

Gold Coast Marathon 2012

By Paul “Bacchus” Marsh

Background

About 30 minutes after crossing the line last year absolutely pumped with my 2:38 I started thinking about my next campaign. I thought with another year of running under my belt with more kms sub 2:35, although a very bullish target, could well be achievable. Problem was that I again pulled up like a freight train and as a result did stuff all running post marathon for a good six weeks. Then it was in to silly season so it wasn't until the New Year that I started to train consistently again.

Made the decision relatively early this year that Gold Coast was the target. Chose this for a few reasons. Wanted to do something different to Melbourne, as a change is as good as a holiday. It is well documented that the Melbourne course is not ideal and everyone raves about the event that is the Gold Coast Marathon. In addition to this I have aspirations of having a crack at one of the big races overseas one day so wanted to use this race as a means of becoming accustomed to jumping on a plane and preparing for a marathon away from my home environment. Furthermore, there were many Milers also keen to have a crack so it was going to be an absolute corker of a weekend.

Considered bringing the family but decided against this and headed up on my jack jones. Firstly we are going overseas later in the year and could not justify two holidays in 10 weeks. Secondly I realised I had become one of “those” dorky distance runners. I was going there to run and have a crack and did not really want to be mucking around getting kids ready at 5:30am race morning. Very selfish and in retrospect having the family there I believe would have had a positive impact, although would not have avoided the blow up... more on that later.

Training Recap

January I did 4 weeks of 75km with the long run being 20km and gradually built from there. Turned to AL yet again and with Slips a confirmed starter the stable was back together, this time with some new members – welcome aboard Lurch. I was coming from a fair way back and remember doing a solo Mona Fartlek at the start of the year and did not even make it 5km. I did however, have confidence that it would come together with consistent training and a gradual build up. Sub 2:35 was always going to be the stretch target with 2:38 or above defined as failure.

This time around I was pretty much injury free the whole campaign and my motivation was up pretty much the whole time. Had a few niggles but this is to be expected when racking up 130km + weeks. Had a few minor illnesses along the way but without doubt the smoothest build up of the three campaigns.

However, this time around the home – work – running balance was a huge challenge. Firstly, three children under 6 makes juggling the mileage difficult but I have been there done that and knew how to fit the training in and Kathryn is a superstar. This biggest challenge this campaign was that work was flat chat. Don't get me wrong, when you run your own business I would much rather have the issue of being too busy than the other way around. However, when a business grows too quickly this can be just as dangerous as not growing at all. What this resulted in was 5am wake ups every morning to get my run in and less visits to the Tan for lunch time sessions. On a few occasions I had a few 4am starts to sneak in the mid week 20km before and early meeting. Not getting to the Tan meant plenty of solo sessions

at sparrows fart in the dark. AL suggested I use the Mona Fartlek as a bit of a staple as it is a great session for the time poor – I am not doing a Mona Fartlek for at least the next 3 months. Upon returning home every evening from work, it was dinner, bath and bed for the kids, turn the computer on and then work until 11pm. Wake up at 5am the next day and do it all again. Lesson number 1 – sleep is a very important part of the puzzle that is a successful marathon. Conversely my stress levels would have been diabolical if I was not running.

Overall felt like I was flying along and getting through the weekly mileage quiet well. Biggest week was 134km and did 4 weeks of 130km+ with the other weeks at 120km. Certainly more mileage than last year. 6 runs of 30km+ with 4 of these in the hills. Cruised through the Tilt 100 session 3 weeks out which had me going in reasonably confident. Most Saturdays I did a 15km run with 10km tempo @ marathon race pace i.e. 3:40. These were a struggle at the start but found them becoming easier as the training progressed. Having said that, I often caught myself thinking during these sessions “how the hell can I run this pace for 42.2km?” Turns out I can’t.

Had one melt down the week leading into the Flemington 10km. This was always going to be a lighter week with a mini taper heading into the race. Basically the juggle between work and running got to me and I just got jack of it all. Did 80km this week and did not give a toss about running. Got on the sauce with the Dads from my daughters school on the Thursday night. Woke up very sketchy and needed to do the Maccas drive through just to survive my first meeting. That day I had a liquid lunch to attend and had no intention on drinking due to the race the next day and the hangover. 10 beers later and a few cc and dry’s I was in a cab at 9pm going through KFC. Would not suggest this is the ideal preparation for a marathon let alone a crack at a 10km PB the next day. Funnily enough I ran a 14 second PB on not my most favourite course in the world – this in a weird way set me right mentally... if I could run a PB off that preparation imagine what I could do if I was being serious. In hindsight, I think I ran this race well as I went into it not caring. Sometimes we can be too intense with this running caper.

