



## La Transtica 2011 - Race Report

### **November 24: Opening ceremony, press conference at the "Residence de France".**

The French Ambassador, Mr. Fabrice Delloye, receives us at the "Résidence de France", for a lunch buffet and a press conference, showing once again his support for La Transtica.

After an interview on Channel 44, it is time to process to the sort out of the race numbers.

It will be the opportunity to let a representative of each of the 7 nations engaged on the race to introduce himself (Belgium, United States, Guatemala, Japan, France, Mexico and Costa Rica).

During this cordial and convivial ceremony, our links with the French Embassy in Costa Rica will be strengthened through the signature of a partnership convention, between the Embassy and the association El Niño.

The French Embassy will finance for each member of the organization and for each competitor a T-shirt with the logos of the French Embassy in Costa Rica and La Transtica and Roiny Villegas, representing Costa Rica, will defend this year the colors of the French Embassy, which has also sponsored its inscription through this partnership convention!

The organization Team composed of about fifteen members from France and Costa Rica, including an emergency doctor, a physiotherapist and 7 French firemen will be reinforced by 5 members of the "Cruz Roja" (Costa Rica Red Cross) and their vehicles (1 pick up, 1 ambulance 4x4 and a truck).

On the solidarity side of La Transtica, the financial support of the associations "Action 18" and "Amicale des Sapeurs Pompiers des Cabrières", will make possible the local purchase and the distribution of more than 300 school kits to the profits of the pupils of schools in Panama and in Costa Rica, whereas the support of the association "Run & Trail 3S" will allow to finance the project of renovation and furniture equipment of the library of the school "Finca la Caja" in the district disfavored of La Carpio nearby San Jose.

Moreover the financial support of the "Comité d'Entreprise Total UES AMONT" will permit to finance 4 renovation projects, to the profit of the schools of "La Esperanza", "El Progreso de Pacayitas" and "Finca la Caja, and of the sports field of the Community of "El Humo".

On the top of that we can add a part of the profit from the races that the associations El Niño and CG Sport Event are organizing in France, "Le Trail des Balcons d'Azur", "La Free Ride Classic Mandelieu" et "Le Trail des Illuminés" as well as the material given by the Hospital of Cannes, a monitor ECG (for the dispensary of Londres) and two Lifepak Physio Control that will be donated to the Red Cross of Puriscal.

It is in total more than 12 000 Euros that will be invested locally to the profit of the most disadvantaged in the continuity of our actions 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Our solidarity objectives are reached and the diversity of the runners lets us augur a beautiful race.





## November 25: Prologue, Beach of Manuel Antonio

8h00, we are ready to leave, 2 hours until Tarcoles, a stop to watch crocodiles, then again 2 hours that bring us to Manuel Antonio on the Pacific coast.

Change of ambiance, sea and heavy heat, meal in the Gato Negro, weather is hot, very hot and just after the hotel check in, some will refresh in the swimming pool, while waiting for the departure of the prologue delayed to 16:30 because of the tide.

16h32, it is start of the prologue, for 3 loops of 2 kms on the beach of Manuel Antonio.

End of afternoon, the sun plays with the clouds before going to lie down, but it is even hot

Roiny Villegas, winner of the edition 2009 gives the tone by taking the head, some strides behind him, Juan Carlos Sagastume and Pierre Aubery don't release anything, letting augur a beautiful fight.

At the end of the first loop, the positions are unchanged, whereas behind, the first effects of the heat are felt.

On the finish line few seconds separate the 3 leaders, Roiny Villegas, Team Embassy of France (Costa Rica) will win this prologue in 23'14, before Juan Carlos Sagastume, Team North Face / GNC (Guatemala) in 23'45 and Pierre Aubery, Team Action 18 / Altec Sport in 24'14.

On the adventure race, the prologue is won by Armando Perez (Mexico), in 30'25 before Shinishi Tada (Japan) in 31'32 and Véronique Gruson Coustenoble (France) in 32'02.

