

Melbourne Marathon 2010

By Paul "Bacchus" Marsh

Race Report - Background

This is a bit of a recap of my first road to Melbourne instalment. It had been the last 24 months of watching the inspired efforts of many milers that has lead me to having a crack at my first marathon in Melbourne... how could you not get fired up after Melbourne 2009, Lake Kamakazi, ChCh and Phuket. Mid last year I was fat, injured and unmotivated. The wise words of GGO had me starting back at 30km a week and building up by no more than 10% a week. This helped me get consistency in my training and avoid building up too quickly and getting injured. Was hitting 50km a week in November 2009 (stuff all by bug gun standards) but started seeing the benefits. Got to 60km a week early this year and then slowly built that up to 70km a week. At the same time (surprise surprise) started running reasonably well. Got caught up in the ChCh craze and chewed the ears of AL and Dozer (given that they too were once 14:30 tan runners) who both told me to cool my jets and shoot for Melbourne... more of a chance to make it to the start line with a longer build up. Suffice to say I am very pleased that I did indeed follow the wise works of AL, Dozer and GGO.

When I penned my initial road to Melbourne thoughts I wrote "the aim at the moment is to get to the start line, hopefully in a fit enough state to get to the finish line... if I achieve that I will be pumped. During this time also want to eradicate my ordinary half marathon and 10km PBs." Achieved most of that except to say that I still have a not so good 10km pb - bring on Zatopek.

Race Report - Training

This has been well documented in my road to series. In short AL developed a 14 week program for me which built on my current base i.e. 70km per week. The program had me doing 4 X 30km + runs and many 100km weeks. Ran 6 days per week with a rest day always occurring on the weekend. As the program progressed so did the double runs. Three heavy weeks followed by one lighter week was the pattern. Coach AL strongly suggested getting to the hills for the long runs. I was initially sceptical but glad I took advice from yoda as I have no doubt the hills are a big reason for my 2:43. Started seeing results for my hard work with a 12:26 tan, great killer loop handicap and a 76:51 half at Burnley. Did no other racing in the lead up to Melbourne. This did concern me initially, however, Burnley put that to rest as I felt my legs were strong the whole race and ran within myself for most of the 21km.

As Slips stated in his report AL was generously providing advice, written and verbal, on training, long run and speed session schedules, tapering, carb loading, race day could not have achieved the results I did without this guidance. Certainly did not hit the illicit substances likes Slips did, however, as the kms increased so did my intake of Gatorade. Did take some magnesium along the way for muscle tightness. Tried to stretch most nights but could have been better with this.

Had fortnightly massage with Gary Mirits (increased this to weekly 6 weeks out from race day). This was for some OP, ITB and in the latter stages abdominal issues. In my first marathon campaign I really feel like I pushed as hard as I could volume wise and many times felt right on the edge of breaking down. ALs meticulous program and the magic hands of Gary Mirits worked beautifully in tandem.

Once ALs program commenced so did my diet changes. Did not go crazy but just ate better. Did not want to be doing all this work and then smashing some flake, potato cakes, fired dimmies and chips. As a result went from 80kgs to a race weight of 76kgs... had not been 76kgs since I was at school and this was also 10kgs lighter than my footy days.

The plan was sub 2:45. I went with this because Slips did. It seemed ambitious given it was a debut marathon but Burnley gave me some hope. I thought I would be dirty if I ran anything slower than 2:48:48 but also knew better runners than me have been beaten by the marathon so I kept saying to myself "do not get ahead of yourself and stick to the plan."

