

## Ko Aloha La Ea

Ko Aloha la Ea - Keep Your Love - Behalte deine Liebe

That was the motto of IRONMAN Hawaii 2011. 2011 was a year that changed my life permanently. Certainly, it was the age group win with course record at the World Championship on Hawaii that made the difference. Hawaii is the most important race in long distance triathlon and after the sensational result I had no more goals in amateur sports. The race was the end of amateur sports and the beginning of professional racing.

Ko Aloha La Ea - The is immortalized in my heart and on my time trial bike.

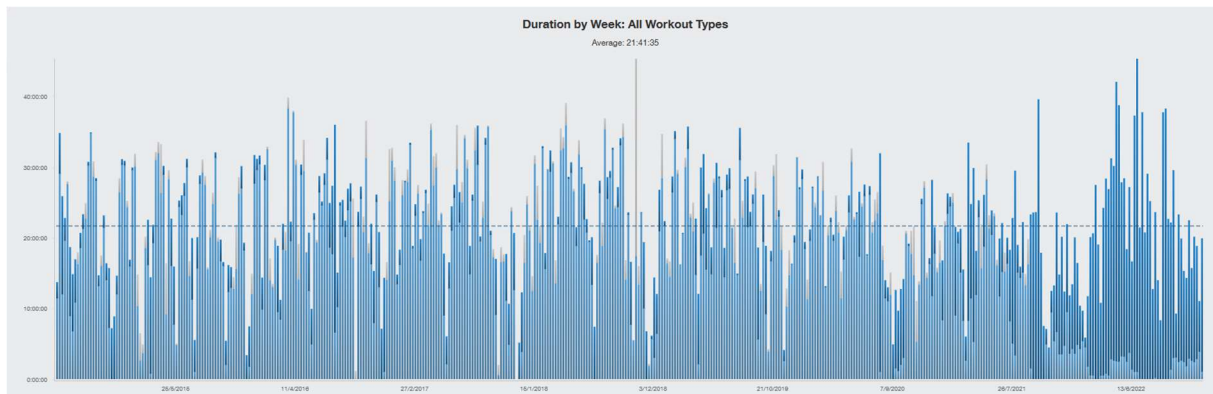


The result on Hawaii was indeed the deciding factor. But the real decisive achievement was that I didn't give up at the IRONMAN in Frankfurt in the summer of 2011. It was not a summer day in July, but a day with 10 degrees and continuous rain. At KM 80 on the bike I had a puncture and while changing the tube I damaged the valve of the spare tube. I spent freezing for about 30 minutes on the side of the road until I could get tools to repair the damage and continue. I knew that my boyfriend and my parents were only 2 km further down the road and it would have been easy to roll there and stop the race. Not to give up here, but to continue gave me still the Hawaii qualification. And enabled me to have the phenomenal race on the island. If I had dropped out then, my life would certainly be very different today. I am convinced of that.

## Living the life of a professional triathlete

Triathlon - my passion.

11 years in professional sports with a total of over 12000 h in the water, on the bike and running. Adding strength training, core stability, mobilization and stretching. That's not passion every day. Certainly, it was not always easy. But my heart was always in it. Ko Aloha La Ea.



During the whole time I never gave up my profession and so I always had at least one foot on the ground and in normal life.

I am proud to have achieved so much in professional sports:

2x 1st place IRONMAN (Austria 2018, Malaysia 2018).

7x 2nd place IRONMAN (Australia 2013-2016, Malaysia 2016+2017, Brazil 2016)

2x3rd place IRONMAN (Denmark 2014, Switzerland 2015)

6x IRONMAN World Championship Hawaii as a pro: best result 11th place (2017, best German).



I wanted to do my final race at Challenge in Roth. That was my first long distance in 2007. It would have rounded up my career nicely. From 2020 onwards, due to the pandemic, planning races was unfortunately barely impossible. One year Roth was cancelled, another year Roth was postponed. Then a back injury slowed me down in the preparation for 2022. Certainly, I could have been on the start line in 2022 and have finished the race. However, not at a professional level. So, I decided to end my career without a real final race.

## What do I take away from my time as a professional athlete?

You won't find any finisher medals in my apartment. I have always given them away. More important to me are the memories, experiences, and insights I take with me from this period of my life, and what I have learned during that time. A few ways of thinking that I have recognized for myself, lived day by day and keep living them:

Facing challenges with respect, but free from fear.

Facing challenges openly, with confidence and belief in yourself.

To have courage in the right moments.

Being patient in the right moments.

Not giving voice to the inner bastard.

Listening to the tiredness in your body.

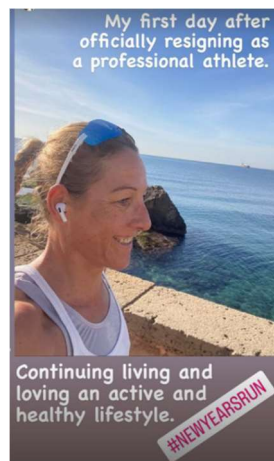
Doing the important things right.

Carrying the Ko Aloha La Ea in your heart.

## Sporty turn of the year

This turn of the year was very special for me. Looking back was emotional, but I was not sad. I am convinced that it is right to say goodbye to competitive sports now.

Traditionally, I have made the turn of the year sporting. The last 15 years I spent the turn of the year on the Canary Islands, this time I was in Palma. I cycled 202.2 km on the last day of 2022 and welcomed the year 2023 with a run of 20.23 km. Not only symbolically I had New Year 20.23 (km) in hand.



Everyone can strive to set the right course for a good future. And not only on New Year's Day, but every day. I try to remind myself of this often.

## What's next?

Quite some time ago, I took a week just for myself to think about how I wanted to shape my new phase of life. I was surprised at how emotional this process was for me. I am glad, that I didn't make the considerations and decisions on the fly or even on the side.

I will continue to work with a 50% position at BYK-Chemie in Wesel.

Since June 2020, I have a small personal training & coaching business, which I would like to continue in this scale in the future. This way I can stay connected to the sport and pass on my passion and experience to my clients.

I am continuing my education in the topics of mindfulness and stress reduction. On the one hand, these are topics that interest me and about which I would like to learn more. On the other hand, these are topics that play an important role in life and in holistic (sports) coaching.

I remain with triathlon and continue training, albeit a little less, with reduced intensity and without a training plan. You won't find me on the starting lines though. I am looking forward to following the sport as a fan on the roadside and in front of the screen.

I will certainly be on the road a lot in the future, but Wesel is and will remain my home.





## Conclusion

I look back on my time as a triathlete with deepest satisfaction, pride, and gratitude. Triathlon has opened my heart, pushed boundaries, broadened my view, and enriched my life. I will carry the experiences I made and the people I met in my heart for all my future.



Now a new phase of life has started and I hope that someday I can look back on this one just as happily.

Thank you for being part of my journey. I wish you all the best for your future. Stay healthy, happy and confident,

Yours, Mareen.

With my sponsors and partners, who supported me for years and made this way possible, I remain connected in gratitude and friendship:

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