

As it is my first race report and I'm fairly new to the Milers I thought I'd give a short history. Feel free to skip ahead because I'll never know if you do.

2009/2010

Running was never of interest to me. Boring! So 3 years ago when mates once more asked me to run with them, this time in the 10km Olympic Dream 6 weeks away they were stunned when I said yes. I suspect I was more stunned than them. Almost 42, gaining weight (91kg; it would peak at 95kg in March 2010) and living an increasingly sedentary lifestyle weren't sitting well with me. Actually it was the amount of sitting that was the problem. I'd always been a team sports man, but had largely retired post a back injury in 1999. Football, soccer, basketball & cricket were my games of choice, although I had been playing a bit of golf up to this point.

6 weeks later, after training hard (and incompetently) I lined up on a horrible wet day and managed a 53:28 (25:05 for the last 5km). One of my friends beat me by a minute or so, and I vowed then that he would never beat me again (he hasn't). And with that my competitive juices, dormant for many years, had awoken. The fact I almost immediately sat out for 2 months with a stress fracture at the base of the tibia as well as one in the 3rd left metatarsal was not going to stop me. Actually I ran the Olympic Dream with the ankle stress fracture such was my stupidity.

Over the course of 2010 I competed in a few races, the Run for the Kids and some Sri Chinmoy races, managing a 42:52 for 10km around Princes Park. I was up to about 150km per month at this stage. I then began to experience some achilles issues for the first time that kept me very limited for 5 months.

2011

In March after finally getting over my achilles tendonitis I got back to about 40k a week, and was suddenly convinced to join Athletics Nunawading by Dizzy and Jeff Broderick. So thanks to them for that because I've loved it. My wife however wishes you both a slow painful death. I got through every race, even with the birth of our daughter Ellie in June. The highlight was 87:14 for the half marathon at Burnley. In fact the day prior to Burnley, after much harassment from a friend to run the Melbourne Marathon I succumbed and signed up.

In hindsight it was a strange decision as to that point my longest run was 26k, although I was running a fairly consistent 60-70k per week by now, and had been largely untroubled by injury for the AV season. I felt that it might be the only opportunity to be fit enough to actually run a marathon. I ran a 28k the week after the tan relays, and then 35k the week after. My ankle blew up post that run and I missed the next week, the 3rd week out from the marathon. In the end I got to the starting line feeling great and somehow ran 3:01.09. And with that I'm retired from marathon running, before Dizzy tells me I cannot leave it at 3:01.

In November my achilles flared up again, although much worse this time. A couple of abortive attempts to resume failed miserably, to the point where my right achilles joined the left on strike. Eventually I listened to Jeff Broderick and paid a visit to Jane Fitzpatrick who very promptly told me that my mechanics are horrendous. I knew I was an overpronator having previously visited Active Feet who put me in supportive shoes. But Jane is confident that with orthotics I'll be sorted. And thankfully she's right.

2012

It isn't until March that I'm back running any sort of distance, and I'm starting behind the 8-ball for the coming AV season. And then in early April I fell ill and was put on a long course of antibiotics. The doctor tells me to take at least 6 weeks off running as the medication is likely to weaken my tendons and I'll be subject to them snapping. Delightful. I hold out 8 days before stepping out. I love this caper too much.

I battle my way through the early rounds of AV but then get some real positives from finally getting under 40 minutes for 10k at Flemington with 39:00. And Ballarat sees another step with 58:12 for the 15k. And then I fell ill again. I struggle for more than 2 months and am getting to the point where I think that running Melbourne is a complete waste of time. In the middle of August I'm off for another week with sinusitis. I resume on Saturday and manage 12k, then need to rest on Sunday. On the Monday and with Burnley just 12 days away I know I'm in strife. I go out to run a gentle 10k with the crew. I can then remember discussing my dilemma with Chris Bridge, that I need a long run desperately if I'm to have any chance of being anything like ready for Melbourne and that I can't see when I'm going to do it. I remarked that perhaps I should just keep on running until 4pm that day having begun at 12. In the end I just keep on going and run around the tan until 3pm, completing 35k. It is a struggle, but at least it gets done. And with that it seems something clicks into place. Burnley comes around and an 83:19 has me over the moon. I get in another 35k the next week and then 38k 10 days later. I miss 5 days after that with some quad pain, but a rest with 3 weeks to go seemed to work last year! From that point training is great, as I just try to copy what Dizzy doing.