Race Report - The Days Before

Geez I hate carbo loading. Constantly going to the bathroom and peeing like a pregnant woman. Kathryn is a gem. In the days leading up to the race she went on to the AIS website and downloaded all these carbo loading recipes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Each day I was sent off to the office with a tonne of specially manufactured muffins. Was feeling pretty good leading up to the race. Knew I had done the training, however, my only concern was a lack of recent speed work due to some abdominal issues. I replaced a speed session each week for the last 6 weeks with a tempo / threshold run over a greater distance. I think in hindsight this did me more good than harm in terms of ensuring I get to the start line. Also did a few training runs at race pace leading up to the big day and did them on the bit so was fairly confident about 2:45. It was almost concerning that I was not getting nervous. Work is constantly hectic so makes it easy to take my mind off it. Felt a few nerves on the Friday before the race when doing the drink drop and chatting to Slips, Fury, AL and TW. It was at this point TW reminded me how long StKilda road is;K this helped me Sunday.

This is where the umbilical brothers start... got a sore neck on Wednesday. Quite amazing reading Slips report and seeing he too had a pain in the neck... so to speak. Had a shocking sleep Friday night. Little man was up for ages and Kathryn being heavily pregnant could not help too much in the settling process. Had a massive headache Saturday... Slips too had a headache. Was this Mitho with a voodoo doll or something 😊. I never get headaches unless they are self inflicted... was this a negative side effect to carbo loading? Took the tin lids to swimming and Kathryn said she would take the kids to her mums for their day sleep. Popped a Panadeine (I never take any sort of medication but I had to do something) and had a midday snooze for a few hours. Woke up and felt a million bucks...I am back baby!

Race Day - Ignorance is Bliss

Pulled a favour from my mother in law and she took Will off our hands for Saturday night. Did not want another night like Friday before a debut marathon. Slept a treat Saturday night. Woke up at 5:00am. Two slices of toast with Jam and 300ml of Gatorade. Usual bathroom visit (thank God this carbo loading is over). Quick shower extra warm to calm me down. Tape up the nipples. Out to the computer for the final song before I leave. This was an easy selection given the success of ChCh so followed in Hallys footsteps and put on Lust for Life by Iggy Pop (Paul Kelly, Leaps and Bounds was on before this just for the MCG lyrics). Jump in a cab and talk cricket with the driver how many times can Very Very Special Laxman single handedly beat the Aussies? Arrive at the MCG at about 6:00am. Have a look around and go to the bathroom at the G. Apply Vaseline everywhere. Then a bloke asks if he can use some as he left his at home. I duly informed him that I have no rare diseases and he should be right to use it refrain from shaking his hand given it had just been down my pants.

Drop my bag off and head over to the start area. Love this preferred start. No queue for toilet stop number two while non preferred starters looked like they were going to be waiting for a while. Felt like a rock star with all these hacks getting knocked back from the area. Find a place to sit. TW finds me and has some wise words for me. Starting to get excited where are these nerves? No sign of Slips. Go for a light 600m jog. Come back for a final pre race leak (now a 5 minute queue). Saw Slips, Perc, Dizzy, Ron Barrassi and my old swimming coach at this point. I am loving this and still excited. Have one final swig of water and head to the start line. See House and Thorny. Slips and I are pumped. Slips Garmin is having a moment with 2 minutes until race start and this seems to be concerning me more than him. Do

not know why Mark Allen from SEN was on course talking but still made me feel important. Still excited and no nerves. This will be fun. This will not hurt. Gotta love the debut Marathon. Ignorance is bliss.

The Race - First Half

Off we go. Side by side with my un-identical twin. Who put a hill at the start of a marathon? Chatting away with Slips talking about his sore neck and my average sleep Friday night. 1st km was over 4 min and for some reason this concerned me. Slips assured me that we have 41 more kilometres to bring it back. See TW and Fury early and this felt great to hear support so early... I did not envisage how much support we would actually get throughout the whole race.

TW is right. St Kilda road is long. Took a few kms to get our rhythm but it was a great stretch to run. Mitho was along this stretch to offer support. How good is this. Feeling great, chatting away and talking with our support crew. I think the people around us were beginning to think who the hell are these two blokes dressed the same with people calling out every 500 meters and what's with those nicknames? I felt important and that made me feel great.

