

ING  **NEW YORK CITY
MARATHON**

PREMIER EVENT OF NEW YORK ROAD RUNNERS



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The Lead Up

We arrived in Washington DC on Saturday, October 26th. The next morning I was out for an approx 12 km run taking in Capital Hill, National Mall area, and the Lincoln Memorial. The Marine Corps Marathon was on and I saw a bit of it while running. They had just over 23,000 participants in the Marathon, apparently it is the 3rd largest in the country, with good weather and what appeared to be a flat course it would be a good one to do.

Monday morning it was a 10 km run around similar areas just like the day before but also taking in the White House. Tuesday morning was also around 10 kms but included 20 minutes of the run done at race pace around the National Mall (don't have a Garmin so guessing the pace). The National Mall has a great dirt area to run. The weather in Washington had been fantastic and we spent 3 days visiting Smithsonian Museums, Capitol Hill, and various monuments. It was pretty hectic and difficult sleeping; my daughter was waking between 2 & 3 am.

Wednesday morning it was off to New York by train. Thursday morning I did a 45 minute run around Central Park, plenty of groups were running as everything was set up for the Marathon. Running along the last few kms of the race I was trying to visualise running that section on race day and needing enough energy to run up the hill to the finish line. My last pre Marathon run was done in the outer suburbs of New Jersey, as I was staying there for a work meeting, it was an easy 35 minute run. After getting back to Manhattan it was off to the expo, spent around 3 hours there. Great atmosphere, massive line to get into the registration area due to security checking of bags. Excellent Expo but probably not as good as Boston's.



The day before the race we spent part of the morning and afternoon shopping for clothes to wear the next morning as it was going to be cold and I hadn't taken the no baggage option so they were going to be left there. Also ended up going to the Natural History museum so not really a restful day. Was fairly apprehensive about the race, my right hamstring had been sore for a few days, had

done plenty of walking around doing tourist things in both Washington and New York plus struggled to get a decent night's sleep since arriving. Having trained to run a pb, doubts were surfacing. The pre race dinner was at a Thai restaurant, a meat dish with about 4 bowls of rice, my formula for the 5 previous marathons.

Race Day

The day started at 3.45am, after getting myself organised an hour later it was a walk to 42nd Street Subway, along the way a few revellers from the night were wandering around. On the train there was a guy eating something that appeared to come from a food cart, a guy next to me asked him what he was eating and he replied that it was his secret weapon. Each to their own I suppose, he probably wasn't going to get under 4 hours. Arriving at Whitehall Ferry Terminal at 5.25am for my schedule 5.45am Ferry, I decided to hop on the 5.30am Ferry. It was at the Ferry Station that the first glimpse of the marathon security, 4 policemen carrying machine guns. The list of prohibited items stated weapons of any kind including firearms. I had a laugh and thought why would anyone want to bring weapons to a marathon but after all this is a country that has a constitutional right to bear arms. Fortunately found someone to talk to on the ferry which helped the next hour pass. After arriving at Staten Island it was onto a bus for a 20 minute ride to Fort Wadsworth. Off the bus it was through security for a full search, the items I had with me were in the clear plastic bag provided. Then a walk through to the Orange Village, there was a few colour coded areas for runners according to bib colour. It was now just before 6.30am, with the race starting at 9.40am there was plenty of time to kill. The village had toilets, a Dunkin stand, and another stand serving coffees, hot chocolates and teas. Fortunately they were giving out Dunkin Doughnut beanies as it was very cold. The beanie remained on until a few kms into the race. The next few hours were quite boring. I had bought a towel to sit on so rested for a while.

Around 8.15am I dispensed with some of the old clothes and shoes, and happened to bump into John Worsfold who was running, he ended running 3-29, which was a good run. At 8.30am I went to the assembling area and spotted John Crameri who was one of the few people I knew running. It helped pass the time having someone to talk to, must have stayed there for at least 30 minutes then we walked to the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge for the start. It was around 9.10am and found a spot at the start line. It was hard to tell how far I was back in the crowd but it wasn't far as I could hear the announcements. A guy standing next to me asked if I ran with the Midday Milers and I realised it was Byron Saunders who had been working in New York since March for Chia Seeds, his goal was to break 3 hours and it was great that he ended up doing that.

