

VONSY®



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Newsletter

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European & Dutch champion Long Distance 2017 and **WORLDRECORD: 15 (Fifteen!) times Sub 9 hours**

IRONMAN MAASTRICHT

Don't even know where to start. I'm normally big mouthed and before the race in Maastricht that wasn't different, I wanted to win, I wanted to become Dutch Champion and if possible, well then please my course record back as well. What happened, well none off the above that's for sure. Let me take you true my day, a more real race report this time as I think it will help me to get over the disappointment of a day where almost nothing went as planned.

Race morning, the normal 3 hours before the start I eat my breakfast, nothing fancy, just 2 or 3 white toast with some butter any honey. I'm totally calm and feel great until like half a hour before the start. But you know this is IM number 41 so I know how I work and what will happen, so I've organized my best friend Joyce to be there for that moment when my nerves get to me. She talk's to me, holds me and says the exact right words, we have been here several times before, together we handle this better. I look into her calm blue eyes and get myself back under control, my last preps, swimsuit on, swim cap and goggles in my hand, 1 Ultrasports gel and some water and off I am.

Everything good so far.

7 AM race start, as it's a Pro women race only, we have the luxury to start first in the "beautiful" waters off the Maas.... Hahahah well beautiful.... it's a fun and great course but don't expect to see any dolphins or so :) Until the far turnaround I'm with the later 1st and 3rd girl and we are swimming pretty well, due to a stupid mistake I fall off on the way back and loose precious time. 5th out of the water, it's kind of what I expected, but the day is long and a lot can happen.

Looking forward to a exciting adventure on the bike as this is the first time that I don't know the bike course, **BIG MISTAKE**, biggest mistake ever, this pretty fun, but very technical bike course is a shocker when you haven't checked it out before. After flying out of 1 corner I got more careful, which means slower. After loosing my nutrition bottle twice and yes, you are reading correct turning around twice to pick up my bottle, besides of being careful I was also holding my bottle every bump or uneven surface, means slower as well.



Bye this time I was telling myself that this is a great bike course but why the hell didn't I ride it before hand as I always do? I was still making up time on almost everybody outside off the late winner fellow dutchy Els Visser.

Coming off the bike and leaving transition in 3rd position behind talented US girl Haley Chura, I was eager to go and get the 2 girls in front of me, I trust on my good run and knew I had a great marathon in me, that could run me to the win.

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But it wouldn't be my day, I struggled with immense back pains from the beginning of the run, similar as in Roth. The pain was even worse than 5 weeks ago and I truly cried as I didn't know how I would make it to the finish line. I didn't think I could handle this pain for more than 3 hours. Let alone on an easy flat course, but no, IM Maastricht is an awesome run course but with lots of up and downs, corners, turns and cobble stones.

Thanks to mister Aspirin and all the great support out there I was fighting true the pain, People saw me suffer on the course and on the live coverage, it wasn't nice and it wasn't fun. I didn't think about quitting, no way, not in this IM in my home country, no change. I suffered as never before and never thought of stopping, I was only thinking that this didn't have anything to do with having "fun". It made me sad, I do this sport because I love it, because I have so much fun while racing any yes of course you have pain, but this pain was just too much and all of a sudden it didn't have anything to do with FUN anymore :-).

I couldn't run my normal run, I had to stop many times to stretch when the pain got to bad, I was never alone, the support out there was amazing, my fighting spirit was always with me and I tried all that I could, I fought to the very end, which brought me to the finish line in 2nd place.



Yes I am sad that I didn't win, but it's very clear for me that I'm so immensely proud of myself, that I handled all which went wrong with such grace (ok I cursed a bit sometimes) and dealt with the pain and still finished 2nd at IM Maastricht, that this puts the sadness away.

This 2nd place has learned and brought me more than many of my big wins, because I didn't give up and just made the best out of a shitty day.

It's great to finally see some new young Dutch talent, I've been racing for so long and it feels like a relief that there are finally some Dutch girls that I can hand over the Dutch flag to and that can race on the highest level, don't take me wrong, they are not clear of me yet, I will be racing some more years and on a good day I would have been the one to jump on that highest spot, I truly believe that.

Everything happened for a reason, it wasn't meant for me to win IM Maastricht again, maybe a little sign, never take it for granted that you win races and your body always gives you 100%. I'm happy for Els' true performance, she has worked so hard for it and it's well deserved.

I'm on a new adventure already, almost arriving in Turku, my 3rd year in a row to race the wonderful Challenge Turku event in beautiful Finland.

For me it's already a success before the race, I love this country, the race, the people that organize it, the travel to here and most of all my husband that will be waiting for me at the bus station in Turku.....

Hug from your **Vonsy**