



Damian Lopez-Alfonso
Havana, Cuba.

Damian was a normal, healthy child until tragedy struck on November 8, 1989. At approximately 7am that morning, Damian – 13 years old at the time -- saw a kite stuck on a street post. He tried to retrieve the kite using an aluminum stick. The stick struck high voltage electrical cables and nearly 13,000 volts of current electrocuted his young body

Damian was rushed to the Children's Hospital in Havana in critical condition. He spent the next 52 days on life support in the intensive care unit. Nearly every day he underwent life-saving surgery.

Once off life support, he slowly regained his strength and was determined to move himself into a wheelchair. Not knowing if he would be able to walk again, Damian never stopped fighting to recover his mobility.

Months later, Damian was transferred to Clinico Quirugico, CIMEQ. He continued to face many more medical challenges. He had reconstructive surgery on his neck which had been badly damaged. During the nine-hour surgery, Damian stopped breathing due to a problem with the tracheotomy tube. Thanks to the skill of the visiting micro surgeon, Dr. Cladia Angruanini, Damian was revived once again and the surgery was deemed a success. But his battle was not over.

In 1991, Damian had facial reconstruction surgery. This eight-hour surgery was again performed by Dr. Angrianiani with assistance from other doctors from the Children's Hospital, including a team from Hermano's Amejeiras in Havana.

The surgeries continued. In 1992, Damian had surgery on his left eye. He had lost sight in the eye from the trauma of the electric shock and received a special lens implant to repair his vision. Next, he had a massive skin graft on his entire body.

Since his accident and countless surgeries, and despite his physical limitations, he has fought hard to overcome his handicaps. Damian began to care for homing pigeons, played soccer and tried new sports. Then he discovered cycling and found a new passion.

Damian began to focus solely on cycling. He quickly found his balance point and with amazing bike handling skills, he learned how to ride and race his bicycle with no prosthetics or adaptive equipment. He began to compete and win in local and regional races with non-disabled cyclists. His record, in mainstream races, includes:

Cycling

- Summer Festival for cyclists: Gold Medal
- Coppa 8 de Marzo Time Trial: Gold Medal ,
- Pursuit: Gold Medal
- Tour of Havana de Este: Second Place
- Tour de Caimito: 40th place overall, (120 riders)
- Criterium de Havana: Third Place (90 riders)
- Malacon Habanero, multiple entries, 3rd, 7th and 12th place.

Track & Field

- Gold Medal: Malacon Habanero: 100 meter