

Gold Coast Marathon Race Report 2012 – Luke Peel

Introduction:

For many of you who don't know my background, I have previously been a footballer, with some running ability. I have played at quite a high level and was always being in the top percentage of runners in teams I played. A footballer, who can run, though, as I have recently found out, is much different to a 'real' runner.

I remember that the only 'long' run we did was a Tuesday morning 'recovery run' which was normally 20min and maxed out at 25min! We did time trials of 2.2km (only 40km less than a marathon) and reps of 200-400m.

I also did track and field at school up until year 11 with a 100m in 11.1 and 400m in 51.3 (I would struggle to run that for 300m at the moment!).

My real foray into running came when I met my girlfriend, Kelly, 5 years ago. She is an elite athlete, specialising in 800m and 1500m, with under 23 national titles in both (2009) and a 2nd in the open 800m nationals in 2011. She also won the first event of the Athletics tour this year prior to becoming ill.

I would train with Kel on the track, at the time or join her for long runs, 60 min, when I wasn't bruised and battered (or hung over) from footy.



Kel running (winning) in Brisbane

In 2010, after footy season and on with a two week prep I ran my first half marathon (86:31). I ran it again 2011 with a slightly extended preparation given that I was living and working in Perth and unable to complete the footy season (my team, Mt. Eliza, also didn't make the finals), I ran a time of 84.17 and was ecstatic to run sub 4min km's.

I have also completed a number of triathlons, with three Olympic Distances (Geelong 2011/12 and Noosa 2011) and multiple Gatorade rounds.

Thoughts of a marathon were sparked about four years ago when after a 'Spring into Shape' fun run I was talking to a mate about his dad who had ran three sub 3 hour marathons. I had just run 31-high for 8km (with lactic streaming through my body) and my footy mate had run 34. We couldn't

fathom running that kind of pace for a marathon! It was then I placed a sub 3 hour marathon on my bucket list!

Within the period of 2011 I had also joined the Midday Milers and Team Icarus. Two contrasting groups, but both have friendship and a competitive spirit in common. I joined the Milers originally to add to my footy fitness; little would I know that it would be spell the 'indefinite' end of my footy career. I joined Team Icarus through contacts at the Mount Eliza football club; a team is made up of players, ex-players, partners and supporters of the club, again football runners, a slightly lower standard than the Milers who I met at Pillars, but never-the-less just as committed. It was founded by the Mount Eliza reserves coach at the time, Muncha, who would be a real positive influence on my GC build up.

At the start of 2012, I had my desire for running/triathlon was greater than footy so I decided to take the year off footy and do my first marathon, the goal was sub 3 hours or bust. With a 10km pb of 38:31 at the start of the year, some may have thought I was crazy!

Early 2012 Pre Marathon Program:

I competed in the Geelong triathlon in Feb, I ran a 10km split of 37:17 (fear the course may have been short, garmin measured 9.91km), after a bike split 10min quicker than the previous year, admittedly I received a debateable 3min drafting penalty (don't ask!) which meant I went into the run slightly fresher. This gave me huge confidence boost that my running was on track.

Two weeks later I entered a Sri Chimnoy 10km at Yarra Blvd. I ran a 51 sec pb (37:40) on a hot and windy day.

In March, I entered the Gold Coast and began to up my long runs (to about 18).

In April, I ran R4TK, this was the first time I ran this event so didn't know what to expect. I would have been happy with 3:55 per km given the hills. I went through 10km in 37:41 (1 sec off PB, should have pushed harder) at 3:46 per km, I thought I had gone out too hard, but then actually accelerated to the end running the last 4.38km in 3:43 per km for 53:59 (so much better than 54:00!).



Run for the Kids

My training at this stage was going well, I had a friend at work that I would go out for a midweek medium-long run with and was doing some good interval sessions. In the four weeks before my 12-

week marathon training plan my weekly mileage was up to 65-70km but still my longest run ever was only 22km!