The competitors will then be able to swim in the hot waters of the Pacific, before benefitting of a last night of comfort in the hotel.

At the time of the evening meal, a donation of a monitor ECG (Hospital of Cannes) was carried out, to the profit of the dispensary of Londres, in continuation of our aids 2008, 2009 and 2010.





## November 26: Stage 1: Paquita - La Selvita - Napoles

A super first stage, 40km to run, a starting line along the pacific coast through the heart of a green palm grove before entering in the tropical jungle gradually. As a starter, 15 km of flat track with bridges crossings and some rivers to ford before a progressive rise that will bring our runners in full jungle.

The main difficulty of this stage will be the heat and the humidity that reign on this part of Costa Rica.

From the start, Pierre Aubery escapes with Juan Carlos Sagastume on a flat track in a palm grove, Roiny Villegas stays in contact 200 m behind, until the first check point where he joins them.

At PC2, twentieth kilometer, a shelter reduces to its simplest expression, opened to the 4 corners on the surrounding jungle which will be used as point of supply but also as a starting line for the adventures runners.

For an introduction, it cannot be better for the adventure runners which will start with a stage intense for 20 km with a strong positive difference in level of 1300m.

The apprehension is shown on their faces; the group is less noisy than the day before on the starting line of the prolog.

The track is simply going up until the arrival.

On the Extreme, Juan Carlos and Roiny escape on the beginning of the ascension. Pierre remains in contact a few meters behind. Then Juan Carlos slow down in one of the stiff parts whereas Roiny accelerates.

At 12 km from the arrival Pierre Aubery (Action 18/Altecsport) accentuates his effort and ends increasing the gap on Roiny Villegas (Embassy of France) and Juan Carlos Sagastume (North Face / GNC).

He won't be caught up anymore and Pierre will win this first stage in 3h58'53 " before Roiny in 4h01'12 " and Juan Carlos in 4h18'58 ", the last runner finishing in 6h45.'

On the adventure race, the surprise comes from the women as they will grab the 3 first places, Muriel Boust, Véronique Sternat both finishing first in 3h10'30 " before Véronique Gruson-Coustenable in 3h14'12 ", the last runner finishing in 4h12.'

Arrived to Napoles, the bus is waiting for the runners, for a short transfer to the camp of Santa Maria de Dota where the runners will take advantage of a well deserved rest.

In the Rancho Guayabal, our night camp, a fire and a good soup are welcomed to warm us.

*"The first day of la Transtica run across Costa Rica was beyond expectation. The scenery and route were incredible, winding through the lowlands and up into breathtaking mountains.*

*On the top of that, the constant rain meant I was never too hot! The best part about running through the villages and untouched countryside has been experiencing "Pura Vida" with ever step".*

**Victoria Collins, USA (Extreme)**





## November 27: Stage 2: Santa Maria de Dota - Ojo of Agua

The Extremes race starts at 8 a.m., from the village of Santa Maria de Dota for the stage considered to be the most difficult considering its impressive difference in level, 2.720 m positive, 1.310 m negative under a bright sun.

As a starter, a first 15% upward slope ...

From the beginning Pierre Aubery and Juan Carlos Sagastume precede Roiny Villegas of a few hundred meters.

Behind them, the efforts of the day before are felt and the gap widens quickly.

Come then 15 km of climb to join the PC 2 starting line for the adventures runners, (21,1 km, with a difference in level of 1 180 m positive and 1 020 m negative).

At PC2, the positions remain the same, Pierre and Juan Carlos starting the 10 km of descent with a light advance, whereas Roiny seems to manage his effort. The two runners reach the village of Providencia (PC 3) 2mn before Roiny.

It is in the last climb (12 km and 1 140 m of positive difference of level) that will lead the runners to 2 990 meters of altitude, that Roiny will carry his attack.

At 7 km from the arrival he will take down its 2 rivals to finally win this stage with an advantage of 4 minutes, in 4h46'37 ".