The Race

After the cancellation in 2012 due to Hurricane Sandy and the Boston Marathon bombing, the event was significant. The elites were introduced, big names including Geoffrey Mutai, Kedesy, Kiprotich, Kurui, & Yuki (couldn't believe he was running 3 weeks after Melbourne). Then of course the United States National Anthem. Major Bloomberg introduced this as 'The Greatest Race in the Greatest City', despite being Marathon number 16 I was nervous and not overly confident even though my training couldn't be faulted. Finally the gun goes off just after 9-40am to the sounds of 'New York, New York'. I only took me about 20 seconds to cross the start line so I was close to the front. The first Mile (most of the measurements were in Miles) on Verazzano-Narrows Bridge was uphill. There were plenty of people around but after that point it was fine. Coming off the bridge into Brooklyn

big crowds and cheering. The field had been split so I was running on the left hand side of the road, it didn't merge until just after 10 kms. Every mile there were drinks and bands playing. Around 7 kms a band was playing 'Dead Flowers' which gave me a bit of a spur. The first 10 kms crossed in 39-06, a bit ahead of schedule, going ok but not feeling great. Having in the past only gone through 1 gel during a marathon, after a bit of research decided to do 3 gels in this marathon to try to alleviate the fadeout after 30 kms. The first gel was taken around 14 kms, crossed 15 kms in 58-57 so on track. Around this point a stitch developed which was unusual, with just over a third of the race completed was thinking how was I going to get through the race. The pace slowed a bit but fortunately it disappeared after just over a km. Crossed the 20 km mark in 79-11, slight drop in pace but still going ok. Just after this point the race crossed into Queens.

Brooklyn had taken a fair portion of the distance from Miles 2 (3.2kms) to just short of 13 miles (20.5kms). The crowd support was excellent with plenty of people lining both sides of the road, cheering, bands playing. I had read pre race about the ethnic diversity in Brooklyn but when you are running for a time, this is a bit difficult to notice, although did see some members of the Jewish community in traditional garments trying to cross the road just before Williamsburg. Reached halfway in 83-45, right on track at this point. Just after this it was Polanski Bridge which climbed up and then down into Queens. There were less spectators in Queens with a few turns around some non descript what appeared to be industrial areas. Parts contained with little people. Crossed 25 kms in 1-40-15, there was a drop off in pace. The Queensboro Bridge was next, it was a tough climb and I was struggling, think Haile Gebreslassie pulled out on this bridge 2 years prior. The Bridge crosses Eat River from Queens to Manhattan. No spectators on the bridge so it was very quiet. After the climb it was downhill with a sharp left turn into Manhattan.

Coming off the bridge the crowd noise was huge and a real boost. Not quite like the scream tunnel in Boston but close. After another turn it was into First Avenue which was long but had great crowd support on both sides of the road. Saw an Australian flag so pointed to Melbourne Midday Milers but didn't get much support. First Avenue went from Midtown through the Upper Eastside to East Harlem. Mile 18 there was a large drink station offering powergels, water, and Gatorade. Water was still sufficient for me while finishing off my 2nd gel. Not long after this crossed the 30 km mark in 2-00-42, while slightly above the goal pace it was better than the previous 5 kms. Still on target but starting to feel fatigued and not sure if I could keep up the pace. Around 20 miles (32 kms) it was a climb up Willis Ave Bridge, fairly tough at this point of the race and then a downhill into the Bronx. The Bronx section covered less than 3 kms, there was some crowd support but much less than Manhattan, passed Yankee Stadium onto Madison Avenue Bridge there were members of a few running clubs out supporting, another uphill climb then downhill ramp onto 5th Avenue.