My training plan was taken from a RunnersWorld marathon 'Coach' magazine (a great sub 3hr program!). I made some slight adjustments, but from this point I would buy in 100%, I put the sessions into excel, an indication to me that it was now gospel!

The big thing for me was to get to the line without injury. Overtraining was always going to be riskier than undertraining.

Training Program:

Three weeks in and my body was screaming! I could hardly walk. I don't know what hurt more, glutes, calves, ITB's, hips....how was I going to cope! My mileage was up to 85-90 for this period and long run at 27km. I was starting to worry about overtraining and feared not getting to the line. Week four was another 85km week but slightly less intensity and my body began to adjust. From this time my body had adapted to the training and I loved every minute of it. I was hooked.

I had three weeks greater than 100km and another two about 95km. My times were really improving and paces getting improving with no extra intensity.

I had four runs above 30km (2*30, 34 and 35) and another two of 28km. My long runs were probably a little too fast at mid to low 4:30's but I never pulled up sore and it didn't seem to affect my training in the days after. My longest run of 35km was at 4:31. I had no soreness from this session and still did 10km the next day.

The key sessions for me were 800/1600m reps on Tuesdays and race pace runs on Thursday. The key indicator session was a 23km session with 17km at about 4:08, in which I was in total control the whole time.

Most of my weekday runs were run alone (I can highly recommend Marathon Talk and IM talk podcasts) at Caulfield park (I know every inch of that 2.2km loop) and I did most of my Long Runs with a fellow Team Icarus member Zats (who was aiming for a pb at GC, sub 2:55) on the trails between Mordialloc and Patterson Lakes and a couple with Muncha (aiming for sub 3:20).

Training in winter was a huge struggle. I trained before work and was waking up at 5am almost every day. Memories of starting a run, without gloves, in 2 degree temperature will be with me for a while. This is one of the harder parts of doing GC.

I only raced once in the lead up (excluding R4TK). I ran Flemington 10km. I did a big 1:04 pb running 36:36 on a hard course. I also ran a negative split (according to garmin). Again, this was a huge confidence booster.

My goal was always sub 3 hours or bust. Secretly I thought I could get 2:57, but would have been happy with 2:59:59. As such all my training had been geared to running 4:12 per km.

I didn't miss a session.

Standard Week:

Monday	Easy 10km
Tuesday	3km w/u & c/d with 8*800m or 4*1600
Wednesday	Easy 15km
Thursday	3km w/u & c/d with 12-14km at 4:08-4:11
Friday	Gym
Saturday	Long Run (30km)
Sunday	Easy 9-10km

Total Mileage:

Wk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Km	89.8	90.86	86.31	86.16	100.99	102.02	71.25	95.58	104.83	98.19	53.97	64.47
LR	25	26.15	27	28	30	34	Flem	35	28	30	15.29	GC

Pre-Race:

In the last two weeks leading into the GC my left toe was playing up. This occurred after my final long run with Muncha, which I did in my race kit, including racing flats. Not a good sign before the big one. It was too late to change shoes so I would have to cop it. I wore black Dunlop Volleys to work instead of business shoes and taking as few steps as possible in the week before. Thank god for Anti-Inflams and the taper!

I don't totally believe in Carb loading, I have a diet that is heavily carb based normally, so just added a couple of extra snacks rather than completely changing my diet. I run all my runs on no food (including long runs) so feel my body has adapted. I would train with a Powerbar gel on each long run to get my stomach prepared.

Kel and I arrived at Crowne Plaza in Broadbeach on Friday afternoon. We hired a bike for her on Sunday and then we had a nap. We went out for dinner at Chang Mai Thai just a hundred metres down the highway (sticking to stir fry's rather than curries!).

I think I have raced the marathon 100+ times over the last 3 months so was able to sleep well on Friday.

We woke at about 8am on Saturday. Kel did a bike session in the gym (warm up for Sunday?) and I ran 20min on the course and a couple of strides to get the legs moving. It was a beautiful morning and the course looked great, the km markers were already out.

