

Inferno Half Marathon (English)

Participant number: 1170

Dr. T T Niranjana, ETH Zurich.

Age 35, Finishing time: 3 hrs 28 mins

This was a first organized running race for me. I had been training for about 2-3 months and was quite excited about this run, a “devilish mountain race”, as the website described it. Well, I will not belabor the point, yes, of course it is a devilish route, uphill all the way, but that should be obvious in case you have seen the route profile and official event description 😊 and that is precisely what attracts hundreds of runners.

Firstly, a word about the organization. It was par excellence. On the race day we were issued the race bib, a cap, a waist water carrier and a pack of Isostar electrolytes. Not to worry, you don't have to carry everything, there were ample refreshment points along the route.

The race began on time at 10:15 am. Nothing particularly eventful about the first part, pleasant weather of around 15 C and a mildly sloping route. I enjoyed getting pampered at the refreshment point. The staff was very cheerful and encouraging; especially the kids aged 10-12, perhaps children of the volunteers, who were very excited with their responsibility and taking their job very seriously. I did a mistake here, I did not know there would be very frequent points further ahead and gorged myself a bit too heavily. A pity I had to now walk for the next one hour or so despite it being not a steep section because I felt bloated. I just passed the next two stops without pausing to eat anything.

For most of the hilly sections (only uphill; hardly any down-hills) for me it was a walk, not a run. But believe me, it is tough to maintain even 3 kph walk on the steeper sections. Unfortunately, as we gained altitude I was sure there would be excellent scenery but visibility was down to a few meters and the “view” was essentially same throughout the rest of the run. After Murren it even began to drizzle and that part was not too pleasant. The last one third of the route is the most exciting, the rocky route involves some very steep sections where you can almost use your hands and do rock climbing!!

Nice thing was, at this stage when it had turned cold and wet, around 5 C, they started providing hot tea/Isostar, oh it felt heavenly. I was feeling better in the latter section as the bloating sensation had

worn off. But of course, as I said the run was down to a slow walk, with both hands pushing on the thighs and back-breaking. And the sweat was frosting at the tip of the hair on my legs!!!

I finished in 3 hr 28 mins, and later found I was placed 112 out of 144 in the main category. Not bad for someone who began serious running only a few months ago. At the top . I took some pics and enjoyed my successful completion for about 10 mins. But that time was enough to numb my wet fingers (although I had worn gloves). So much that I fumbled and took 15 mins to change my clothes to a dry set. I didn't know there was a nice warm resting room below with recovery drinks and eats, went there and enjoyed my well earned break. They issued the finisher T shirts there. Warm and well-fed, we took the cable car down to Murren.

Murren was the centre of activity/relaxation, like a festival, with so many family members/kids of runners and the Triathlon that was happening the simultaneously. Had pasta, collected my main bag, took a quick shower and went to the massage centre. This was my first massage, it felt very good.

I found it amazing how they could provide so much for a small registration fee. I am sure it must have taken a lot of selfless service from the volunteers for setting up the route catering infrastructure, route marking, collecting the used cups and route markers after the run (it is no joke to do all this at 3000 m altitude).

Barring weather, everything else about the event was just amazing, and I look forward to doing the 2010 edition. Hope to see some of you there. Happy running!