The crowd at the Fitzroy Street turn was awesome. Love this home town marathon. On to Albert Park lake and Slips correctly pointed out we need to take the racing line. Spotted some red singlets on the left leading up to 7km thinking it was AL, however, it was Dozer and Racer offering more support and high 5s. The people running with us are probably thinking "more of these dudes... they are everywhere." Yes they are people and get used to it. Move over to the right and grab our drinks from AL and the Smooth one with Mitho and some others in support (my memory is not quite as good as Slips). At this stage I think I said to Slips "how lucky are we... hand delivered race drinks." We then put in a quick split as the Miler army had fired us up. Slips and I both suggest we cool our jets.

Saw Biggers on course around this time too. Around the 10km mark we formed a bit of a group with the APS guy and tri guy. It was great to hear that we were soon to have Hutz joining us... my comment at this time was that we were going to have a real marathoner in our presence. I did this to spur me on a bit given that we had a long way to become known as a marathoner. Also said to the tri guy that he was nuts running 42km after 3.8km of swimming and 180km of riding. Good to have some more company and some others to chat to. I think after all the running we have done Slips and I exhausted most of our conversation 😊. 10km up and Slips says we are ahead of schedule. It was at this time I realised he had written the splits on his arm... how prepared is this bloke!

Pit straight was great. Feel like a million bucks and you could see we had a huge crew at the Scumbag drink station. Like a well oiled machine they spotted us early and Grunter and AW handed over the water and gels. If only Webber could get these guys in their pit crew. Hally and Bevo here as well with official miler photographer Thai. It was around this area Tri guy told us our positions. What a freak... I had enough trouble spotting the km markers let alone counting. He said that he did this in ironman races to pass the time... fair enough. I did not realize that we had a few more tacked on to us except for the now infamous orange guy. Despite the fact he ran 2:42 he can get stuffed as he ran with an ipod.

During the pit area run we were able to spot Thorny and House who looked like they were having a morning stroll and Dusty on the way back who looked a million bucks. Also caught sight of Lurch and Perc. The support from the other Milers at the start and end of pit straight was awesome.

The next few splits were all over the shop. Auto splits for me next time... how hard is it to get the markers right???? The run back on to Fitzroy Street was enjoyable knowing we had a downhill section ahead of us. Hutz joined us at around this point and we also grabbed a drink off TW at 14km. We are now running towards Port Melbourne. Slips refers to his arm at 15km and informs me we are over a minute ahead of

schedule. This is great but keep it in check boys. Saw GGO at this point but did not recognize him immediately as he was wearing lycra. It was a damn shame his body did not let him wear the red singlet. Saw GG around this point too.

This section of the race gave us another look at the leaders. Freaks. We yelled out to Thorny and House and they had the lead chick with them too. Slips mentions that they both might get chicked. I try not to choke on my Gatorade. EM should approach Oxford dictionary and have that term included. We were hitting out splits... and they were on the lower end of our range. Felt like Glen Boss had put Makybe Diva to sleep in the back of the course at Flemington and we were cruising. Both AL and TW mentioned the first 15km will be the most enjoyable running experience of my life... it was. Felt fresh, strong, in control and loving it.

Negotiate the turn at Bay Street well and allowed us to yell out some more support to Dusty, Perc and Lurch. Also see a mate of mine Harro at this point also running his debut marathon. Thai doing a sterling job. Starting to feel it a bit but nothing too major. In the back of mind I was thinking we may have taken this out a bit too quick. Catch AL, Racer and the Mithen's at 20km. AL was fairly forthright in his advice at this point. I sensed Mitho was worried about his PB 😊. Slips checks his Collingwood sleeve at this point and tells me we are 1:40 ahead of schedule. What happened to out 3:55 splits?

