

Brisbane Marathon – Luke Peel – 04/08/2013

A day on, and although at work today I have had some reflection and data analysis on yesterday's marathon. I am honestly shocked with how well yesterday went and am very happy to have a PB to show for my trip to Brisbane.

Why Brisbane? I was originally entered in the Gold Coast Marathon a month ago; I got an injured achilles that meant my training was heavily impacted in the month prior – no runs greater than 30mins. I was able to get right for the race, but downgraded to the half, running slower than my PB but still breaking 80min. I pulled up very sore in the achilles for the first few days but with management was able to get it right. I put in 2 and a half weeks of crash course training, which included 3 * 30km + runs in 10 days (incl a 34km) and two MP pace efforts of 14 and 16km. I wanted to run this marathon also because I leave for Europe in a week and wanted to consolidate my years training (namely 13 runs of 30km+ for the year) and also not have any pressure to train hanging over my head.

I entered Brisbane with very low expectations – the goal was initially sub 3. As the four week block progressed I changed this to 2:55. It was easy to forget the missed training before Gold Coast given the positive recent training. In the past two months my total training time was actually greater than normal with all the riding and swimming (a couple of week's 11-12hrs).

Race Day – I woke to perfect weather at 4am – 8 degrees and 0km/hr winds. It was predicted sunny and 22 but with a 6am start heat was unlikely to impact my performance – I would be at the pub by the time the heat hit.

The race had the half and full go off together and runs the same course. I noticed the 1:24 balloon, but tried to put this out of my mind. The goal was to try and go out in 87, which would give me a great shot at 2:55 and if I was good enough to run 85 for the second half I could sneak a PB (2:52:07). My original goal for GC was 2:50 so I didn't consider an 85 half too far out of my potential if my legs held up. Another option was an even split to beat my GC '12 time (2:54:03).

I ran the first couple of km's sitting about 20m off the balloon, but I wasn't able to let him go, I didn't feel I was working too hard, got into a good groove and thought I would play it by ear. He was actually off pace, slower than 4:00min/km's, so I assumed he would speed up and I would let him go. At about 4km I looked back and there was no one for 100m, yet there were 15 people with the pacer.

We were consistently clocking low 4min/km's – passing 5 in 20:21 and 10 in 40:29.

The course was stunning, along the river. I was initially worried about running about 70% of the course being on bike paths, but they were wider than many roads, in particular those on the GC. The marshalling was great with 100s of volunteers and great aid stations.

The pacer was really struggling and I went past him at about 20km, I went through halfway in about 85:45, faster than planned but I felt good.

As the half and full courses split, I was interested to see who was continuing, out of the group of 12-15 only 3 continued on for the full. My left glute was starting to stiffen at this stage, but not too bad. It got worse at 26km but I was able to put it out of my mind (right now, it is in lots of pain!).

It was lonelier now and the first km on our own was up and over a pretty significant bridge.

Back along the river and it was into a groove. From about km 24 there was one runner about 50-100m ahead of me, I couldn't bridge the gap, but we were both sticking to the same pace. It would remain throughout and although closing in the final km, he beat me by 6 seconds.

I would pass about 6 people in the final 20km's, including one with 2km to go, he was struggling and I put 70 seconds into him in this time.

There was two 180 degree turns, so I was able to count the runners ahead, knowing I was closing in on a top 10, I was inspired to keep going.

I went through 32km in 2:09:53 – knowing I needed to run 41min for 10km + 1min for the final 200m. With km's 33, 34, and 35 below 4:06 pace, I was getting confident.

I went through 37km in 2:30:00 exactly – that meant 21min for 5km + 1 min for final 200m – I was now very confident of a PB, I hadn't run a km slower than 4:08 so was confident I could get 5 averaging below 4:12. The goal was now 2:51:30. I was feeling it big time, but wasn't dropping time.

The final 2km was around the botanical gardens. This was hell! It was up a very sharp 70m hill into the gardens and then a lap on brick paths. My feet were burning on this surface and the blisters I was suffering were in agony.

Barely able to must an increase in pace I crossed the line in just over 2:51 (2:51:08). Like an idiot I pumped my arms in the air, pure relief!

I stopped and have never been so exhausted. Of my three marathons, this was the worst I have felt. My feet ached and I could hardly stand. I was wobbling all over the place. Bliss!!!

What a day, I smashed a chocolate muffin and soft drink and retired to the grass hill to watch others come in.

I was asked to give an interview post-race as an interstate visitor, I was more than happy to do this, due to the incredible organisation of this event.

The course was very honest; four bridge crossing, plus the entry to botanical gardens twice, and a hilly session on the first laps adding to the undulations. I think these helped to some extent for me as they break up the monotony and don't cause you to go too lactic as they are generally no more than 200-250m long.

I have pulled up worse than ever, I couldn't sleep last night and was hobbling around all day yesterday and worse today, again bliss.

I had about a burger and beers (and cider) at the Belgium Pub on the river, and then more beers in the sun on my mates balcony (now sun kissed) before pulling the pin about 5pm as I almost passed out watching the footy. I finished off the night with Indian for a successful day.

Observations:

- I knew the person who came second; he went there to cherry pick a win. He ran 2:38. Last year's winner ran 2:43. At 8pm on Saturday night, after telling people he was going for the win, he found out there was a 2:13 Kenyan runner in the field. This was posted on Facebook by the event. He shared the post with the comment – "Gulp" – I think he was a little deflated! He would run 2:31.
- I met Deeks, who was great, he was reliving his Comm Games win 31 years ago!
- There were almost 600 in the marathon, 1800 in the half and about 7000 across all events.
- I was able to place 9th and took out my 20-29 age group.
- In my third marathon, I was able to keep my record of negative splits intact – 3 from three (22 sec).
- All marathoners had access to drop off personal drinks, this was not an option not taken by many, meaning my three personal drinks were only amongst five at most so I could take without breaking stride.
- I had three 250ml bottles placed on course, started with another and had two gels. I probably drank 800ml of water and had gels at 23km and 34km (water was drank after gel consumption to help digest). After a toilet break in Oakland, my stomach held up great – I recommend Endura (and the coffee flavour tastes great!)
- A smaller marathon, but I highly recommend it!
- A 59 second PB

Stats (these are based on the official km markers on course – I manually lapped):

Split	Time	5km Split	5km Pace	10km Split	10km Pace	20km Split	20km Pace
5	20:21.5	20:21.5	04:04.3				
10	40:29.1	20:07.6	04:01.5	40:29.1	04:02.9		
15	1:00:46.0	20:16.9	04:03.4				
20	1:21:17.7	20:31.7	04:06.3	40:48.6	04:04.9	1:21:17.7	04:03.9
25	1:41:35.3	20:17.6	04:03.5				
30	2:01:39.0	20:03.7	04:00.7	40:21.3	04:02.1		
35	2:21:54.7	20:15.7	04:03.1				
40	2:42:22.5	20:27.8	04:05.6	40:43.5	04:04.3	1:21:04.8	04:03.2
42.2	2:51:08.0	08:48.3	04:00.1				

Split	Half Split	Half Pace
21.1	1:25:45	04:03.8
42.2	1:25:23	04:02.8

Elevation Gain – 366m