In the days leading up

On Thursday catch up with Lurch for a coffee to hand over drinks for him to pass to Grunter. We talk tactics, and get to know each other and our backgrounds much more. I'm pretty certain the strategy he has for the day is a good one and that it suits us both. 4:12's for the first 3-4k, then 4:07 for as long as we can hack it. I make it known I'll be going no quicker than that for at least the first 32k, possibly more. I have no interest in blowing up because I take on a pace I know I oughtn't to. We know that at some stage we're likely to have to go our separate ways and that neither of us should feel guilty about it. It is great to spend time with somebody so equally enthusiastic about running. I felt we could have talked all afternoon and beyond if we had the time. I have no doubt that Lurch will go sub 3 hours. His run at Burnley when he went passed me looking so good and it is incomprehensible that he won't break his hoodoo. For me, while my public aim is to go under 3 hours, I'm thinking I should be under 2:57.

On Saturday night, after getting the little one to bed eat a dinner of pasta; not overly big. Get into bed early, and watch double episodes of Hell's Kitchen US, which seems to largely involve that twat Gordon Ramsay berating a bunch of supposed chefs who struggle distinguish a

fork from a spatula. Contestants are clearly chosen on the basis of their lack of social skills rather than any actual cooking. Get around it. It certainly helped me fall asleep with ease.

Race Day

Pre-race

Alarm goes off at 4.12 after a pretty decent night of sleep. Why 4.12? I initially had it at 4 and thought that was unnecessary so debated whether 4.10 or 4.15 was the go. In the end, being indecisive I sort of split the middle. Breakfast, 2 pieces of white toast with jam, weak tea, a banana & a chocolate energy bar; followed by a nice session in the bathroom. I was very happy with the result there. Ipads are a great invention too by the way. Put enough vaseline on to keep a hand to gland combat expert happy for months; drink some powerade, feed the whining cat, and then a last minute check to ensure I've got everything. Get in the car, start her up and then decide perhaps I shouldn't have been so happy with my bathroom results. Back in I go. Eventually get moving and make an uneventful trip in where I park nicely in Alexandra Ave. I'm always proud of my parking. Looks like I'm spot on between the lines. Change shoes. Why I didn't just wear the pair I'm changing into at first I don't know; and I'm changing into a pair I don't actually plan to race in. Makes sense to me. Start making my way towards the Swan St Bridge and decide the results in the bathroom certainly weren't as successful as they might have been. Knowing there's a toilet a few hundred metres back I turn around and start heading that way before a familiar voice is heard; Dizzy. Ok the toilet can probably wait. We chat inanely about goodness knows what to avoid the nervousness. Actually I'm fairly certain I mentioned the Victory getting blasted by the Roar, and we both agree we prefer the Heart anyway. Why Dizzy didn't raise Del Piero-cam at this point I don't know.

Well the moment we're over the bridge and in sight of the portable toilets and Dizzy is off like a shot. Good move. Ok I'm done and dusted yet again. Stroll over to the G and take a peek at the finish line. I'm pretty pleased to be finishing inside as opposed to last year. Dizzy takes another opportunity to use the facilities, but given it was only 5 minutes ago we'd gone, and that was my 3rd time already today I'm feeling fine. Alright we make our way to the bag drop off, strip into gear, including another shoe change for me (Adidas Adios Feather 2). It immediately becomes apparent that something is desperately wrong; Dizzy isn't wearing Miler Red. I'm thinking the whole Judean People's Front, People's Front of Judea kind of thing. We make our way to the start line via the William Barak Bridge to bypass the masses. Enter the gloriousness of the preferred starter area where Dizzy decides the facilities might be needed so off he goes. Now that he mentions it that seems a good idea to me too.