The Race - Second Half

Halfway point has been done to death. They have the mats in the wrong spot and even I can see that. As I see a 21.1km marker spray painted on the road I check my watch gee 21.1km. You do not need to be a rocket scientist to put the mats there as opposed to 500m before. We also grabbed some drinks (the wrong ones) at this point form Dozer. I love this photo it sums up the Slips and Bacchus journey completely.



Down past Fitzroy Street and see my brother in law and two nieces and give them a high 5. More great atmosphere here until the boring section down to Elwood. It was around this point where we are going a bit too quick slowly moved from the back of my mind to the front. Still feel good but legs and lungs starting to feel the pinch. Was still oblivious to the fact we had a pack with us. Saw LG around here good to see an old face. More encouragement to House and Thorny. How easy do these two make it look. 25km the arm tells us we are 2 minutes ahead of schedule.

Negotiated the car park at Elwood and got a bit excited as I knew the big family crew would be on the other side of the car park. We entered on to beach road and saw Kathryn, the kids, mum, mother in law and sister in law and got heaps of encouragement. Kathryn had made a sign and pom poms for the kids and had been teaching them to recite go daddy all week. Did the U turn at Elwood and went to the right side of the road to give the kids their well deserved high 5s. This felt great. My family could not have been more supportive of me embarking on the marathon and it was good they were able to get close to the action. Post race Kathryn said it looked great as we were the first big pack to come through and Slips and I looked like we owned it.

Straight after this point (about 26km) the little voice in my head was getting louder. You are beginning to feel it and you should back off or it will go from being doing a Smoothy to doing a Bacchus. The other little man replied, do not be soft. Of course this is going to hurt you are not just out for a stroll. First little man bites back, he should be doing 3:55s and is well in front. Back off to 3:55s and sub 2:45 is a given. If you keep doing this then 2:50 may be a struggle. Second little man, harden the f@#k up. This went on for a bit.

Catch a look of Dusty and Perc again along with LG. It was around here Slips told me to jump on as he felt I was dropping off. Bloody hell now I have three voices to contend with 😊. AL and racer hand us our drinks and Dozer joins us for a jog at 28km. How are you feeling Slips, feeling great mate, all good. What about you Bacchus? I provide a not so convincing, yep, good. I lied and Slips and Dozer knew it.

Ah sh!t Fitzroy Street. What goes down must go up. Did not look forward to this but was better than I thought it would be. It was now Slips, Orange guy and me in that order up Fitzroy Street. My decision had been made. Back off or it will get ugly. After the half marathon merge the back off started. Slips and Orange guy put a little bit of distance in me but not a heap. I see Orange guy take out his ear phone and say something to Slips I hope he had lust for life on.

See my old neighbour as I jump on to St Kilda road and she offers some support. She looked concerned for me. Not a look I needed or wanted. Right Bacchus 3:55s and stick to it. This stretch from 31km to 40km was (at the time) the toughest thing I have ever done. As soon as I made my decision to back off it still felt just as hard to maintain 3:55s. 30, 31 and 32kms I still averaged 3:53. This was just a grind.

I have a love hate relationship now with my Garmin. I hate you because this hurts much more than the feedback you are providing me pace wise. On the flip side I needed the immediate feedback to ensure the negative little man in my head did not win. I was now ticking off the kms and working very hard to maintain my pace. This hurt like nothing else and I was telling myself to love the hurt. The amazing thing was I was still passing people when I felt like I should be passed. In fact I think I only had one person pass me over the last half of the race.

Come on Bacchus work! I kept reading ALs email in my mind. This is the time to put your balls on the line. I must have said this to myself 100 times. WTF why are these half marathoners with me now. I really do not need this now. Dodging and weaving through a mass of punters. This is the Melbourne Marathon for Christs sake! It is at this point I realise I have become one of those precious runners. Stop

complaining. Stuff that. I have not trained my guts out to contend with some biggest loser types get out of my way.