We had buffet breakfast at the Crowne. It was a big struggled to avoid the eggs and pancakes, but I opted to stick to cereals and fruits (just a triple serve!). The promise of buffet in Fiji in the coming weeks eased the blow. We ate next to Steve Monagetti, I hoped that would be the last I would see him (he would be the 3hr pacer on Sunday).

My mum arrived around lunch time and I filled her and Kel in of the plan for tomorrow:

7.5km – mum and Kel – water

13km – Kel – gel

18km – Kel – water

28km – mum and Kel – water

Finish – mum and Kel – cheering!

Simple? I provided them with 2 times to be prepared for, goal time (4:12 / 21min per 5km) and a 3hr time. Kel knew though that if I was to arrive early than that would actually be worse than being late.

We went to the expo after this. Number collection was such a smooth process and was the expo was filled with lots of information and good products, although being inside at the convention centre; it lacked the atmosphere of the Noosa expo outside in the sun.



Mum's turn next year?

Dinner was, of course pasta. We must have been channelling Bacchas, as we also went for the fine dining experience of La Porchetta. Experience, is probably the best word to describe the service, after waiting an hour+ for our meal, the helpful (not) young (not) waiter came over and apologised saying that he had not even put our order in! He forgot! You are kidding me! It was nearly 9pm and I still hadn't eaten! Once it arrived I had a large serve of Gnocchi and was happy again.

Back to the hotel to arrange all my gear, write out my splits, scull more water (I felt like a fish!) and go to bed.

A relatively uneventful Sunday morning, up at 5am, 3 pieces of bread with honey and on the shuttle bus, pick up was outside the hotel and such a smooth process. I had 30min wait for a toilet (expected, but stressed me none-the-less), the wait meant I needed to run to check my bag in and rush a 6 min warm up, 4 min short of my plan (OCD much? Damn garmin obsession) but I would have to cope, I was kicked off the course for the wheelchair start.

At the start I found the milers boys; House, Jared, Lurch, CC, and Hally. Coincidentally, they were standing right next to Team Icarus; Muncha, Zats, Goodthing and Trenta. My plan was 4:12 per km (88:30 half). Zats wanted 4:00 per km and Goodthing 4:12's as well. House (who I had spoken to midweek) was going to pace Jared, Lurch and CC to 4:10's (88 half) so my plan was to keep them in sight, but not run with them. I thought I would be terrible company anyway, as I thought I would be too scared to talk, how wrong I was! Hally was going out for 2:50.

1-5km – 20:48:

The first km was crowded as expected, but only took about 100m to get clear space. I felt like I was out for an easy run, but still low 4 min pace. Good sign. I went through the official 1km with House, Lurch and CC with 4:11 on the clock. Perfect for me, but House has some work to do! Goodthing, Zats and Hally further up the road.

It was a pretty easy first five; I was sitting just behind Housey and went through 12 seconds under target.

First challenge achieved, not to go out too hard.

6-10km – 20:45:

I ended up biting the bullet and running the gap to Housey just after 5km. I figured I may as well use the company rather than run the same speed but just behind. This worked well and we were very chatty along the way. At this stage you start to notice people you will run with for some time.

Lurch looked strong. CC was off into the bushes at about 7km (too much water?); I didn't see him again, about the same time we lost Jared off the back.

Coming up to 7.5km, I warned House / Lurch the support crew was ahead and we got some good photos.



Kel ended up following the course for the next couple of km's, but not so close to talk.

At about km 9 we finally caught Mona's pacing the 3hr group. I was pacing about 2:56 and he was ahead of me, hmmm. We were stuck behind them (about 50 people) for a bit, I ran my slowest km (4:11) so I went around them. At this point I left House and Lurch (temporarily).

11-15km – 20:45:

Kel rode with me for a km from 10-11km. She got annoyed with me for talking too much so rode off; she didn't want me wasting any energy. At about 12km House and Lurch re-joined and we would run together for the next 12km.