Finished the training off well and had a 2 week taper. Some training highlights include my introduction to Churchill Park and THAT bloody hill a few km into the run. This is a great place to run particularly with large groups as the trails are a lot wider than the Dandenongs. Slips and I did the Tilt’s house to Olinda run with Licka. Although it was slower than last year I got through this really well and was a huge confidence booster along with my Tilt 100 session, which I did solo... I highly recommend this session to everyone towards the end of their marathon campaign. A lowlight was my terrible Tan run 10 days before... did not think that blowing up around the Tan would be indicative of what was to come at Gold Coast.

As usual I had done stuff all racing. Happy with Puffing Billy and the 10km run. I certainly had a degree of confidence leading in and although I was travelling well Tilt and I both felt that plan should be to take it out in 77:30 and try and only drop 60 – 90 seconds in the second half.

Overall felt confident and maybe too much so. This time around I was less hung up about the whole ordeal in terms of diet and missing a session etc. I have come to the conclusion that sometimes we can over analyse things too much (thanks to those stupid Garmin’s). I had the attitude that a missed session is a missed session... get over it and move on... if you try and make it up all you will do is get more tired or injured and lets be honest, 3 to 4 weeks out from a marathon you cannot really get too much fitter. Maybe because my first two marathons were very good runs that I

thought the same would automatically occur. The last couple of weeks has really taught me a thing or two about running and this game will smash you for six just when you think you have it covered.

The Days Before

Pumped. I did not get nervous before my first two marathons. Reckon I get more nervous before a Tan time trial. I really do hate carbo loading. I was not as pedantic about it this time around but still smashed plenty of carbs and Gatorade. Was feeling really good leading up to the race. The week flew by and I was very keen to get on that plane. Had a bit of a cold that week that never really got a hold of me but never really went away either. This did not really phase me... comes with the territory of having 3 small kids and training your guts out on limited sleep.

Took the Friday off work and did the school and kinder drop which is always good fun. Had a chat with the school principal a bloke by the name of Tony McMahon who was a gun runner in his day... think he has multiple sub 2:20's... Hutzy would be able to confirm this. He mentioned that Gold Coast was his last marathon and he ran a shocker... I am sick of these synergies!

My old man dropped me to the airport. Landed and jumped in a cab. Rang House to discover his whereabouts and he was on foot to Jupiters... it is best I steer well clear of House tonight. Checked in to the hotel, which was right in the heart of the action on Cavill Avenue. Headed out and grabbed some pasta to eat. Watched the Hawks smash the Blues and went to sleep... well at least tried to. Lesson number 2 – when next in Gold Coast for a running race never stay on Cavill Avenue. It is farking noisy all night and had some Croatian dude on his balcony next to me breaking up with his girlfriend over the phone... classy fellow. On the flip side the hotel location was perfect for the Sunday arvo / evening session.

Had some breakfast with House who looked remarkably fresh for someone who played poker to 3am. We then scoped out the surrounds to plan the attack for the Sunday arvo / night session. Looked like Waxy's was a lock and I was very keen to hit Melba's to relive some old footy trip memories. With that planned we jumped in a cab with Stoltzy (poker player to the gods) and headed to the convention center to pick up our race numbers and meet the rest of the crew for the carbo load legends lunch.

This is where I realized the organizers of the GC Marathon are like a well oiled machine. Everything works smoothly... pick up race number... check it on the scanner... drop drinks off... wander around the expo. There were people everywhere and the buzz was amazing. I had left my sunnies at home and saw the forecast for Sunday and decided to purchase a new pair of running sunnies (I am glad I did as these would have at least masked some of the pain I was in on Sunday).

We all sat down for lunch (thanks to Pres Slips for arranging). The who's who of Australian running was there. Deek, Mona, Troopy, Shelley, Ondieki, and Lisa Weightman fresh from braining the field in her 10km. Troopy told us his story of the Beijing Games when he had a shocker. This was amazing to hear. He went on to say that every one of those superstars up on stage had run plenty of shockers and these are the races you learn from not the great races you run. He mentioned that this was the toughest thing he had done mentally as he was gone at 16km. Thought about pulling out but the one thing that stopped him was that in the Australian team there is a rule that if you pull out of a race you have to take your singlet off. He knew that if he did this that would have been the end of his career and he never wanted to

take an Australian singlet off. As much as this was great to listen to, it never really entered my mind about how important Lee Troop's words were going to be the very next day.