On the general ranking, Pierre Aubery (Action 18/Altecsport) loses 3'11 " and the first place to the profit of Roiny Villegas (Embassy of France), Juan Carlos Sagastume (North Face / GNC) reinforcing his 3rd places.

Tomorrow's stage promises to be hot!

On the Adventure race, our three women reinforce their leadership, Muriel Boust and Véronique Sternat both finishing in 2h58'04 " before Véronique Gruson-Coustenoble in 3h04'40 ", Shinishi Tada (Japan) in 3h16'01 " and Armando Perez (Mexico) in 3h21'57 ", the last runner in 4h52.'

Rain and the cold weather will be part of the adventure but the competitors will be taken quickly in charge on their arrival, all happy to have reach the end of this difficult stage, for a transfer of 20 min. toward the village of La Esperanza, our bivouac for the evening.

After a collation and a hot soup, a donation of 43 school kits to the profit of the school of Purisil, in preamble with the dinner prepared by the local community where the runners will appreciate a salmon trout and a well deserved rest in the classrooms of the school.





### November 28: Stage 3: The Esperanza - Kiri Lodge - El Humo

After a donation to the profit of the school of Esperanza, the 20 runners rush in the Tapanti national park for 24.1 km, difference in level of +585m /-1830m, for the Adventure runners and for a Marathon of 42.1 km, with a difference in level of +985m /- 2830m for the Extreme runners.

The sun finally appeared after one rainy night and blew.

This time the adventures and the extremes will start together.

On the paper the profile seems easier, but doesn't reflect the main difficulties of this stage. At the race briefing, it is reminded that it is going to be necessary to manage de-escalation on a single track filled of trap: mud, roots, spiny vegetation, abrupt slope.

It starts by a breathtaking slope of 3 km, to reach 2 850 m of altitude, before attacking a first downward portion, to reach at km 6th, the entry of the famous single track, the decor is well changing, penetration in deep heart of the " Tapanti ", The slopes are very abrupt, it is very slippery. There are mud and lots of roots, it is necessary to pay attention before clinging to the branches because some are strewn of thorns...

Following is a river crossing secured by a rope, before beginning a small ascension through this jungle... it is really hard... A new descent, through the plantations of coffee trees until PC 3, arrival line for the Adventure runners.

The runners of the extreme will have to go through 2 more passes and 18 kilometers to join El Humo following a smashed track in the middle of a humid tropical forest.

After its failure of the day before, it is certain that Pierre Aubery will do his best to reduce his 3 min. gap on Roiny Villegas.

At PC1 (km 9), end of descent of the Tapanti, Pierre and Juan Carlos are pointed 3 min. before Roiny, at PC 2 (Km 19), Pierre leaves behind Juan Carlos (at 6mn) and accentuates his advance on Roiny (9mn).

Pierre manages his end of race and will pass the finish line in 3h51'40 " with 14'40 advance on Roiny (4h06'10 ") that passed Juan Carlos (4h24'40 ") in a last effort.

On the general ranking, Pierre Aubery (Action 18/Altec Sport) retrieves the first place leaving Roiny Villegas (Embassy of France) at more than 11 min. and Juan Carlos Sagastume (North Face / GNC) assures his 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

On the Adventure race, our 3 feminine seem untouchable, leaving the other runners at more than 20 min. but for the 4th places nothing is done.

Some will visit the "Trapiche" while waiting for the dinner, prelude to a donation of material intended to renovate the sport field of the community before being invited to appreciate and take part in local dances.

We will go to bed relatively early because tomorrow it is the night stage, the alarm clocks are set up to 2h30 am for a departure at 3h45 am...





## November 29: Stage 4: El Humo - San Pablo

2h30 the alarm clocks ring... It is necessary to speed up because the start is at 3h45, breakfast, care, packing.

The adventures and extreme leave together for a neutralized section, the real starting line is at the exit of the village of Pejibaje.

