

Friday August the 30<sup>th</sup> : 4:30 pm. I have never celebrated my birthday in such a way. At the starting line of the trail race of all the superlatives. In front of one of the finest natural scenery in the world. Together with 2,300 runners coming from 74 countries.

A new adventure. A true one. A thrilling challenge because I had never run before 168 km that had to be nonstop to stay within the time slots and not be disqualified.



Even thou I was among hundreds of runners , I run the first 77 km up to Courmayeur completely alone and it was over this distance that I did suffer most. A level of pain I had never experienced before.

The first two kilometers jostling with the others and then another six of fast running to get to the bottleneck of the first climb as further ahead as possible.

But it was not because of this initial effort or lack of physical fitness or wrong hydration to make me face problems so early in the race. The reason, I think, was the huge tension snaking in during the two-hour wait at the start thinking about the next two sleepless nights, about the trail hardness, about the certainty to reach soon the abyss of fear and having to overcome it at all costs. To be aware that Michele, Paola, Franco and a lot of people would follow the race live while my family would be on site at the start and along trail. I felt immediately seized by cramps: quadriceps, triceps, tibialis. Something never seen before!

Then I started to use my head; so I focused elsewhere to relax my contracted muscles and tendons, I let the negative feelings go and let in the positive ones. The fantastic scenery, the beautiful weather, the mid-August return of my daughter Giada back from Australia after 10 months of authentic experience working as a waitress in Sydney and as apple picker in Stanthorpe. Then night fell. A wonderful starry night. The climb to the Croix du Bonhomme with the indelible image of hundreds of front lights that preceded and followed like an endless Chinese dragon floating in a sea of stars among the rocks of ice.

In this way I managed to eat up kilometers suffering but not getting worse.

Finally in Italy. The descent toward Courmayeur, that I reached at 8 am on Saturday morning, was the worst time.

Physically torn apart and with the quadriceps in flames, struggling to breathe through the fine dust raised by hundreds of runners, the 4 kilometers steep path was a nightmare.

Meeting with beloved faces, Alessandra and my daughters Giada and Giorgia (thank you very much!), sitting down for the first time from the start, wearing clean clothes .... gave me back my breath and hope.



Then near me Davide arrived. A runner I met in March 2012 during a race called *Maremontana* when I was only a spectator since I had just broken my elbow. Davide is a good friend of Michele, Paola, Franco e *LND Famiglie Italiane Onlus* as well.

With the benefit of hindsight I would say that an angel sent him from heaven. The ideal companion. Together, with Davide wearing my same shirt "*Rare does not mean alone*", we left from Courmayeur gate one hour and a half after my arrival.



That was the turning point. A bit 'at a time, my body, now more relaxed, began to respond ever more effectively and cramps vanished. The keystone was to share the road with a good runner and at the same time a rare person.

Very close, at a good pace, we went from the Rifugio Bertone to the Refuge Bonatti and then we passed the Grand Col Ferret getting to the Swiss side on Saturday at 15:30.

From La Fouly, after another 23 kilometers, with good legs but suffering from sleeplessness, I arrived at Champex at 21 hrs where I met my family waiting for me and found my friend Daniele: the faithful and wonderful mate of all the year workouts. Even though he had just completed the other 100 km CCC race, he found the strength and the enthusiasm to come and assist me.



After the only "micro sleep" of 20 minutes which seemed to me 20 seconds, on a crude foam mat with a blanket over me, I left fairly covered up. We still had another 46 km to go and in particular three fearsome climbs (Bovine, Catogne, Tete aux Vents) with equally painful descents.



In this last part of the race Davide was incredible. On the Catogne descent suddenly and seriously he told me: "*Federico! Now we do ignore the pain! The pain does not exist!*" I immediately took damn seriously his words, admiring and respecting him even more, if possible. From that moment on we started to fly (of course in terms of our ability) completing the race with a crescendo of enthusiasm, energy, excitement .... and especially forgetting to have 140 km on our legs.