We had a good group going and were well and truly into a good rhythm. I felt really strong and was still very chatty. One of the guys said, "I love the marathon, you run fast, but you're never truly at your threshold" – I couldn't agree more with this, well for the first half anyway!

At about 14km we saw the leaders.

16-20km – 20:43:

Not much changed pace wise here. In a great rhythm.

Around the 15km point we saw Bacchas, Slips, Hally, and Thai. All looked really strong. Bacchas in particular was up at the pointy end.

The turnaround was just before km 16 (at Burleigh Heads) and then we were on our way back to Southport.

We caught up to Goodthing just before km 18 and he would run with us for the next 4-5km. I saw Muncha coming the other way, I gave him a huge high five. He was one sweaty unit! There was plenty of support for Milers and Icarans on the course, I felt like I was at home. I still felt strong.

At km 18 I saw Kel again. Due to a missed gel at km 13 I wanted it now, but Kel thought we were sticking to the plan of water. This left her unprepared and meant she had to throw the bike down and sprint 200m to catch me and hand me the gel, lucky she's an OK runner! She informs me Zats is up ahead, looking good.



Halfway – 87:36:

This was faster than the planned 88:30, but I was not overly concerned.

21-25km – 20:42:

Almost identical splits here. I got chatting to another runner, Luke, at this point. He commented that I looked strong, which was funny because I was actually envious of his comfort levels, I suspected we would be running together for some time. He had run the event twice with a best of 3:08, but said he was much better prepared this year. Reading between the lines, I think he met some demons at around the 32km mark a couple of times.

We were running in a group of about eight, led by our trusty leader, House, the group included Lurch, Goodthing and Luke.

At about 23km I noticed Goodthing slip back.

At about 23.5km we rounded a corner and up a slight hill. House and I were up the front and looked around and noticed that it was only he, Luke and I left. He made the decision slow and pick up Lurch.

It was now just Luke and I.

We went past Crowne Towers at KM 24 and I joked about just stopping there.

We joked about all the imaginary injuries we were going to get over the next few km's, funny because I felt my hips were tightening up, just in the head?

KM 25 was at Caville Avenue and there was a much bigger crowd. It was a great view with the sun glistening on the ocean.

We saw a Japanese man bust out of the port-a-loo (bad sushi?) and then back on the course.

Running about 3:30's to catch up.

26-30km – 20:31:

This was my hardest section, despite my pace picking up (fastest 5km to date).

At km 26 a tall lanky figure joined Luke and I. Soon after this he picked it up a bit, taking Luke with him. I was already running ahead of my target pace so made the decision to hold back (wait until km 32!).

The reason this was lonely was because it was still a couple of km's until seeing mum and Kel again.

At about 27.8km I see Kel sprint past on the bike, she must have stopped for a coffee break.

Her and mum cheered me on at km 28 and provided water and took photos. Seamless!

...Or not, it turns out Kel's chain came off at km 18 (was it when she ditched it to give me the gel?), after much fiddling she had to put in a 10km sprint to get to me just in time. What a girl! The grease on her perfectly manicured hands was a sight I probably won't see again!

I saw a former footy mate, Catshead, who now lives in Brisbane, at km 30. He is an Icarus member who has run Melbourne Marathon before. He ran with me for about 300m and this was a real boost.



Seamless!

31-35km – 20:44:

This was supposed to be a tough section, it has the bridge and passes the finish line, but I didn't feel it too bad. The bridge at 31km was ok, mainly because it came near the end of my garmin split so I didn't see any visible sign of slowing.

Just after the bridge I hear heavy, fast footsteps come my way. The Japanese man? No. I knew it is either someone who missed the start or House. House it was. He informed me he had to leave Lurch as he was in a bad way and slipped off 3hr pace. House looked very comfortable, even after a couple of 3:30km's to catch up (freak!).

He asks if he can help, "funny you ask House" I say, "hold my drink I need a gel!" Personal chaperone, how good is that?

We chat a bit, I still felt ok, but not as chirpy as at km 10. It was starting to get hot now too, without the shade from the buildings.