On a lighter note, I actually have a pillowcase circa 1982 of Deek... a bit weird I know. Mum had kept it for me and recently gave it to my son and it now takes pride of place on his bed. So I had Kathryn email me a photo of it and showed it to Deek at the lunch. He was pumped and genuinely happy that I showed him the photo and he was quite surprised that he had his mug on a pillow case. I did reiterate to Deek that I did not use this pillow case during my teenage years.



Second Generation Deek Pillow Case

After the lunch we headed over to Jupiters (it is next door to the convention center) to watch the footy. It was around this time we were all receiving the good luck text messages. I received one from PM saying something like "whatever House does today, do the opposite". Very good advice indeed. However, I did yield. We had 90 minutes to kill before dinner so House and I hit the poker table. 90 minutes later I was up \$400 and had just paid for my flight and accommodation... good sign for Sunday! Off to dinner with House, Hally and Iron Mike... Tony was very keen for a rice dish which proved quite difficult... in the end we settled for the 3 chef hat restaurant, a small little Italian place, called La Porchetta. Mike and I stuck to the pasta while House demolished a large with the lot.

Back to the Hotel and Hally and I prepared ourselves for the next day while watching the Bombers smash the Doggies... another very good sign. Another shocking nights sleep... burnouts, fights, you name it Cavill Avenue has it. I mentioned before that in hindsight I reckon if the family came up with me I would have been better prepared i.e. I would have stayed in different accommodation and, assuming the kids slept, would have had a good couple of nights sleep – lesson number 3.

Pre-race - Pain is temporary

Woke up at 5:00am. Two slices of bread with jam and some Gatorade. Get ready and watch Tony meticulously re-read his training diary just to reinforce that he had done the work and was well prepared... seasoned pro. We did find ourselves a touch frustrated that we both forgot to bring some tunes up with us as Lust for Life by Iggy Pop has been kind to both Tony and I. Meet House at 6am and head to the bus

stop. Again this is an exceptionally well organized event... We had a 1 minute walk to the bus stop and waited 1 minute for a bus.

Arrive at the start with plenty of time to spare. Have a final nervous James Hird and drop our bags off. Catch up with Lurch, Jarrod and CC. We part ways and I head to the start line where I have jagged a preferred start. This was awesome. Less people than I thought and the organizers make you feel very special. Get to have a few run troughs at the front in front of the spectators. Pretty cool to be warming up alongside the Kenyan, Ethiopian, Japanese and Aussie Pros. I feel great and the atmosphere is electric. See Slips and Jay here and wish each other the best.

The Race - First Half

My plan was to run my own race but at the same time try and find someone for some company. The plan – head out in 77:30 and hold on. Off we go. Have to force my self to slow down during the first km but was able to establish a nice rhythm early. I would really like to know others thoughts on this... I am a big Garmin watcher... I think this is good early in a race as I find it helpful to slow myself down but geez I check it a hell of a lot. When you are blowing up it becomes your worst enemy. I am actually thinking next marathon I do I will use a regular watch and take manual splits.

The first 5km I am hitting the splits perfectly – 3:38, 3:40, 3:40, 3:42, 3:40. I am passing people fairly often. I figure out my splits are slightly ahead of the official clock at the 5km mark which was no big deal – 5km official split of 18:25 in 47th position – right on track. Get to the first drink station at 5km and have my first hiccup... my bottle is not there or I just couldn't find it. Picked up some Ednura instead from the volunteers. Straight away I think back and realize how blessed I was to have hand delivered drinks in my two previous marathons. Thorny, Woolies, Dozer and Smoothy... I will repay the favor for you blokes this year at Melbourne.

Now I was not feeling perfect but still getting through the first few kms really well – 3:38, 3:38, 3:38, 3:36, 3:39 – a touch quick but still very consistent and a 5km official split of 18:19 with the 10km split being 36:45 – in 46th position. Pick up my drink at the 10km mark, which was water and a gel. Still going along well but at the same time wish I was feeling a bit better. Splits still very consistent and this positive feedback is great mentally – 3:40, 3:37, 3:40, 3:39. 3:38 – 5km split of 18:18 and through 15km in 55:04 – bang on target – up to 39th position. Had a bit of a drink mishap at the 15km station – had to stop and find my drink. Had just passed a Canadian bloke (who was trying to run sub 2:40) when this occurred and worked hard to catch up to him again. This was good fun as he was quite animated with the crowd and when we hit the turn at Burleigh he revved up the fairly sizeable crowd, which gave us both a laugh. I dropped him after the turn and pushed on.

