

3RD AUSTRIA EXTREME TRIATHLON: AUSTRIA'S TOUGHEST LONG-DISTANCE EVENT

29th June 2017

The lights of headlamps, moving through the night towards the South Wall refuge, sitting on a mountain ridge at an altitude of almost 2000m. The flashes of a near thunderstorm, which briefly illuminate the mountain landscape – rugged rocks, dominated by the south wall of the Dachstein, rising vertically for another 1000 m. A steep mountain trail, leading down to the finish line at 1800m, which must be reached before midnight. This is the last stage of the Austria eXtreme Triathlon, Austria's toughest long-distance event.

Taking place on June 24, 2017 for the third time, the event name kept its promise: before the athletes were received by an enthusiastic crowd, they had to face the extreme challenges of 3.8km of river swimming, 187km of cycling and 44km of running, with a total of 5,800meters in altitude difference.



Race day began in the dark of night in the picturesque river landscape south of Graz. Accompanied by the concert of the frogs in the surrounding ponds and the mystical assistance of the “Ghostwalker”, the athletes prepared themselves between the campfires for the start. With a burning “X” logo dropped at 4:30am came the starting shot for the swim in the Mur that was unusually “warm” with 16 degrees. Guided by signal lights on the buoys and kayaks, all the starters successfully managed the river flow and hit the bike route with the sun rising.

Four mountains with a total of 3,900m in altitude difference were waiting for the athletes and temperatures that quickly rose to more than 30 degrees. Efficient teamwork of athletes and supporters to ensure the supply of drinks was key to going on. After changing to running, the temperatures climbed to 34 degrees, accompanied by a strong headwind. Hard conditions in the face of the 1,900m altitude difference on the running track. On the last 17km up into the mountain region of the Dachstein athletes and supporters finally raced together to meet as a team the challenging conditions, which included nightfall and thunderstorms.



The challenging track naturally took its toll, but 45 out of 125 registered athletes from 28 nations finished the 3rd Austria eXtreme Triathlon. With a time of 12:39, the Austrian Michael Strasser won his second victory after 2015. Kristina Roth from Germany finished as the fastest woman with a time of 16:33. In spite of all the hardships, you could only see smiling faces at the finish line – among

the athletes and their supporters, who had teamed up for the Austria eXtreme Triathlon and who were enthusiastic about the beauty of the mountain landscape. Among their numerous family members and friends who were part of the adventure of this race. Among the spectators and fans along the track that remained at the finish line until midnight. And, of course, among all the volunteers and the organization team, whose President Maria Schwarz summarizes the philosophy of the Austria eXtreme Triathlon: “Only

together we are strong. In addition, this year's motto is "It will change your life". After all, all athletes went to their limits today and they will take the experience of this race day back into their daily lives.

For more information about the event, please visit the [website](#).