Stroll around a bit; I'm surprised it is as empty as it is at this stage. See the pin-up boy Smurf and have a quick chat. I ask if he's targeting 2:42 and he admits he is. Good lad. Catch up again with Dizzy and decide to go for a warm up running into Dozer who it must be said doesn't look too flash. After the rather brief warm-up we then re-enter the preferred starter area and yep before you know it Dizzy is off to use the facilities. It is at this point I realise that I've yet to see Lurch. We're down to 6 minutes or so before the gun. Given I'm supposed to be running with him I start to get a little concerned. Perhaps the stress of going sub 3 has gotten to him and he's self combusted? Oh wait, here he is, looking as cool as a cucumber. Meanwhile I'm as nervous as a long tailed cat in room full of rocking chairs. It soon becomes apparent that everyone around us knows the great man. With a minute or so to go the guy next to us starts hacking and spluttering. Not good. He says not to worry as it is too late to catch it anyway. How he's planning on getting through 42.195km I do now know. I really wish I'd noted his number to see how he went.

The Race (0-10k)

The gun goes and we're off. A huge relief is to see Dizzy charging away rather than again heading to the facilities. Naturally the first few kilometres are a real struggle trying to avoid the crowds, so many of whom must be going way quicker than they ought to. We manage to avoid the strife and hang together. Through the first 5k we're at 4:13 pace, so a little behind but nothing to be concerned about. Up around the old BP house we see Racer who thinks his pace is all over the shop, but he's where he ought to be I'd have thought. I'm actually not feeling that fantastic, the tummy definitely not feeling right. Please, no toilet breaks. Please, stop thinking about it. After about 8km we finally get beyond the 3 hour pacing group and find a little clean space. Grunter is beautifully placed and I take the first drink. Over the next km or so I drink maybe 80mls of the powerade and chuck the rest away. Ok, we get to 10km in 41:58 which is behind our plan, but nothing significant. We know we won't bother trying to make that up, but stick to the plan. At this point we've actually failed to do a single kilometre at the planned 4:07.

(10-20k)

We really settle into a nice groove, and the next 5k goes along swimmingly. We get it done in 20:45, or 4:09 pace, whereupon Grunter duly appears with more refreshments. For me it comes the time to decide whether to take the gel or not. I've tried them in training 3 times without issue at about this point so I do it. In the end I take only about a third to a half of it with some water. I've got more ready at 25k and 35k with some water or just powerade instead if I want. I'll worry about that later. Lurch is looking good; I'm trying to keep an eye on his technique but it looks solid to me. He's not living up to his nickname. The next 3k is into a slight breeze heading towards Port Melbourne and we certainly slow up a bit. The first person we notice heading back the other way is Woolies, seemingly flying along. We offer the chorus of support, most raucously in my case despite the fact Woolies probably wouldn't know me from a bar of soap. I certainly scare the living bejesus out of the people around us, so I call that mission accomplished and move on. The 15-20k is done in 20:52 meaning a respectable 41:37 for the last 10k, and 83:35 for the first 20k; about a minute behind plan.

(20-30k)

We're downwind now, and completely unencumbered of the masses. And with that I'm feeling great. Any thoughts of the tummy are gone and we're moving along at a nice clip. We cover the first 3k at about 4:04 pace, and also see the leaders heading in the opposite direction at what must be about 29-30k distance. Amazing! By now I'm locked in, and I'm focussed. I've only got eyes for the road ahead, and feeling as loose as a goose. As a result at maybe 24k I realise Lurch isn't by my side; crap running partner am I. Panic sets in, I look back and he's probably 20m or so back, and I don't really know what I should do. I slow down a bit a couple of times, but eventually decide

probably the smart thing here is let us both run our own race. As it turns out Lurch is running at about the planned pace. So I press on. 20-25k is covered in 20:17, and with a 3:59 for the 26th km and it feels like I've made good use of the trailing wind. I opt for Powerade at 25k rather than the gel, and down no more than about 100ml together with a snake. Mmm red snake. Not far after the turnaround at Elwood I see Lurch who looks like he's going fine to me. At least I hope he is. Back into the wind but really it is light and rather refreshing. I still feel relaxed and know that unless something dramatic happens sub 3 hours is formality. I get to 30k in 2:04:28, meaning the last 10k was covered in 40:51, comfortably my quickest so far. Only 16 months prior that would have been more than 2 minutes faster than my 10k PB.

