

About a Gator #56: Dominick “Sonny” Dayrit

March 2016



1. **SVYMG:** What is your endurance sports background?

Sonny: Growing up, and until recently, the thought of running or biking long distances wasn't all that appealing to me. Even in the sports in which I participated when I was younger (wrestling, tennis and CYO track), I wasn't the biggest fan of running. I started running again a little over seven years ago after getting scolded several times by my doctor to get my levels in check. I picked up a "couch-to-5k" plan and quickly got hooked. Since then, I have run five marathons (Baltimore 2011, Marine Corps 2012, Philadelphia 2012 and 2013, and New York City 2015) and a bunch of half-marathons, 10 milers, and 5k races. About a year after getting back into running, I picked up cycling just to try something other than running. And about 3½ years ago, I started taking swimming classes with hopes of completing a triathlon; I got the inspiration to attempt a triathlon after watching NBC's Ironman coverage and seeing a former "Biggest Loser" contestant finish the race. My first tri was the 2013 Riverwinds Sprint (West Deptford, NJ). Since then, I've finished one half-Ironman distance event and several other Olympic and sprint distance events as well as a couple of Tough Mudder events.

2. **SVYMG:** What are your top 3 endurance sports goals?

Sonny: My goals are:

- Finish my first full Ironman distance race this up-coming October (Ironman Maryland)
- Continue to get better and stronger at swimming and cycling
- Participate in any type of endurance race abroad

3. **SVYMG:** What has been your favorite race in which you've participated?

Sonny: It's really hard to pick one but I would have to say the Baltimore Marathon because it was the first marathon I completed and it's what got me started towards entering other endurance races.

4. **SVYMG:** What is the race that you'd most like to do?

Sonny: Aside from Ironman Maryland this year, if I ever qualify (and I'm pretty far from it at the moment), I'd love to run the Boston Marathon.

5. **SVYMG:** What song would you most like to hear at the starting line of a race? How about the finish line?

Sonny: At the start, I'd like hear "Ready, Steady, Go (remix)" by Paul Oakenfold; it's a good techno song to get blood going. A close second would be "Jump Around" by House of Pain.

6. **SVYMG:** What has been your best endurance sports experience to date?

Sonny: My best experience is probably finishing Ironman Princeton 70.3. And it wasn't because I finished with a great overall time, it's because I was able to overcome some obstacles during the race and still finish. During the bike leg, I experienced several incidents including a flat tire at mile 9, which for some reason took me forever to change, and then I had a minor accident around mile 30... After the 2nd incident, I had real doubts if I'd get through the bike portion. Fortunately I did, and I finished with a decent run.

7. **SVYMG:** Do you have an endurance sports tip or two that you'd like to share?

Sonny: I would say perseverance and don't let perceived failures keep you down. I nearly gave up the whole idea of triathlons after taking up swimming and struggling mightily with it for a good six months or so. I just kept hitting the pool until it slowly started coming for me.

8. **SVYMG:** If you have one, who is your favorite professional endurance sports athlete?

Sonny: My favorite endurance athlete of late is Craig Alexander.

9. **SVYMG:** What is one interesting thing about yourself that has nothing to do with endurance sports that you'd like to share?

Sonny: I'm originally from the Philippines; I came here when I was just a toddler.

10. **SVYMG:** Any other background info you'd like to share?

Sonny: I grew up in Philly (Olney section). I graduated from Penn State, where I met Karen, my wife of almost 15 years. We have two sons, Devon (6th grade) and Dylan (4th grade). We also have two dogs, Boomer (boxer/shepherd mix) & Duke (lab/beagle mix). I've worked for Aetna for the past 16 years as an application/software programmer. Aside from sport activities I enjoy photography, cooking, and traveling.

