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Austria eXtreme Triathlon 2017

Our story could actually be told very short: trained hard, raced harder, enjoyed fantastic days surrounded by great people in and around Graz. Well, you might be interested in some more details particularly related to race day, here you go: after standard breakfast comprising honey bread and coffee, my two supporters, Patrik & Res, and I drove to the start and checked in for the swim. The swim was solid for my capabilities, so was T1. Luckily, we reconnoitered the first part of the bike course the day before what allowed me to focus on putting the hammer down from the very beginning on. I kept in mind the chairperson's words to save some power for the passes to cross, however the legs felt good and thus I was not in "saving mode" at all. The road conditions were surprisingly good but it started heating up, especially during the last climb to Sölkpass I was grateful to have my team around supporting me with fuel as well as motivating words and gestures. One of my highlights was passing Michael who went on to win the race just before reaching the top, however no chance for me to keep up with his downhill skills, very impressive! I was happy reaching T2 in good shape and after some refreshments, I left for Südwandhütte. Unfortunately, I twisted my left foot being 15 minutes in the run only, however being 3rd overall at that point was worth suffering a bit more than without a paining foot. The strategy for the next approx. 5 hours was simple: stay hydrated, do not look back and just keep going! I finally made it to "T.2.5" where I was glad to see Patrik and Res again and continue the journey together with Patrik, although he gave me a hard time and kept telling me to move faster. One the last climb to Südwandhütte, we called my wife who together with our two boys motivated me to master the last steep steps. At Südwandhütte, Res joined us and so the team was reunited again to finish the race together. Crossing the finish line is always special to me, particularly the last 200 meters when I remember the many (hard) trainings and privations that are even more worth it if a race day ends successfully as it did at the autXtri 2017 with the 3rd rank overall. In sum, it was a great atmosphere and special thanks go to the whole autXtri crew that was not only accountable for an impeccable organization but also a heartfelt ambience as well as the other athletes and supporters with whom we spent unforgettable days between Graz and Ramsau am Dachstein!"