33km 3:55 tick. 34km 3:55 tick. 35km 3:50 tick. Thank you Garmin I am on track but f@#k you all the same. Bacchus auto split next time I am sick of hitting this split button beeping is easier. I can still see Slips but no longer Orange guy. The gap has not changed too much. The pain on the other hand is increasing. My left calf is annoying me but not inhibiting me. Legs are in agony and breathing is all over the shop. Sounding like Grunter.

Now for the back of the Tan not happy with the course designer at this stage. Remember Bacchus, balls on the line stuff. Still peeved with these half marathoners but they now deviate back to StKilda Road. I was now alone and had to contend with the next 2km on my Jack Jones. Oh how I wanted those punters back at least I had someone to pass.



Where are you going half marathoners?

Get my drink from TW and see him and Fury in a bit of a fluster. Not sure why and hurting too much to talk. See the Fury ride up to Slips with his drink great recovery guys. TW rushes off. Mate you dont have to get there too quick I will be a while. This is without doubt the toughest thing I have done. The 2km up hill stretch at the end of a marathon running on your own. Thorny treated this with contempt. Fury has a little ride with me. You are going well Slips is just going a little better. Was this a strategy to fire me up?

36km 4:01. That felt like 5 minutes. 37km 4:05. That felt like 6 minutes. Can hear AL something about balls on the line. Have no idea who else is here with him and hurting too much to look. Gatorade in hand and the lovely drinks people still feel it is incumbent upon them to get in my face and each offer me water. These guys are great in retrospect but when you feel like you are about to keel over it is not ideal. I must admit Green Eggs and Ham were not on my mind at this point. See my brother in law with my two

nieces again as I approach the top of the hill. Needed that. 38km 3:58.

Domain road downhill from here. No high five for the bro in law this time. Need all my energy. See one of my best mates ahead and catching a bloke in front of me. Try and pick up the pace to show off and pass him in front of my crew. Fury rides up at the perfect time. Asks me if I want my next drink. No wait for St Kilda Road. He then advises that if I hit 4 min kms for the rest I will have a 2:43 WTF! I am no good at doing maths on the run when in pain so had no idea where I was at. Was confident of mid 2:44 but 2:43! Hurt Bacchus. Hurt like you have never hurt before. 39km 3:56. Some music pumping at the corner for Domain and StKilda need more of this.

StKilda Road. In pain but almost over now. Dozer joins me and I grab my last drink off Dozer via Fury. Have a bit and throw it away too heavy and I have hydrated enough. Dozer tells me to control my breathing. Tells me to hurt and that this is what I have done all the work for. Having Fury and then Dozer immediately after was worth its weight in gold. Dozer and I could both sense that I was gaining on Slips and this gave me another pick up. Dozer left me to help out the next Miler.



Thanks Dozer

Bugger. Now we have even slower half marathoners with us. Need this like a hole in the head. Also more of those helpful drink station people. Decide to run around the back of the table this time to avoid them and the punters no one got the point. Who the hell needs a drink at 40km anyway. Atmosphere is great but getting very annoyed with the masses of runners. 40km 3:58.

Slips is definitely coming back to me. I can see the bald head of the white Kenyan dodging and weaving. WTF, why is there a photographer on the ground in the middle of Flinders Street right in my way can this get any more annoying? Starting to dig deep and put the foot down and call on anything I have left. 41km 3:54. Work Bacchus. Finish with Slips on the G.



Why is this photographer on the ground in front of me? Not happy Jan.

Passing every man and his dog now. Down hill section of Wellington Parade South. Finally some respite from the half marathoners on Brunton Avenue where we get the attention we deserve. This part is awesome. Big crowd. Big noise. Soon to be big head. Really having a crack and making huge inroads into Slips. Mr Brightside by the Killers is on the loud speaker one of my favorites but usually singing it hammered in the young members marquee the day prior at Caulfield Guineas day. Sounds much better here needed it more too. Approach the entrance of the G and see Fat Ass. I hear him say Go Slips. Hoping for the first time all race I get no encouragement so I can sneak up on this old fella I am about 10 meters behind him now. Fat Ass did not oblige Go Bacchus and then the look over the shoulder 😊.

