

Melbourne Marathon 2010

What follows is a re-enactment of the events leading up to, during and after the 2010 Melbourne Marathon as seen through my eyes.

I make no apologies for the length of the report, the detail, the style or the format.

I do apologise if I've missed naming anyone that was out on the course offering support - it wasn't intentional and you can rest assured, your support was greatly appreciated.

Shane "Slips" Fielding (a.k.a. The White Kenyan)

Marathon dreams...the long long lead in...the injuries

- 10/10/2004, 6 years ago to the day of the 2010 Melbourne marathon, I ran my first and only marathon as a very naïve runner. I thought I'd done the preparation work but knew nothing really - a badly paced run, hot conditions and not enough fluids saw me cramp badly and the last 8 kms were horrid. Finished in 3:36:08. At the time, was very happy with the achievement.
- Started serious running in 2006 at the ripe old age of 40.
- 07/2008 - Registered for 2008 MM - time to erase marathon one from the Personal Best record books
- R Fibula - 30/07/2008 - stress fracture - marathon plans gone, recovered in time to hobble the 10km
- C5/C6 collapsed disc - 5/05/2009 - unable to effectively train for 2009 MM
- 11/10/2009 - support crew for Dozer and Smoothy at 2009 MM, inspired to try again
- 1/1/2010 - started training for ChCh marathon
- L ankle - 5th March 2010 - tendon strain due to ineffective orthotic
- R ankle - 16th March 2010 - rolled badly in Brisbane - numerous strained ligaments
- ChCh plans gone
- R ankle - 8th May 2010 - pine cone incident at Lardner - restrained ligaments
- Gold Coast plans gone
- L ankle - 12th September 2010 - Yasso and then a night of Karaoke and dancing - ligament
- R knee - during taper - pain behind kneecap during run

The training

- Started training for a marathon on 3/01/2010
- As injuries stepped in to destroy chances of running ChCh and then Gold Coast, basically got through the injuries as quickly as possible and refocussed on the next marathon. Committed to Melbourne on 24/07/2010, 11 weeks out, but was well advanced in the training by this stage. Averaged 100km per week for the next 6 weeks, finishing with a very promising Yasso session before the L ankle injury appeared from nowhere with 4 weeks to go. Had 5 days rest and then flew to Gold Coast for a holiday - ankle showed limited improvement. Was due to run the final 34km the week of the injury. Taper to start middle of the week on Gold Coast.
- Had started Pilates in October 2009 and found that as core strength improved, running posture and ability to run out longer races and maintain form was improving, especially road races (15km Ballarat and Burnley half).
- 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.
- Since 01/01/2010, averaged 86km per week, inclusive of injuries. The base was there, the work had been done, well and truly.

- For previous 2+ years, following 95% of training runs, Ascend Elite Recovery protein (also used by Lisa Weightman), Ascend Sport Colostrum, Creatine Monohydrate. Daily serve of Glucosamine/Chondroitin/MSM, Fish oil, Calcium/Magnesium and Multivitamin
- No Powerband usage involved

The plan

- I set myself a target time fairly early on. No science, just a nice round number...2:45. It meant 3:54 km pace for 42.195 km.
- Coach AL thought it was achievable, that gave me some comfort, I hoped he wasn't just humouring the old coot.
- Bacchus set the same target. We made a pact early on to run with each other for as long as possible, as we saw how it helped AL, Dozer and Mitho in 2007.

The taper weeks

- Started on Gold Coast holiday with a 28.5 km run on the Wednesday. Also did a solo Mona Fartlek along the Coolangatta foreshore.
- L ankle problem still there but manageable.
- Returned to Melbourne and ran a solid one hour session on Waverley grass track at race pace (3:54), covered 15.35km, late morning in the sun. Was buggered after an hour, starting to wonder whether could maintain that pace for 42.195.
- The longer the taper went, the more aches and pains I seemed to get in legs and ankles. Less running seemed to be affecting the joints. Not enjoying the taper.
- 4 days out from race started to get upper back pain and neck soreness, very stiff neck and tight muscles around the spine.
- Carbo loading - continual eating, struggled to get it all in, didn't really enjoy carbo loading
- Started early the final week on drink/gel preparations - got plenty of volunteers and worked out a schedule for fluid/fuel intake. Organised the drop-off for Friday morning - things going to clock work.
- Received an email from AL on the Friday 'What to expect on race day' - invaluable thoughts and insights based on past experiences of AL, a heads up on how we'll be feeling at different sections of the race, how to cope, how to pace. I must have read it a dozen times over the weekend, remembered and actioned it during the run, and reading back through it now, it was spot on. The only bit that was off the mark was that between 38 and 42km, I'd be physically hurting but if I was close to target time, I'd enjoy it knowing what I'd achieved. I'm here to tell you now, I was physically hurting, I was under my target time, I knew what I was about to achieve...BUT I WAS CERTAINLY NOT ENJOYING IT.
- Had a good night sleep on the Friday night - up and down a few times to toilet due to fluid intake