We start seeing people come our way. Based on the cheers when I went past the finish the winners were already in, but there were still plenty of other fast runners coming in; John Dutton, Cam Maffett and the female leaders.

We see Slips when he has about 3km to go, House, the professional, immediately does the maths and says he is slightly behind target (freak!), Slips was seen before Bacchas. I comment that maybe we missed him and he was already near the finish. Slips still looked really strong.

A km later we saw Bacchus, he did not look as strong as before. He just gave us a shake of the head. He seemed a little delirious at this stage and just wanted it to end.

At about 35km we caught Hally, he looked to be doing it tough, so I told House to stay with him. I had Kel's family waiting for me at 36km so that was enough motivation for me, plus I was still passing people and feeling strong (well, as strong as you can after 35km!)



36-40km – 20:30 (fastest split):

My longest ever run! Keep going!

Running solo now, but catching some people, the section til the turnaround from 36km to 36.8km seemed to drag on. I saw Zats come the other way, he still looked really good, on track for the pb he wanted, I was so happy for him!

I saw Kel's Aunty, Uncle and Cousin just before the turn around; I give them a huge high five. This contact really put a smile on my face and was such a boost!

The beauty of being at this point meant I would see them again very soon. I yell out to put a beer on ice for me; it was getting very hot now! (I talk a big game, but at lunch with her uncle, I couldn't even face a beer).

I was able to pick up my pace now as I was on my way home. With 5km to go, I was confident I would make the line without significantly hitting the wall, so I started to pick it up a little to low 4's. I become an A-grade mathematician at this point, but why can't they make it 40km or 45km to make the maths easier! (Or at least 42km...)

I catch up to Thai with about 4km to go (although in my head I only have three to go). He is not really slowing, but I think I am just running a bit quicker than before.

At about km 40 there is a little bridge. I catch Cheddar at this point who is running next to Luke. I pass them and focus on getting to the line.

41-42.2km – 8:31:

I am close now and starting to run closer to 4min per km. This official pace for this section was 3:52. I feel my calf pulsate with a km to go so I rip open my last gel and take a very small bite, mainly for placebo effect, my stomach is not feeling great so I don't want much.

I see Catshead again at 41km. He was cheering for Zats. I was confused, where was Zats? Then I notice he was only 20m in front of me. The confusion was because his singlet (not Icarus uniform, worthy of a fine!) was Orange from the front, but charcoal from the back which I didn't know until now (was this his ploy!). I catch Zats and an older lady with about 800m to go. He doesn't quite have the legs to come with me. I would have loved to cross the line together after all the advice he provided and long runs we shared. But after the sledging he gave me when Essendon beat Carlton, I thought stuff that!

Turns out he doesn't have the legs to beat the old lady either and gets chicked on the line! Stiff!

I see Kel and mum with about 200m to go. I am smiling from ear to ear. This has been one of the best experiences of my life. I have exceeded all expectations. I give them a quick fist pump to the support crew and keep moving.