The Finish - Version 1

The finish version 1. Knew I had the old fart covered. Led him into a false sense of security at 31km and let him go knowing he would be found wanting. I was sick of his endless chatter anyway. Got onto the G and was comfortable in the knowledge that I, out of any miler, could smash this wanna be Kenyan over a 200 meter rep. Headed around the hallowed turf and then could hear the Fielding family call out for their patriarch. At this point I knew I had to do the right thing. My mother always told me to respect my elders. And so, I backed off and ensured a close enough finish without it looking like I threw it. An Indian bookmaker would be proud. Slips by one second. Well done mate.

The Finish - Version 2

The finish version 2. I, more than anyone knew that trying to catch this old bastard with more fast twitch fibers than Usain Bolt over one lap of the G was impossible. Anyway lets have a crack and put on a show for the fans. Got up to him but was never going to pass – did not have anything left and he had me. As much as this was hurting this was great fun. Going toe to toe with a mate you have trained with and raced with and a solitary second separating us over 42.195kms. Coach AL must have been proud. Post race Kathryn told me they were about 150m from the finish line and when Slips and I ran past we got a huge cheer given we were dressed the same and seemed to be having a real crack. It was an awesome atmosphere. 2:43:14. Last 1.195km in 4:30 at 3:37 pace. Stop.



Synchronised “sprinting”

Post Race

Shake Slips hand. Mate, that deserves a man hug and we are having one! Walk over to the fence to see the Fielding crew. We get told to move along. Tempted to tell the bloke to get me a wheel chair. I can barely walk. Every muscle is gone but I do not care. We are both in shock. How did we just do that. Wander aimlessly down the ramp massive struggle. Feel like I need to spew. Pick up my medal and bag. See a bloke spewing into a bin thinking I might tag in.

Get outside and Slips cramps up. I offer to help but cannot bend over. See House and informs us of his and Thornys feats freaks. House can tell I am about to spew and tells me that the best thing is to eat something as much as I do not want to. Sage advice. Eat some lollies and feel great immediately. Find the family. Hugs all round and Slips and I pose for a few happy snaps to keep the adoring fans at bay. Then instructed by Kathryn to pick the kids up for photo need them to be lifted to me. Great photo and all my son can say is go daddy and daddy fast running. Yes son very fast 😊. Use the pram as a Zimmer frame and catch up with Mark Gorski at R4YL he is pumped for Slips and I. Must have been the socks he sold me.



Great work Slips. Wish I had a pair of sunnies though.



The happy family.

Go into the G to get changed. See Dozer and he listens to my incessant crapping on about how good Slips and I were. Thank him profusely for everything. Now off to Yum Cha to smash as many pork buns as I can. Mission completed. Sent a million SMSs and got heaps of phone calls. Coach AL one of the first on the phone. See a mate I went to school with who was pumped with his 3:21. Suffice to say I was not unhappy at telling him my time.

Get home and have a shower and go to bed. Trade SMSs with my Siamese twin about how good we are. He informed me of our top 50 finish. Debut Marathon and finish in the top 1% of the field pumped. Go and get fish and chips 2 flake, 3 potato cakes, 2 fried dimmies and plenty of chips oh how I have missed you.

Post Race Thoughts

Thanks for the template Slips.

If someone told me 12 months ago I would run a 2:43 marathon on debut I would have fallen over laughing. To run 2:43:14 equals 3:52 per km. It really was not that long ago I was pumped breaking 20 minutes for 5km. 2:45 was ambitious to say the least. For me I was most happy with the way I ran. We went out quicker than expected but nothing stupid. I backed off when I needed to. This was a major turning point for me. Did not want to loose Slips but in hindsight this saved me. If I kept going I was going to blow up. You can tell by my splits all I really did was back off to the target time and this was enough smart not soft. Loved being able to come home with a wet sail but saying that not sure it would have been as quick without Slips in front of me.

