourite Kadri. The 19 years old from Mataram is the revelation of the day, finishing 5th in 3:25:03 leaving the competition from Jakarta, Surabaya and Semarang behind.

As the heat starts soaring (it had not been this hot in weeks in Lombok), triathletes keep crossing the finishing line, beating the course and the elements, proud survivors of the Lombok Triathlon. Every athlete has his own story: the surfer from Bali who hired a mountain bike for the race, the cyclist with an aero helmet and a 11-23 cassette, the triathlete who cramped completely just before the transition to the run but still managed to finish strong, and many more. The stories were shared at the festive and spirited awards dinner party with dance, music and of course the welcoming of the heroes on stage.

The toughest course in Asia will back in 2008 with more tears, more pain, but also more smiles and intense moments at the finish line!

The Lombok Triathlon is brought to you by

Race Organizer: Tribob.com



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Sheraton Senggigi Beach Resort



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