The section leading up to and after the turn was great as you could watch the leaders come back. Also got to see Jay who looked to be going well (he took it out in 71 minutes on the dot). Once I had turned saw Slips, Hally, Tony, Thai, CC, Lurch, Peely, Jarrod and House who was keeping everyone in check. Everyone looked to be going along well and we all managed to give each other a pump up. Great to see all the red singlets out in force and we were getting a heap of comments from the crowd. Also saw a client of mine who was looking at going sub 3 but ended up having a very similar day to mine.

There is plenty of shade from the sun over the first section of the course. It is as flat as a tack and the crowd atmosphere is much better than Melbourne. I was getting plenty of comments on my shoes, which is good for a laugh to take your mind off things. Interestingly, I spent the first half of the race pretty much in no mans land

with no one to run with. I was picking people up from the start and no one was passing me. Every time I picked someone up I asked what their target time was to see if we could run together. I was amazed to hear that they all wanted sub 2:40 but had taken it out at 2:35 pace. I kept thinking to myself, “you people are nuts and you will blow up”... ahhh the irony.

Now I still am not feeling great nor am I feeling crap so at this stage I am not overly concerned and I continue to hit the required splits – 3:41, 3:40, 3:41, 3:39, 3:42 – 5km split of 18:29 (the slowest to date) and a 20km split of 1:13:33 – up to 38th position. I notice I do need to work a bit harder to maintain the pace. Split at km 21 was 3:44... mmm WTF? Halfway in 1:17:41. 11 seconds slower than the plan and I was very happy with this. Only thing is it was starting to feel a bit harder to maintain and I am only half way through... I think to myself, I should be right I had a rough patch last year at about the same stage... just work through it and you will be right in 2 or 3 km.

The Race - Second Half

Now I am starting to become a little concerned. I am working hard and the splits from 20km to 25km were – 3:44, 3:45, 3:44, 3:46, 3:47 – 5km in 18:54. This is not good. In my mind I was happy to be running these splits from about 30km but not from halfway. What was worse was that unlike previous years after 3km I had not worked through it and was starting to struggle more. It was around this point I was saying to myself “if you maintain 3:45’s from here on you will still run a PB”. This became the target. It is nice to have a target but they are useless if the legs don’t want a bar of it. Deep down I think I knew I was stuffed at around the 25km mark. Was trying to battle my demons so much so that I just plain forgot to pick my drink up off the table. Grabbed a bottle of their water instead.

Through Surfers and I am struggling. See MJ in his Milers singlet who gives some encouragement. I let him know that I am struggling. The sun now is starting to beat down and the shaded areas are no longer. I now know that I am about to enter a place that I have never been and I will be asking myself some questions of my mind and body that I am not sure I really want to answer. The Garmin has now become my worst nightmare... surely I cannot be running that slow – 25km to 30km – 3:51, 3:56, 3:56, 3:56, 3:57 – 5km in 19:40. However, I was up into 32nd position. Clearly I was not the only one struggling and passing people was the only positive thing I had left.

During that stretch I had passed about 3 women. Running out of Surfers I caught up to one of the Ethiopian women who was clearly starting to struggle. She asked me how far the other girl behind was... I said to her that she looked to be struggling and if she kept the current pace she should be right. I asked her what position she was in at the time... she was in 4th. Even though I was battling I thought to myself let’s try and help her out and at the same time turn my form around. So I went to the front and told her to hang on. She stuck with me for maybe 2km and she was getting a heap of support from the crowd so I tried to use that to motivate me. Despite me feeling like I had two bricks strapped to my feet she could not hang on.

Now they warn you about the mental mind f@%k that occurs when you pass the start / finish at about 32km. For me I was starting to be so internal in battling my thoughts that I did not even realize I had arrived there... probably a good thing. The positive part was INXS Suicide Blonde was playing. Saw Iron Mike here. He called out some support and I told him I was gawn. It was here I was madly checking my Garmin. 32km last year was a huge mental check point. Last year the idea was to be at 32km in less than 2 hours knowing that you could run 4 min pace and break 2:40. I went

through here in 2:00:30 and was now running over 4 min pace... last year was 1:59 flat and was running 3:45s – shit. Now I knew I was gone but at this stage I was very keen to see Slips. Surely he cannot be travelling as badly as I am. If he is going to knock me off I want him to have the sub 2:40 he deserves. I knew at this stage that given the conditions and the fact he had not yet caught me meant that this dream was probably over for him today and that sucked.