The day before

- Neck and back pain worst yet, got worse as day progressed. Didn't appear to be tension or stress related, was quite relaxed. Continual intake of panadols during day and anti inflamm tabs, self massage, but no impact. Had a 3km slow jog, headache noticeable but didn't affect running. Actually went to bed with a neck pain headache - not the best sign, woke up a couple of times during the night, head ache still there.

Race morning

- Somewhere between the last time I woke up during the night and when the alarm went off at 4 am, the planets and stars aligned....this may never happen again.
- Amazingly headache gone but neck still stiff and sore.
- 3 slices of toast, cup of black tea, 2 panadol
- Nipples band-aided
- Obligatory toilet stop
- Wrote 5km splits on left forearm
- Left home 5 am
- Conditions outside were perfect, no wind, overcast and cool, a bit foggy which generally means a calm fine day.
- Drove in to MCG, continual massaging neck and shoulders as driving in to try and relieve tightness - seemed to work
- Got to MCG car park 5:40 - relaxed in car for 10 minutes
- Read an early morning SMS from PM offering some last minute support and advice.
- Headed off to find toilets, lucked out, one of the first into lower level of MCG when they opened the doors so no need to queue up. Saw Dizzy in the queue - found out he was running the half - good luck and best wishes were exchanged
- Back to car to finalise preps, skins off, trusty Adios on, lashings of Bodyglide, took gel and extra panadol at 6:15.
- Took bag down to drop off under MCG
- Final toilet break, just in case, lucked out again, found the only toilet block under MCG with a shortish queue.
- Headed around to start line, arrived 6:45, chatted to Bacchus in toilet queue
- A couple of run throughs, sipping powerade, saw the Fury on bike, quick interview, headed to preferred start area, met House, Thorny, Tony
- No butterflies - relaxed as ever been before a race.
- Before we knew it they'd moved the main group of runners up to the back of the preferred start area and we had to quickly squeeze through to get near the front

The race

Km 1

- The gun went off right on 7am, 6 seconds to cross the start line, Bacchus and I side by side - umbilical cord well and truly attached and would stay this way for a fair chunk of this story, possibly the entire story if you can believe that umbilical cords can be considerably stretched.
- I knew there was a sharp hill to climb up to Flinders Street so had already planned to take it easy and not get carried away with racing up the hill too fast.
- Went through the 1km mark in 4:02, Bacchus commented that it was a bit slow. I assured him that once we got onto St Kilda Rd it was slightly downhill so we would pick the difference up pretty quickly.

Km 2

- Saw TW and Fury on his bike along here
- 2nd km in 3:49 so back on track.

Kms 3 - 5

- The long stretch along St Kilda Road
- Km pace still not 100% in rhythm with 3:55, 3:51 and 3:48.
- Plenty of chat, enjoying it, feeling really easy.

- Started to gather some company behind us, including Andrew Edwards from APS, I'll call him APS Andrew (see later in story).
- Went through 5km 6 seconds ahead of planned pace - pretty happy with that.

Km 6

- Down to end of St Kilda Road and around onto Fitzroy Street. Looking forward to that first drink break. 3:47 for that km.

Km 7

- Started the run around Lakeside Drive. Saw Dozer and Racer just before the 7km marker on the left - we moved over to them thinking they may have had the drinks - they yelled out that AL and Smoothy were up on the right at the 7km post with drinks. High fived them both as we ran past.
- Moved into single file and grabbed the drinks and started sipping. A good size group there to cheer us on.
- Went through the 7km marker within 8 seconds of the projected time
- 3:59 for that km - still a bit up and down.