The faces are tired, the night was short, the night is black and the noises of the jungle sound in the immensity.

The course of the day, seem the most balanced of all the stages. The pace is good before starting a first rise, then a muddy descent followed by a little portion of road to join the PC1.

It begins to rain whereas the runners penetrate to the heart of the sugar cane fincas; it is the beginning of the climb toward the summit of the Cerro Atirro.

The rising of the day on the lake of La Suiza is embedded in an intense fog, which will not leave the runners, giving an unreal environment to this stage.

Arrived to Pueblo Nuevo, crossing of a suspended bridge before starting a long ascension toward the village of El Silencio, a last 4 km murderous, PC3, km 23,7 and finish line for the adventures..

The Extremes will have to add a pass and the 19,1 kilometers that separate them of San Pablo.

At PC1 (Km 9), entry of the Cerro Atirro, Pierre Aubery, Juan Carlos Sagastume and Roiny arrive together, followed some minutes latter by most of the rest of the runners, and will stay together PC2 (16 km), entry of the Finca Canada, who is going to carry his attack the first.

Pierre takes the initiative on the first slope and arrived at PC3 (km 23) 3mn before Roiny and 6 min. before Juan Carlos Sagastume. Pierre looks easy, whereas behind him Roiny seems in difficulty.

A last effort in the rise until the last pass before attacking the descent toward San Pablo and on PC4 (km 31), our impressions are confirmed as Pierre point with more of 12 min. of advance on Roiny.

Pierre Aubery (Action 18/Altec Sport) insure until the end of the course and his pursuers will never be able to come back, he will finish in 3h55'12" before Roiny Villegas (Embassy of France) in 4h17'15" and Juan Carlos Sagastume (North Face / GNC) in 4h27'10 ".

With more than 33 min. of advance on the scratch ranking, Pierre Aubery seems to be in good position to win the Extreme race.

Didier Rossi, wounded to the knee, will go until the end of his strengths and will finish last of the stage in 6h29'30 " under the applause of the other competitors, again a big moment of emotion.

Faithful to themselves, our three women finishes in head, and Armando Perez reduce the gap to 3mn on Jacky Malassagne 4<sup>th</sup>.

The rest of the day in San Pablo will be dedicated to a recuperation rest to be able to appreciate tomorrow the descent in rafting of the Rio Pacuare.





### **November 30: Rafting**

Guaranteed thrill, loaded of adrenaline at the time of this rafting on the River Pacuare (class III and IV!) We embark on rafts of 6 and a coxswain guide who explains us the security instructions as well as the 4 basics movements: Forward, behind, to hold the ropes, and to protect ourselves in the boat... He also explains us how to take someone of water and the attitude to have if one falls to water.

Here we go, and the tone is given. The decor is simply unique, the tropical vegetation and the power of waters transport us in a fantastic world of pure magic.

The landscape is paradisiac, impressive cascades, lush vegetation and strong emotions for those whom raft will roll over.

### **December 1: Stage 5 Playa Negroes - Manzanillo**

8h31 the start of the last stage of La Transtica 2011 is given on the beach Playa Negro, 5 km before the village of Puerto Viejo.

Rain is back again, which finally will make this stage less difficult, the runners not having to suffer from the heavy heat that we had known the past year.

This last stage is composed of a first wild beach section of black sand, followed by the crossing of Puerto Viejo along the sea side, a shaded path before joining the second section of rosy white sand beach as wild as the first section surrounded by an exuberant jungle which gives the impression to dive in the Caribbean. To follow a 2 km road section allowing us to bypass the rocky coastline.

At PC2, back on the last beach portion with crossing of an estuary to arrive at PC3a last loop in the reserve of Gandoca of an astonishing beauty, where the runners will have to be armed with courage to face this last section, a muddy and slippery single track.

The finish line is in Manzanillo last village before Panama.