People along the way either were sensing this spell or, more likely, were cheering because at this stage of the race only a few still had the strength to run. And their enthusiasm was feeding ours in a spiral of elation. In Courmayeur on Saturday morning I was eagerly willing to stop. Sunday morning in the last 5 km I did not want this race to end. Mind is the most amazing of the mysteries!  
I arrived in Chamonix happy after 42 hours and 48 minutes hugging my friend Davide.



My trail runner dream came true! UTMB Finisher. And now? Someone I respect a lot today wrote to me not to wake up and continue with another dream. I do agree: it's nice to choose to run these races or at least come up with something to get close to and beyond our limits because it's just there, on the edge, you get closer to insights that are otherwise invisible.

Sick people and their families as well are living situations on the edge but unfortunately not by their choice. For this reason I think it is important to be close to them, just like my family with me along the race or Daniele in Champex.

People with rare diseases in particular need more than any others to be helped because they are few and of no interest for pharmaceutical multinationals. So I ask you a concrete contribution to fuel their hope. We collect funds to privately support scientific research on Lesch Nghan Rare Disease.

Please go to <http://www.lesch-nyhan.eu/en/sostieni/offerta.php> and donate what you wish (reason for payment. FedeUTMB).

Thanks and a big hug

Federico





Federico MAZZUCHI ☆

Pettorale 3455 UTMB® - V2 H / Club : SISPORT



Stato **Finisher** Class. **1104** Class. V2 H **151** Ultimo punto **Do. 11:18 Chamonix** Tempo di gara **42:48:13** Velocità **3,94 km/h**

Suivi GPS NEXXTEP SPORT

VISTE



GIORNO/ORO DI PASSAGGIO	Do. 11:18	QUOTA	1036 m
TEMPO DI GARA	42:48:13	DISTANZA DALLA PARTENZA	168,7 km
CLASSIFICA PER PUNTI	1104	DISTANZA DALLA FLÉGÈRE	7,2 km
VELOCITÀ	5,66km/h	D+ DALLA PARTENZA	9796 m
		D+ DALLA FLÉGÈRE	63 m



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PALMARES

Suivi GPS NEXXTEP SPORT

VISTE



PUNTO DI PASSAGGIO	VELOCITÀ	CLASS.	GIORNO/ORO DI PASSAGGIO	TEMPO DI GARA
Chamonix	1036m	- km/h	-	00:00:00
Le Delevret	1739m	7,10 km/h	815	01:54:55
Saint Gervais	815m	7,12 km/h	1214	02:56:15
Les Contamines	1160m	4,99 km/h	1282	05:00:10
La Balme	1698m	5,17 km/h	1208	06:34:39
Ref. Croix Bonhomme	2439m	2,85 km/h	1372	08:28:26
Les Chapieux	1553m	5,55 km/h	1378	09:25:37
Col de la Seigne	2507m	4,25 km/h	1264	11:56:36
Lac Combai	1964m	6,00 km/h	1237	12:44:48
Arête du Mont-Favre	2409m	3,15 km/h	1134	13:58:13
Col Checrouit	1958m	5,25 km/h	1182	14:49:29
Courmayeur - Dolonne	1192m	5,87 km/h	1127	15:33:40
Refuge Bertone	1979m	2,92 km/h	1276	18:24:01
Refuge Bonatti	2015m	4,58 km/h	1239	20:00:56
Arnuva	1771m	4,27 km/h	1238	21:14:16
Grand Col Ferret	2527m	2,60 km/h	1186	22:57:07
La Fouly	1603m	4,70 km/h	1253	25:05:38
Champex-Lac	1481m	4,44 km/h	1217	28:27:52
Bovine	1898m	3,59 km/h	1235	32:13:29
Trient	1303m	3,84 km/h	1213	34:02:40
Catogne	2009m	2,84 km/h	1178	36:22:30
Vallorcine	1263m	3,48 km/h	1185	37:50:33
La Tête aux vents	2116m	3,14 km/h	1136	40:40:15
La Flégère	1870m	4,15 km/h	1143	41:31:43
Chamonix	1036m	5,66 km/h	1104	42:48:13

Distanza da  
- La partenza : 168,7 km  
- La Flégère : 7,2 km

Dislivello positivo da

