

So the mourning period is over and I have been using my training time to put together a report of my first marathon at the Gold Coast on Sunday.

My form going into the race had been mixed so I was finding it hard to know what kind of race I would be able to put together, and therefore knowing what time I could sensibly commit to.

I had a few goals. My Dad's first marathon was 3:20...but he was 45. Sub-3 had to be done. Sub-2:40 was definitely achievable and I would be very happy with this for a debut. ALPBChCh 2:39:06 was in my mind, and since Brett's pledge to race the Melbourne Marathon if I beat his PB ([does everyone remember reading that?](#)), 2:38:08 became a mandatory target. However, greed is a curse, so I was also thinking sub-2:35 would have been nice, too. As a result, I thought I would try to go through half way in 77:30 to give me the option of 2:35, without blowing my doors off.

Louise, Eila and I arrived in GC on the Friday and the weather seemed pleasant enough. It wasn't until about 4am Saturday morning when I was woken up by howling wind and driving rain that I got concerned. I was planning to go for a jog at about 6:50am but there was no way I was going out in those conditions. It was starting to resemble a tropical cyclone (but much colder!). I was beginning to regret that I had put all my eggs for the season into this one marathon's basket and now the winning time will be about 2:40 and I will be lucky to get under the 3:20 mark (much to my Dad's delight, I am sure). At about midday the wind died down so in lieu of the morning jog, we walked the 7K up to Southport for the registration and expo.

I tried to chill out in the afternoon, but sitting in a hotel, waiting, anticipating, thinking, is not really a very relaxing activity! I had thought about this stupid race enough. The thing that actually made me think everything would be OK was a photo of the front row of [runners](#) starting last year's race. It's just another running race - Get out there and enjoy it! For the afternoon, that photo became my "happy place" whenever I was getting a bit tense.

RACE DAY

Once again, I was awoken at 4am by the wind nearly tearing the balcony off the side of the building. Lovely!

I got up at 4:30, forced down some toast and an Endura, and I was right to go. There were shuttle buses leaving from central Surfers and it was a nice walk through a fair bit of drunken revelry to catch it. At 5am, the night was still young! Ah, they were the days.

The 6:50am start seemed a bit early - especially as in Victoria it doesn't get light until about 7:30. Still, the race organisers obviously knew

something I didn't as it was broad daylight by 6:30.

I missed seeing the start of the Half - I was surprised to see hundreds of people with red numbers still milling around the race compound about 10-minutes after the gun had gone off. Didn't these people want a PB???? At about the 35K mark of the marathon I started passing these half-marathoners and no, I don't think PBs had even been thought of (unless it was Peanut Butter 😊).

As with Melbourne last year, Deeks was at the start giving a bit of a motivational rev-up. I think at Melbourne it kind of went over my head, but here, I was drinking in every word he said - Finally, I was on the start line of my first marathon. It was good!

I started in the 2nd or 3rd row of the race but was determined not to get dragged along at 3:20 pace. Unfortunately, I missed the first K marker, then the second. I had no real idea of how fast I was going which was a bit unnerving. Turns out I started off a bit too slow (about 3:45 pace) and in a group that was not really interested in going any faster. There was one guy in the group who looked like a runner (he flew past me at about the 37K mark), but I didn't hold high hopes for some of the others. At about the 10K mark I realised that I had to up the tempo a little so jumped on with a couple of Japanese guys and we stayed together out to the southern turn. From here I seemed to begin finding my rhythm. I was running consistently at about 3:40 pace and feeling OK. Too afraid to go any faster so erring on the side of caution with my pace. As for the Japanese guys, at the turn, one of them decided enough was enough and took off at about 3:20/k pace, never to be seen again. The other went backwards at about the same rate.

So I was on my own from about 11K to 22K. Passing people here and there. Feeling good and actually enjoying myself.

A bit after the half-way mark, I caught the lead female. I had been catching and passing people for a while but when I caught Shireen she wouldn't let me get away (egotistical women!). She must have upped her pace to stay with me and I felt like telling her to not worry about me and run her own race...but it wasn't really my problem and I was enjoying the extra cheering she was getting.

So coming back past the start-line was fantastic. The crowd was going wild for the first girl. I saw a few familiar faces and everything was rosy. I have already posted about the Motorcycle crash so won't elaborate here. It shook me up a little - mainly the wife's blood-curdling screams! But the thought didn't occur to me to stop or slow down.

From 26-34K was the highlight of the marathon, for me. I felt great (I was alive!). I had put a lot of distance between me and the first

female, passed about 5 people...and all without changing my pace. I was constantly reminding myself to wait, wait, wait. I could have easily upped the pace here to 3:30s and would have had it not been for PM's words of warning about this ringing in my ears. I was ticking out 3:40s without stressing too much. I was fatigued but my body seemed to have set into an active kind of rigimortis and every Km I was happily surprised to look down and see something between 3:40-3:41 on my (well, Luke Y's) watch.

At about 34.5K the course reaches its northern-most point at Runaway Bay where runners do a 180-degree turn and head home again. Although the overnight gale-force winds had abated, there was a bit of a breeze to head into for the last 8K stretch but I was still surprised to look down at the 35K mark and see 3:53 for the KM. The next K was 3:56. I was trying to recapture that 3:40 rhythm that had seemed so effortless only a couple of KMs ago. I can't say I had lost my rhythm. It's just that my new rhythm was about 20sec/k slower than it had been 😞

I soldiered on. I was obviously getting a bit testy at the 37.5Km water station when a walking half-marathoner, about a meter wide, stepped in front of me at the drinks table. I think words sounding something like "Cat Funt" may have escaped my lips. Apologies to you, sir, if you happen to be a reader of this forum.

At the 42K mark it was nice to see the boys cheering me on. It was less nice to start feeling a cramp in my left hamstring (just as well it didn't happen 2K ago) and even less nice for some smart pr!ck to want to out-sprint me over the last 195m.

So, the net time was 2:37:41. Booking Brett a berth at the Melbourne Marathon. I will happily pay his entry if he beats my time.

The 5K splits were:

00:18:26
00:18:46
00:18:17
00:18:18
00:18:25
00:18:20
00:18:41
00:19:53
00:08:33

After the race I walked back to the hotel in Surfers (7K) which was pretty slow but I reckon it would have done a world of good. Great to catch up for a couple of Tooheys Olds with Handman, House, Dizzy, WebMistress and James A. House looked like he had barely run, so I

was not surprised to hear that he hadn't. 😊

Also good to head out to the Holiday Inn for dinner and who should be sitting at our table but Troopy, Mona AND Deeks! I was able to thank Deeks in person for his inspirational words pre-race!

Anyway, I reckon I pulled up OK. Nothing more than your garden-variety stiffness - if not a little longer lasting!

Thanks to AL, PM, Brett, Troopy for all the advice.

Next marathon - Melbourne. But not until 2009.

Cheers,
BB

PS. Team Coleman took out the 7.5k walk in a photo, but all bets were off when Emma decided to leave the kids (and pram) with Brett.