Pierre Aubery (Action 18/Altecsport) will win this last stage in 2h28'48, in front of Juan Carlos Sagastume in 2h30'02' , and will confirm his 1st place to the Final ranking, covering the 196 km in 19h29'52 " , new record of the Extreme course.

For the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, Roiny Villegas Costa Rica, (Embassy of France) confirm his strong potential, with its 4<sup>th</sup> podium, 2<sup>nd</sup> on the final ranking Extreme in 20:47' 09'' in front of Juan Carlos Sagastume, Guatemala, (North Face/GNC), 3<sup>rd</sup> in 20:55' 03".

Victoria Collins will finish on her mental, despite of a strong foot pain handicapping her since 3 days, in 32h06' forcing the respect and the admiration of all.

On the Adventure race, Muriel Boust and Véronique Sternat will both finish 1<sup>st</sup> of the final ranking covering the 120 km in 15h17'48 " , before Véronique Gruson Coustenable in 15h40'13 " and Jacky Malassagne in 17h28'49 " .





## **Conclusion:**

The 21 runners engaged on this Transtica 2011 have been able to discover through the different stages, a varied course which brought them from the Pacific Coasts to the Caribbean Coasts.

They have been confronted to changing weather conditions, often rainy, alternating heavy and moist heat of the plains, refreshing tropical rains, wind and icy rain of the altitude forest.

They have been involved in the solidarity aspect of La Transtica through the various donations, lots of emotional moments that we have shared together.

They were welcomed, lodged and celebrated by the local communities, moment of exchange while discovering the way of life of the various communities living in Costa Rica.

The organization 2011, strong of the knowledge acquired during the past editions, reinforced by 5 members of the Red Cross Red appeared to be particularly efficient, welded and reactive and made it possible for all the runners to fully live this adventure within conviviality and in full safety.

Our objective "The discovery of a country and its way of life through a sporting event with humanitarian goals" was over achieved, this time again, at the price of the enormous and effective work of each member of the organization and I say thanks to all of them

The group of the 21 runners of 7 different nations was also largely involved, each one bringing its own touch, carrying out its challenge and thus contributing to the total success of this Transtica 2011.

The cordial feedback given by the runners, during and after the race, the support of our partners or sponsors, the French Embassy in Costa Rica, Altec Sport, Generation Trail, 6<sup>ème</sup> Sens, Incomm and Sportips, brought us the daily motivation and t energy necessary to this success.

We were 44, runners and organization members, to have had the privilege to share an edition of La Transtica which was huge and intimate.

Pura Vida

Bernard Marchal

***La Transtica 2012 will take place from November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 to December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 and will be limited to 50 participants.***

*"It was my first multi day race and I did have a lot of luck that it was La Transtica 2011, Extreme course..*

*This race is a pure diamond, " Pura Vida "*

*The fantastic landscapes, the organization at the image of its boss: human, pro, only happiness.*

*In summary, to know La Transtica, Bernard and his team was a privilege for me.*

*I will come back in anyway for 2012!!! "*

***Franck Ducerf, France, Extreme.***





## La TRANSTICA 2011 in figures:

- 4<sup>th</sup> edition.
- 2 formats.
- 12 days of trip.
- 5 stages.
- 1 descent on rafting on the Rio Pacuare, level 3 to 4 +.
- Extreme race, 30 to 40 km per day, 196 km with a total positive difference in level of 6 855 m.
- 11 finishers, 19h30 for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 32h06 for the last.
- Adventure race, 20 to 30 km per day, 116 km with a total positive difference in level of 3950 m.
- 9 finishers 15h 17 for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 21h41 for the last.
- 21 trailers
- 1 give up
- 7 countries represented (Belgium, France, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, Costa Rica and USA)
- 22 members of organization including 5 members of the Cruz Roja from Costa Rica
- 1 emergency doctor
- 1 physiotherapist
- More than 12 000 € of school supplies, furniture and material of renovation distributed to the communities of Costa Rica and Panama.