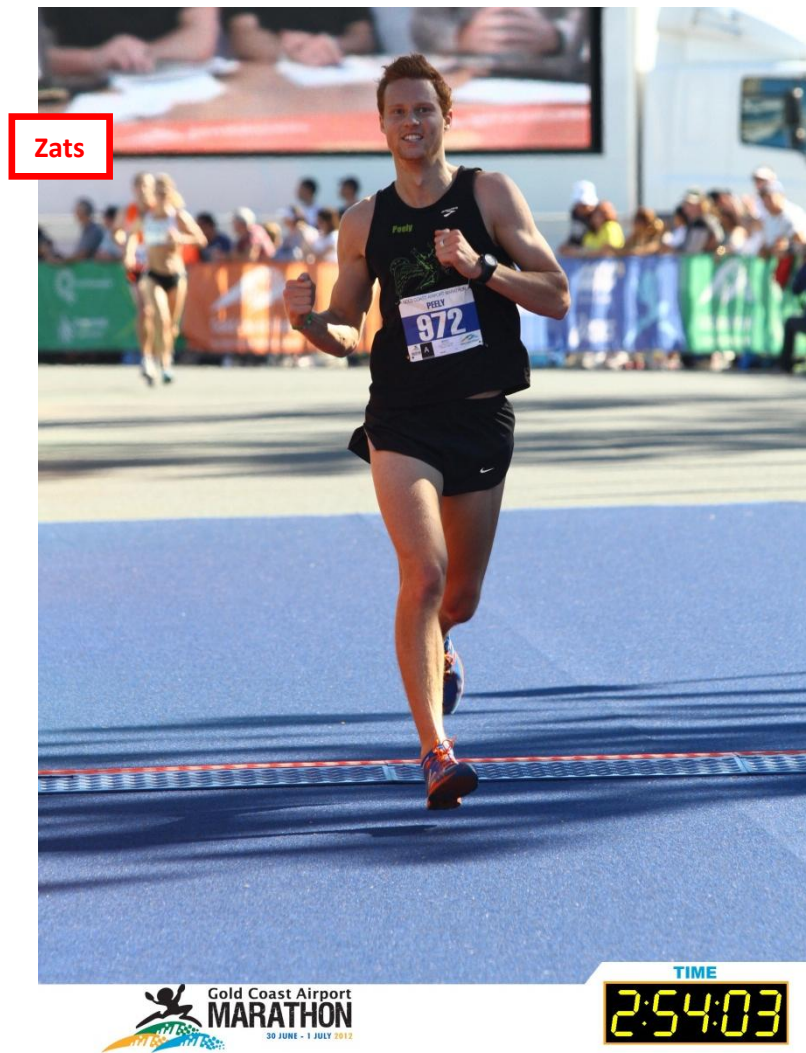
I smile and fist pump over the line, stopping my watch at 2:53:63 or was it 2:54:03? Either way I am in shock!

I turn around and embrace Zats as he crosses the line. I later find out his daughters were watching at home and saw this. This marathon business is so good!

I wait around the finish line, I see Cheddar come in with a PB, Thai, and then Hally with House as well. Hally looks broken, but under 2:58 is still a great time! It is such a good feeling. My feet are in agony. My toe in particular is in pain. And calves feel like they will explode, but I am still smiling.

I leave the finish area, get my medal, T-Shirt and look for the support crew.

I can't stop smiling!



2:54:03. This was beyond any expectations. In all the dreams I had of this race, I never got a time better than 2:57. This was so unexpected.

I ran a 1:10 negative split (86:26) and passed 109 people (no one passed me from what I could tell from about km 30). Each of my last four 5km splits was better than my first four, and my last 2.2km was 35th fastest.

I want to run another, but will I ever enjoy it this much? Who cares, just enjoy this!

I get photo's with Kel (covered in grease). Find a toilet (much needed, sorry to anyone after me). Meet all the Milers and Icarans on the lawn (what a setup it is in the sun). More team photos. Get out of my shoes (arrggghhh). Finally eat something, a chocolate boost bar (arrggghhh) (about 45min after the race, but my stomach just felt so crook).



Team Icarus

We have lunch at a lifesaving club near Broadbeach with Kel's family and my mum. I have a huge burger and chips (finally, first meal about 4 hours after finishing). Then we meet both the teams at Waxy's. Three pints of XXXX (had to do it), it tasted so sweet, but was already a little pissy! We had a Team Icarus Dinner at Chang Mai (again, but Surfers this time), it was a great team

feeling and reminded me of footy club culture (but with a focus on km splits and not dream team points).

Congratulations:

From Team Icarus:

Muncha 3:19 (14min PB), monster effort!

Zats 2:54 (1min PB)

Goodthing 3:05 (11min PB)

Trenta, Harold and the four half marathon girls

From the Milers:

Slips with an age group win (star!)

Cheddar with a PB, great work.

Thai (really solid ran, looked really strong even after going out hard)

Hally (gutsy run!)