Now I thought it could not get any worse than what was currently happening but it did and it was like a shocking nightmare. What I went through over the next 10kms was without doubt the hardest thing I have done mentally and physically. My mind is now playing all sorts of games. My legs feel like I am running Cliffy Young style. My Garmin reinforces how sh!t I am running and I am now snowballing out of control. At this stage I am devastated. I am livid that it has come to this. I just want the pain to end and I am not sure what pain was worse – the legs or the mind. I am getting jack of all the spectators saying things like “you are doing really well”, “keep going”, “looking good” blah blah blah. In my mind I am saying back to them “shut the f@\$k up I have hit the wall and I am running like a flog piss off and go out for a run to see how hard this caper is”. I was a seriously angry ant and was so glad that I bought those sunnies the day before so I could hide my pain and the glares I was giving these people. 30km to 35km – 4:07, 4:07, 4:12, 4:17, 4:27 – 5km split of 21:20. Sh!t – I had only run one 4 min km split in my two previous marathons and now I have strung together 5 in a row and they are getting worse! WTF – 4:27 – I do my easy runs at this pace – someone shoot me and end this. Still managed to pass a few but was now getting run down by plenty.

Surely Slips has to be getting close. I have a couple of looks over the shoulder. He eventually runs me down at about 36km. Clearly he has had his own struggles but he passes me like he does during a 200m rep and is clearly flying compared to the turd I am dishing out. I give him a low 5 and wish him the best for the next 6km – Go UB1 bring it home. To put it in perspective I turned I think 1:20 ahead of him. Slips reels that in by 36km and puts 3 minutes into me over the last 6km.

The next part of the race is very lonely and was the most brutal for me. I actually think I am in hell at this point but I prefer the hell I see in the cartoons. In direct sunlight I am now grabbing a bottle of water each 2.5km. I usually hate drinking during a race but now I cannot get enough of it... clearly the sun is having an impact. I am stating to have terrible thoughts about walking and even pulling out. I swore to myself I would never walk during a marathon but geez I was very close. It was at this stage I was reflecting upon what Troopy said the day before about pulling out. I actually had thoughts of taking the milers singlet off. I did not like this place at all.

I am barely moving. 35km to 40km was 4:48, 4:41, 4:49, 4:39, 4:32 for a 23:35 split. At one stage I looked at my Garmin and the pace had a 5 at the front it – surely not – I muster what I have to keep it under 5 min pace. During this phase I was doing the sums in my head. For some reason I remembered what House wrote in one of his Phuket reports about wanting to break 2:48 to ensure a sub 4min km marathon. This became my target over the last 5km. To do this I had to run sub 5 min pace... the scary part was that this was now not a given. I have negotiated the final turn and start seeing the crew on the way back – exchange words with Hally and CC – we are all spent. House is really working with Hally to bring him home and it was great to see. Peely looked as fresh as a daisy – great debut. Thai looked pretty good as did Tony but no sign of Lurch or Jarrod – I am shattered for them.

Got to the 40km mark, which is where the crowd and atmosphere starts to build. Sub 2:48 looks achievable. My knee almost gives way around here – ITB issue. I have

now decided to force myself to stop feeling sorry for myself and make this last couple of kms a positive one. The glass must always be half full and even in such times of disaster we must always remain somewhat pragmatic. So I start interacting with the crowd. Every kid that put their hand out I high fived. These kids look at you like you are a hero and I had been ignoring them all day in pursuit of my dream. Now that the dream was shattered it was time to give something back. I was chatting to the crowd and having some fun in a weird sort of a way. Another bloke eventually caught me and we ran together for a bit. I could see a fella up ahead who had started walking. Time to help out a stranger in pain. Got to him, gave him a tap on the back and got him to run with us. We chatted and dragged him along. The crowd went nuts and this was a magical moment for the three of us who will never ever see each other again. He had to stop again at around 41km. There was no way I was stopping – never stop... plus I just wanted it to all be over.