It was back into Manhattan a fairly flat few miles counting down the street numbers through the Upper Eastside, plenty of cheering and support. It was a tough balance between enjoying the experience and trying to run a time, on occasions I would wave to the crowd other times it was head down and thumbs up. Crossed 35 kms in 2-22-15, my worst 5 km split so far. The chance of a low 2-50 time while mathematically possible, knew it wasn't going to happen. Not having a Garmin made it a little difficult with only 5 km splits every mile was labelled but in the back half of the race you can't really be bothered doing the conversions until the end. Couldn't wait to get into Central Park, entered around 23 mile mark with the Guggenheim Museum to the left, it was just over 5 kms to go. This section was downhill which helped as I was struggling, it was a scenic part of the race, although I

wasn't really enjoying it. The crowds in this section while good weren't huge, may be due to the security.

Rounding down towards Central Park South the crowds were large and loud, I had visualised this section of the race having jogged through it on Thursday morning. The 40 km mark was 2-44-01, the pace had dropped again but not as much as the previous 5 kms. At Central Park South the race went outside the Park, there were massive crowds, I knew I had to work hard at this point looking at my watch thinking and wanting to get under 2-54 so I wouldn't be losing a minute with each year of age. The countdown was on, 1 mile to go, then 800 yards, 600 yards, reached Columbus Circle (one of my favourite places in NY), big cheers from massive crowds, made a right hand turn and re-entered the Park, the last 400 yards or so was uphill, not the sort of thing you want at that late stage of a Marathon. With 100 yards to go my name was announced which was great. Crossed the line in 2-53-33, very happy.



Got my medal and did high fives to plenty of volunteers. Without the huge amount of volunteers the race certainly wouldn't be what it is. The walk from the finish line through the Park to exit seemed to go on forever, must have been about 800 metres. Upon exiting Central Park it was around 72nd Street, had to walk down to about 60th Street where my family was waiting. They had to go through extensive security to get through including proving their connection to me. They managed to get a spot in Central Park near the finish line, they were able to see me finish. Getting through the crowds at Columbus Circle was difficult but eventually made our way to our accommodation which was just over a 1 km away. A few streets away people would say congratulations but further streets back others were going about their lives without any care about the Marathon. I was actually walking fine which was a surprise as the course was tough, bridges, hills, and the road surface was rough and uneven.



Impressions of Race

Initial impressions were mixed, it was a tough race and one I didn't feel very comfortable at any stage. After finishing I thought I would never do the race again but that may change over time. Really well organised, great event. The great thing about running is that you can do a Top 6 Marathon at the same time over the same course as some of the world's best, you can't do that with too many other sports. The security was extensive, some thought it was over the top but it didn't worry me too much. It is a shame that an event that brings out the best in people (competitors & volunteers) has to resort to these security measures. A great experience and one I will look back on fondly in years to come.

My Performance

Race Splits

5 km	19-39
10 km	39-06
15 km	58-57
20 km	1-19-11
Half	1-23-45
25 km	1-40-15
30 km	2-00-42
35 km	2-22-15

40 km 2-44-01

Finish 2-53-33

Positives – My 4th best time (only 6 seconds away from my 3rd), considering the course and windy conditions probably a better run than my best 3 which were done over easier courses, 388th place out of 50,2, 5th Australian (not too many good Australian runners in the field obviously), the winner Geoffrey Mutai was around 3 minutes slower than his race record 2 years earlier. He only beat me by 45 minutes whereas he beat me by 49 in Boston.

Negatives – Trained harder than I ever have, included 3 double runs in the afternoon after a morning long run, did 4 longer runs at Anglesea over hilly terrain specifically for New York, and consumed 3 gels during the race. Despite all this, did blowout post 30 kms like my 6 previous marathons. Did the extra training to reduce this but unfortunately this didn't happen.

Post Race

Caught up with John Crameri that evening, had a few beers at a few bars but apart from a few marathoners there didn't seem to be a place where marathoners gathered, if there was we couldn't find it. That was a bit disappointing. Went to Marathon Monday the next day which was situated in a large tent at Central Park West where the finish line was. They had medal engraving, merchandise, and some physio treatment. At that point I was surprisingly feeling fine but in the afternoon the soreness hit. Found it very difficult the next day walking down 4 flights of stairs with heavy bags.

What's Next

Have struggled with running since the race with hip and hamstring soreness. Hopefully that will disappear as it only took 2 weeks without running before I started to miss it. If all going according to plan maybe the Melbourne Marathon next year.