Lurch and Jared – great to get another marathon under your belt, you'll look back with pride...soon.

House, freak, 2-3 weeks after Phuket, glad to hear you enjoyed this experience more.

Thanks:

Massive thanks to the support crew.

Firstly Kel. You are amazing. This year has been so tough for you. With your illness, not running or exercising, the last thing you would have wanted was to talk running and it seems that was all I was doing. I was trying not to, but couldn't help it and you were just so supportive. Marathon training is very selfish and you never once complained. You are such a support. Next time round you will be able to join me on the runs! I hope I can support you in the same way. You earned our holiday to Fiji more than I.



Mum, you are so so supportive. To come up for this to help me was great but more than anything to share the experience with you was great. You mean so much to me and are so selfless.

Housey, what a star, so unselfish, a great help to so many guys during the day, I owe you massively, without your help; I would not have got close to the result I did. Your support in the build-up was also very helpful. If I can help you in the lead up to IM Melbourne I would love to. I live in Mordialloc, on the course, and would love to get out for a ride, run or swim with you.

Zats, such a great bloke, your support on the long runs was invaluable and using you as a sounding board was great.

Munch, champ, enough said, you were huge the whole time and as the Team Icarus pioneer are doing great things. A friend for life.



Goodthing, Munch and I

To steal a line from Munch, the marathon is just a victory lap for all the training you have done. I can safely say that I loved the victory lap!

I am already planning number two. LA Marathon in March? Running from Dodger Stadium, through Hollywood and Beverly Hills to Santa Monica with 20,000 yanks is too tempting! Look out Kobe, I am coming!

The Data:

Split	Time	Dist	5km Splits
1	04:08.0	1	
2	04:06.8	1	
3	04:04.7	1	
4	04:09.3	1	
5	04:06.8	1	20:35.6
6	04:04.7	1	
7	04:03.2	1	
8	04:11.7	1	

9	04:08.0	1	
10	04:09.1	1	20:36.7
11	04:11.7	1	
12	04:04.6	1	
13	04:10.9	1	
14	04:11.4	1	
15	04:08.8	1	20:47.4
16	04:05.6	1	
17	04:04.9	1	
18	04:04.9	1	
19	04:09.7	1	
20	04:07.9	1	20:33.0
21	04:09.2	1	
22	04:07.9	1	
23	04:08.9	1	
24	04:07.7	1	
25	04:04.4	1	20:38.1
26	04:07.6	1	
27	04:05.0	1	
28	04:05.8	1	
29	04:05.8	1	
30	04:06.6	1	20:30.8
31	04:07.2	1	
32	04:08.3	1	
33	04:08.8	1	
34	04:08.4	1	
35	04:09.3	1	20:42.0
36	04:08.4	1	
37	04:06.2	1	
38	04:03.2	1	
39	04:04.4	1	
40	04:04.7	1	20:26.9
41	04:03.6	1	
42	03:56.3	1	
43	01:13.2 (3:23)	0.36	09:13.1

Official Splits:

Distance	Time	Split Rank	Tot Time	Race Rank	Distance	Ave Pace	Ave Speed
5KM	0:20:48	314	0:20:48	303	5	4:09	14.41
10KM	0:20:45	189	0:41:34	225	5	4:09	14.45
15KM	0:20:45	188	1:02:19	214	5	4:09	14.46
20KM	0:20:43	174	1:23:02	204	5	4:08	14.48
25KM	0:20:42	150	1:43:44	191	5	4:08	14.49
30KM	0:20:31	99	2:04:16	155	5	4:06	14.62
35KM	0:20:44	70	2:25:00	133	5	4:08	14.46
40KM	0:20:30	47	2:45:31	104	5	4:06	14.63
Finish	0:08:31	35	2:54:03	96	2.2	3:52	15.48
Half Way Splits							
Half Way	1:27:36	183	1:27:36	205	21.1	4:09	14.45
Finish	1:26:26	35	2:54:03	96	21.1	4:05	14.65