The Finish

All these people I passed earlier on are flying by me. Robyn Millard stormed past me with about 500m to go. Great debut. AL told me after the race that I was 1:40 up on her at the 40km mark! This section is awesome. The crowd is huge and it is a great finishing stretch. See the clock up ahead and find something to scrape under 2:47. 10 people passed me over the last 2.2km to finish in 59th. The second half was a diabolical 1:29:13. Thank f@#k that is over. See Slips. Took me a while to digest how good his run was and was surprised that I was not more devastated with my run... was happy that I left that out on the course. See Robyn and she is absolutely pumped and deservedly so. I have been there before and it feels great.



The family watching the live streaming as finish... finally

Post Race

Slips and I exit the finishing area. Again this event is so well organized. Oranges, Endura and water – I smash them all. The volunteers are all pumped for me. On two occasions I try and explain to them that I had a dog of a day but they look at me like I have rocks in my head. They don't get it so why bother trying to explain it. They are pumped for me so I go along with it and remain glass half full. High fiving everyone as they give me my medal and T-shirt. It was good fun and it is these people that make the event so great. See Stoltzy who congratulates / commiserates... a great runner in his own right with two 2:28 marathons off 70km a week. Slips and I find a chair and some shade while Stoltzy rounds up the others. They arrive in dribs and drabs. Tony and Lurch are clearly struggling to walk properly. The discussions start on who did what and who felt what. Got a nice team photo. I for one was pretty keen to get a beer into me. Drinking with 10 mates that have been on the same journey surely has to be the best way to ease the pain and anguish. House mentioned that today / tonight will not be hard... it is when the booze wears off that it begins to hurt... how right he was.

Off to Waxy's. Smash back a heap of pints. My poison was "Winnie" Coopers Pale Ale. How good was Winnie Cooper? From there it was a transfer to CC and dry with two slices of lime after 8 pints. Got sledged by House for the "early" transfer but this is coming from a "bloke" who drinks cider. Hit the parma for lunch and we hit the pool table. Slips and Lurch are very handy on the pool table... so much so they may well have been conceived on one. The lefties team in House and I got stooged on the black a couple of times but I cannot let that bullsh!t double Lurch knocked down go!

Time for a change of venue and Melbas it was and it did not let me down. Ahh the footy trip memories. After a \$2 steak we made what seemed to be a good call at the time to transfer to Vodka red bull. It only took one of these until the Milers cut up the dance floor. Boom Shake the Room by Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince was clearly a highlight. I think at Melbas we sorted the reasons for my blow up (if only I could now remember), came up with an alternative to the carbon tax, named a much better first 11 for Australia and negotiated the Gaza. Given the 9am flight the next morning I staggered back at 11pm (10 hour session post marathon wasn't too shabby) and starred at the ceiling all night... I hate you red bull.

The next morning Hally, Iron Mike and I somehow managed to get into a cab. Mike tried to get on the wrong plane... think he was still speaking short hand and walking like a crab. I avoided a spew and smashed back some Hungry Jacks. 90 minute sleep on the plane and the hangover was gone... just in time for the kids to see me at the airport.



The joys of having a longer second toe

Post Race Thoughts

I am now suffering from post marathon depression – this report is my therapy. I am sh!tty and p!ssed off. I reckon I had the best preparation out of the three marathons I have completed. Plus I had another year of running under my belt. I am not one to over analyze things however, there is no point going through what I went through if you cannot learn from it.

Firstly, hearing Lee Troop the day before without doubt got me through the most difficult time of the race. He said during the lunch that you learn more about yourself when it all turns pear shaped. I have learnt plenty but it is very hard to actually put words to it. I'm glad I finished and I'm glad I didn't walk. I was on record before the race that anything 2:38 and above would be defined as failure. Upon reflection, failure would actually be not learning from what I / we went through.

Did I not respect the distance the way I should have? Maybe. I may have been a bit too confident that the result would just occur given my two previous successful races and the additional training. The Tan taught me a thing or two and the GC Marathon gave me a PhD. However, would this have changed my strategy? No. Out in 77:40 in my mind was a good target given my form and preparation. This was only 40 seconds faster than last year... hardly going out too hard. Others may disagree... happy for input. In the end you put them on the line and sometimes they get chopped off... might have to fly back to Surfers and pick them up. You need a lot to go right to run a good marathon and not a lot needs to go wrong to have a shocker.