(30-40k)

Just keep relaxed and focussed and we're home. There are so many people on the course from here on in it is magnificent, and every time you see somebody you know or hear your name called it gives you a little boost. I'm still feeling great. I've heard about some wall, but that's about as much as I want to know about it. As such I fight the urge to pick it up and just happily settle in to 4:11's. I try to do some maths in my head but it is about as successful as a chocolate fireman. I get through to 35k with a minimum of fuss and a lot of flatulence. That last 5k has been done in 20:57. I know the main challenge is ahead. I wave off Grunter at 35k (and in fact later again at 38k). Once again we merge with the half marathoners and I do my best to keep clear taking the long way around. The divide comes up and again I'm in clear space. Before too long a figure appears in my vision I did not want to see; Dozer. I'm trying to think of something to say but really can't come up with anything that won't come out as condescending nonsense so I say nothing. It does though take my mind off the rise around the tan and before I know it I've run passed quite a few and am turning into Domain. It is a great point in the race; the end is really not far off. I get to 40k in 2:46:25, a 10k split of 41:57 which is still quicker than the opening 10k.

(40-42.195k)

With just over 2k to go I just focus on keeping moving and staying as loose as possible. As good as I've felt to this point I've not got anything left from which to accelerate. I've always described myself as one paced, and so it was again. Just before we turn into Brunton Ave a couple of guys go passed me chatting away happily and easily. I can only presume the dirty cheats have jumped the fence and skipped the opening 40k. As it turned out they're 2 of the 3 from the 20k marker to get beyond me. I want to pick it up and get them, but I know it isn't happening. The run down Brunton Ave seems to take forever; where is the damn turn into the 'G'? At last it appears and I get into the 'G' and somehow find the correct lane to run in. There's a guy on my hammer that I've been seeing from about 30k in, so I'm keen not to let him beyond me. He sounds like a Labrador in heat. Look up at the clock over the finish with a couple of hundred to go and know that I'm going to finish with a 2:55 something so there's no need to bust a gut for a few seconds. Instead I opt to cross the line looking cool and relaxed, like 2:45 wouldn't have been out of the question had I really wanted it. Last 2.195k covered in 9:03. I've also managed a negative split (88:05 & 87:24).

Post Race

It's over, 2:55:29. I'm thrilled; I'd have happily taken that pre race. I find a host of other milers, and attention very quickly turns to Lurch and where he is. I haven't seen him since 24k; and suddenly I've got a bad feeling. Thankfully he's soon seen entering the stadium and there's joy all round. To see his reaction is just a thrill as it is so obvious how much this means to him. Eventually make our way and collect the bags. After leaning down and grabbing an apple from the bag my back tells me how much it hates me.

Nevertheless I pulled up extremely well, much better than 2011 when I wished I lived in a single story house. In fact that afternoon we go shopping as a family and my daughter takes good advantage of my fine mood by convincing me to buy her a mini quad. This is followed by a lovely session at the pub. I'm happily retired from marathons with a sub 3 hour time.

By about Wednesday I'm unretired again and thinking about Canberra.

My thanks must go to a number of people. Most specifically to Grunter for faultless support; every stop he was right in place and clearly visible. To Lurch, just a pleasure to run with, and a gentleman to deal with. And to Dizzy, who had to put up with me hanging off his coattails for weeks on end, and countless questions about what he's going to do that day, or on the weekend. And so on.

My Splits					
Split Name	Race Time	Leg Time	Pos	Cat Pos	Gen Pos
10k	00:42:06	00:42:06	281	49	258
20k	01:23:44	00:41:37	250	44	228
30k	02:04:36	00:40:51	196	34	177
40k	02:46:33	00:41:57	151	23	135
42k	02:55:37	00:09:03	148	23	132

KM	SPLIT	5KM SPLIT
1	4:13	
2	4:15	
3	4:14	
4	4:09	
5	4:14	21:05

6	4:09	
7	4:10	
8	4:15	
9	4:09	
10	4:10	20:53
11	4:07	
12	4:10	
13	4:07	
14	4:15	
15	4:06	20:45
16	4:14	
17	4:13	
18	4:10	
19	4:06	
20	4:09	20:52
21	4:04	
22	4:04	
23	4:05	
24	4:02	
25	4:01	20:16
26	3:59	
27	4:09	
28	4:09	
29	4:13	
30	4:05	20:35
31	4:13	
32	4:11	
33	4:12	
34	4:16	
35	4:11	21:03
36	4:14	
37	4:18	
38	4:06	
39	4:04	
40	4:12	20:44
41	4:07	
42	4:13	
43	0:43	9:03