In relation to the shoes I have not really had racing shoes until I bought the Adidas Adios runners. Everyone else seemed to love them and I thought the blue looked cool. I have worn these 5 times for 2 tan PBs, killer loop handicap win, Burnley Half, and Melbourne Full. I am in love. No blisters but a bit of damage to one toe nail.

Agree with Slips and Thorny that it does not get much better than running a marathon in your home town. Slips is spot on - you could not run another marathon in the world where you can get 20 or so of your mates running all over the marathon course helping you out with drinks and support and then have your family standing in the greatest sporting stadium in the world as you run the final 300m to cross the finish line. They do need to sort out the issue with the half runners. I also loved the music when it was one and think they should have some tunes on over the whole course maybe we could put Iggy Pop on repeat.

How good are the Milers. This event made me realise now more than ever that it is an honour and a privilege to be associated with the MMMs. So many volunteers to deliver drinks on course. Blokes running and riding next to you when you are in a world of pain to help you along. Advice from experienced runners that have been there done that. Personalised training programs and all you have to do for payment is not complain about the coaches seeding for club events 😊. 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 experience and I thank you all.

Slips what a legend. For a guy that has been struck down by injury so many times I am so happy for you in achieving what you have done. I feel privileged that I joined you for the ride. We did our long runs together. Always seemed to be finishing our reps together (except for the 250s). To train together, then run together for 30km and finish one second apart after 42.195km is something that will remain with us forever. AL is spot on this guy is 44 and he has the best abs of any Miler. Looking forward to breaking 2:40 with you umbilical brother.

On that I am hooked. Yeah it hurt but pain is temporary and glory is permanent. I have been on a sharp improvement curve over the last year. I joined the Milers in March of 2007. Improved a bit and got lazy. In a way I feel like I have only been running for a year. Feel like I have got a fair bit of improvement left in me. Keen to keep at it and not let all this training go to waste. Short term want to get under 35min at Zatopek, and run some 1500m, 3km and 5km on the track. Have done absolutely no track racing unless you call the 2010 MMM Mile handicap an official race. I think I have sub 2:40 in me and there is already talk of Christchurch. With child 3 due soon I may cool my jets and shoot for Melbourne 2011. The only thing I will do differently next time around is be more vigilant with stretching and I am going to start pilates very soon need to improve my core.

Thanks

My wife Kathryn and kids Lucy, Will and TBA. Could not have been more supportive. From Sunday mornings away up in the hills to making muffins from the AIS website. All Kathryn wanted for me was to get to the start line and achieve the result I wanted pure selflessness. To get the kids so involved with posters and poms poms being 7.5 months pregnant may have been more difficult than the marathon. Agree with Thorny that in a few weeks it will be a lot harder than the marathon and I am glad I am not doing it!

AL what can you say. Meticulous program and wanted the best for Slips and I. His confidence is us running sub 2:45 certainly made me think it was achievable. The weekly emails, the advice on carbo loading, the taper etc. AL sent Slips and I an email on the Friday before the race mapping out how it would unfold. I read this and reread this. This email was so important for me during the race. For a mate to offer so much for nothing in return is rare in this day and age. Thank you and cannot wait to run a marathon with you.

To the Milers that have offered support and emails over the last 12 months and marathon running advice it has not gone unnoticed. In no particular order PM, TW, Dozer, AW, Hally, Smoothy, Thorny, Mitho, Dizzy, House, Hutz, Lawry, Dusty and Banger. Special mention to GGO who got me back running (not sure if he knows that).

To our drinks support crew thank you - AL, Dozer, Smoothy, Fury, TW, AW, Racer. This was huge. No fighting drink stations. The encouragement and pick me ups. To everyone else that was out on the course giving support and to everyone that has offered congratulations thank you.