The training. Did I do everything I could? Yes, in my opinion. More kms without being stupid and 6 X 30km+ runs. However, I seriously need to structure the business in a way that provides more flexibility and efficiency in order to hit the lunchtime sessions. Too many solos sessions – not fun and not as beneficial. We are working on this but in reality I am 12 to 18 months away from seeing the benefits. Do I race enough? Probably not. The question therein lies will this ever change? Probably not. I just cannot commit to running AV with the limited time I have. I firmly believe that this would have benefit but the best I can do is to fit in a tempo run on a Saturday around swimming lessons, choir etc. In reality, running around after children is only going to increase as they get older.

The little things. If you look yourself in the mirror and ask yourself have you done everything you could possibly do to get the best result then I would have to say no. Could I have eaten better, drunk less, stretch more, do core strength work? Yes to all of those. Is that going to change? Maybe, maybe not. Diet and drink less should be simple but sometimes we can take this game too seriously... I did run a 10km PB after a bender. Stretch more and core strength work... if someone can turn 24 hours in to 25 for me then I will do more of this.

The course. It is flat and fast but clearly the sun had an effect on many of us. I found the conditions very tough. Complained about the wind last year but would take that any day of the week compared to the sun we had. As mentioned previously my reasoning behind this was the fact that I drank so much during the race. It did not get super hot but I did come back with a tan if that is any indication. Would love to run it with a 6am start but then we would all sook up about the half marathoners getting in our way. In the end they have got the timing of the races right. The event is great. The most well organized event I have been too. I will strongly consider heading up for the 10km or half next year – both have 6am starts on courses that put anything we have in Melbourne to shame. The lesson I have learned here is that my next marathon will be in a cooler climate... having said that I still have vivid memories of Dozer and Dusty battling in Melbourne on a 32 degree day with hot

northerlies. It is the risk we run when preparing for a marathon... most people can only do one marathon a year and you cannot control the conditions.

Some great messages from mates after the event:

PM – did the same thing in the same race in 2004. Great work in chalking another one up. You will be better for it.

Rob O'Donnell (former national cross country champion who was never completely fulfilled with his marathon times) – Enjoy a beer. It is a bloody tough event to master.

House – once the beer wears off then it will start to hurt.

Thorny on the forum - That's hard luck, Bacchus. It seems so thankless to work hard for something and not get the result you are worthy of. But I am scared by your comments: "there is no way I am going to go out like that." Seems we can't go out with a PB because we think we can do better... and we can't go out with a shocker because we feel defeated. Runners are quite like those sad old delusional boxers who make multiple come backs. Except we are only fighting ourselves.

Thorny was clearly a prophet in a former life but how true is his comment – that sums up running like I have never heard before. These blokes are clearly a class or two or three above me and have been there done that. What it tells me that even the best have their bad days and they are better people and runners for the experience.

How good are the Milers. Great bunch to travel, run and drink with. Advice from experienced runners that have been there done that. The sledging, the banter and the genuine want for you to succeed. Running is such an individual sport but being a Melbourne Midday Miler makes you feel part of a team. Each and every Miler has played some part in my marathon experiences and I thank you all.

Slips what a legend. This bloke is like a good bottle of red. Pumped to see him win his age group. I will back him to go sub 2:40 next campaign. Coach Tilt. You have been a huge motivator for UB1 and me not only over the last few months but also the last few years. Great work also to Peely, Robyn and Tony and for House with his pacing... your assistance with Hally was worthy of man hugs. Great work to Hally, CC, Thai, Lurch and Jarrod for gutsing it out. I think it says something about the Milers singlet in that no one took it off. Also congrats to Thai on his announcement that he is expecting number 3.

Where to from here? I have NFI. I will probably do another marathon at some stage but where and when... the wounds are still too fresh. If I could jag an international marathon then albeit an early call but Chicago and New York 2013 fit in well. Watch this space. A sub 12 tan is now a big 2012/2013 goal particularly after the crap I served up a couple of weeks ago. For the time being I am just going to pork up a little bit.

Thanks

My wife Kathryn and kids Lucy, Will and Jane. Could not have been more supportive. We have 3 kids under 6 and it was pure selflessness on her behalf that allowed me to embark on not only this marathon but also the two previous.

To the Milers that have offered support and emails over the last few years and marathon running advice it has not gone unnoticed... It is a hell of a lot easier to get a marathon right when you have experience like this around you.

A Tribute

To complete my report I thought I would summarise the weekend by way of a song... so here goes...

Bust a Move – Reworked by Paul “Bacchus” Marsh

Original version by Young MC – a modern day lyrical genius ☺. Bring it up on YouTube when you sing along. In memory of a great night at Waxys / Melbas.

This here's a jam for all the Milers
Tryin; to do what those Garmins tell us
Get shot down cause ya over-zealous
Take on the GC, Melbourne get jealous
Okay smarty go to a party
Milers are scantily clad and showin ecto bodies
Jesinta Campbell walks by you wish you could text her
But you're standing on the wall like a running Poindexter
This days function high carbo luncheon
Food is served and you're stone-cold munchin'
Deek comes on people start to glance
But then you ate so much you nearly split your pants
Jesinta starts walking guys start gawking
Jupiters is next to you and Poker starts talking
Player next to me starts to sledge coz he hates my groove
So come on fatso and just bust a move

Sunday you're running your mission and your wishin'
Someone could cure your lonely condition
Lookin' for speed in all the wrong places
Everyone blowing up with no one to pace us
From frustration first inclination
We have now hit the wall and want to leave the situation
But every dark tunnel has a light of hope
So don't hang yourself, with the marathon rope
Your garmin's showin', that your slowin'
Couldn't care less about the PB you're blowin'
Sunnies are dark just to hide the show
Then ya spot the drink station with your bottle in your row
The sauce bottle is yellow, it says "Hello,
come pick me up you slow running fellow."
You plod over there with seconds to lose
And what comes next hey bust a move

In this city Bacchus gets shitty
Coz he's running like a flog, the crowd gives him some pitty
Give the legs a poke just to get some play
Then you try to make a move and they say, "No way"
My legs fakin' goodness sakin'
They want the runner who shuts down the station
Got no PB and you got no bar
Then you got no therapy and there you are

Some runners are sadistic, materialistic
 Lookin' for a PB makes them opportunistic
 They're runnin' all the time smashing apart the Tan
 So a runner with the sub 12 can be the man
 So on the GC you're strollin' real low rollin'
 The 2:38 is still all yours and a PB not stolen
 10 girls run past you with somethin' to prove
 So don't just shuffle there bust a move

UB1 Fielding is two one up and leading
 From the 36km mark he caught you bleeding
 He's hopin' you can make it to the finish if you can
 Cause he will stick it to you even though you own his Tan
 You say crap-o, check your speedo
 And roll to the finish line in your addidas addioso
 The chicks run past and backwards you are heading
 And there's one more girl you won't be getting
 So you start thinkin' then you start blinking
 The clock looks backs and knows that your sinking
 The race is all over and I don't want to go back
 But now your feelin' fine cause the bar is packed
 Melbas's jumpin' the bass is pumpin'
 You look at dance floor and the Milers are thumpin'
 "Winnie" Coopers wants to dance to a different groove
 Now you know what to do Bacchus bust a move

The data

Numbers never lie!

5KM	00:18:26	0:18:26	47	3:41
10KM	00:18:19	0:36:45	46	3:39
15KM	00:18:18	0:55:04	39	3:39
20KM	00:18:29	1:13:33	38	3:41
25KM	00:18:54	1:32:27	39	3:46
30KM	00:19:40	1:52:08	32	3:56
35KM	00:21:20	2:13:28	34	4:16
40KM	00:23:35	2:37:04	49	4:43
Finish	00:09:50	2:46:55	59	4:28

Half Way Splits

Half Way	01:17:41	1:17:41	41	3:40
Finish	01:29:13	2:46:55	59	4:13

Average Pace = 3:57

Splits

1	03:38.9
2	03:40.7
3	03:40.3
4	03:42.5
5	03:40.3
6	03:38.1
7	03:38.6
8	03:38.7
9	03:36.8
10	03:39.5
11	03:40.3
12	03:37.3
13	03:40.1
14	03:39.8
15	03:38.1
16	03:41.6
17	03:40.3
18	03:41.1
19	03:39.4
20	03:42.7
21	03:44.5
22	03:45.1
23	03:44.1
24	03:46.9
25	03:47.7
26	03:51.3
27	03:56.5
28	03:56.2
29	03:56.1
30	03:57.1
31	04:07.5
32	04:07.6
33	04:12.1
34	04:17.6
35	04:27.2
36	04:48.8
37	04:41.4
38	04:49.7
39	04:39.5
40	04:32.6
41	04:36.1
42	04:32.2
43	01:23.4

Geez it got messy over the last 15km or so.