Km 8

- Not long after we grabbed our drinks, my right foot started to get a pins and needles feeling in it, the same problem that turned into a completely numb foot at Brimbank Park earlier this year. This had happened three times before, always on hill cross country courses, so I couldn't believe that it was firing up on a flat road run. It got marginally worse during this km and at about the same time, both Achilles started to tighten up. I've always thought the foot numbness issue was Achilles related. 'You are kidding' I'm saying to myself...only 8kms into the marathon and already getting Achilles pain and if the foot numbs up completely like previously, I'm stuffed.
- Luckily I'm wearing the Adidas Adios - a racing flat with heaps of toe room. I started scrunching the toes up and moving them around as I was running to try and loosen the feet up.
- Went through 8th km with a 3:49 - Bacchus and I commented that it was a bit quick and we needed to back it off only a fraction. I think we got a bit of momentum up at the drinks changeover and maintained the pace through that next km.

Km 9

- Saw biggers near MSAC - good to see my old AXA running mate out there giving me support. Biggers and I trained together when I did my first marathon in 2004. It was a hot marathon that year (Frankston to Albert Park) and the heat was part of the reason I ran a 3:36:08 (to be exact). That same year, biggers actually ran his marathon PB of 2:58:33....sub 3 hours on that day was a phenomenal effort.
- Still with the foot.
- 9th km in 4:03. Surely that's not right, we hadn't changed pace that dramatically...a few of us in the pack commented it had to be long.

Km 10

- Had a chat to APS Andrew through here. Once we found out we both knew Hutz, he mentioned that Hutz was planning to pace him from about the 14 km marker.

- 10th km was 3:39. Too quick, we all decided that the 9km marker was in the wrong spot - the average over these two previous kms was 3:52 - that's more like it.
- Went through 10km in 38:46, 19 secs ahead of schedule - this is good.

Km 11

- Foot issue cleared up, Achilles no longer tight....you farking beauty.
- 11th km - 4:06 - ca they not get these markers in the right spot??

Km 12

- A big group of the lads at the entrance to pit straight cheering us on with some words of advice.
- Still feeling strong and enjoying this.
- Collingwood drink station up ahead, could see AW run across to grab our water and gels and we collected them on the way through without breaking stride.
- Some great support through here from Smoothy (what's he doing in the Collingwood camp?), AW, Grunter, Tone, Bevo and Rafa (apologies if I missed anyone) and Thai on camera.
- A perfectly timed snap from Thai of some synchronised gel opening by Bacchus and I - it was almost as if Coach AL had taught us this manoeuvre - all part of his cunning plan.
- First chance to see the lead runners through this section. A big shout out to Thorny and House who were side by side and seemed to be enjoying the proceedings.
- This km also incorporated our first hairpin bend turn - not too bad, managed to get back on pace fairly easily. One of the guys running with us (I'll call him Tri Guy) had counted the runners in front of us as they went back past us the other way and mentioned that we were in 72nd place - nice counting Tri Guy.
- We'd collected a bit of a pack by this stage, most would hang on for the next 15km or so, only one (I'll call him Orange Guy), would run with us to the end and in fact ran 2:42 ish.
- 3:30 for the 12th km - WTF is going on here???



Km 13

- Had a chat to Tri Guy along here. This was his 4th marathon but the previous three were done in a full ironman so this was his first marathon on fresh legs. He stuck with us through to about 25 km, ended up blowing up in the second half and finished with a 2:53.
- As we ran back past the Collingwood drink station, someone ran past us the other way - cannot for the life of me remember who it was - looking for Smoothy. Probably wasn't expecting Smoothy to be hanging out at the Collingwood drink station. Who was it that ran past???

Dozer's story

Twas me looking for Smoothy at 11km, I needed to get Dusty's 21km drink from him. I was calling out to Fury, but you answered. Obviously still enjoying it all at this stage

- Saw Dusty, Lurch (at this stage, currently known as Chook) and Perc running on the other side.

- Ran back past the lads at the end of pit straight - great support.
- Somehow missed the 13km marker.

Km 14

- Back past Junction oval with the masses of marathoners still starting their journey around the lake and right onto Fitzroy Street, with a nice downhill section to look forward to.
- Hutz appeared at the side of the road and we bid farewell to APS Andrew as Hutz commenced his pacing duties.
- Time for our next drinks and appearing out of nowhere was TW, drinks in hand ready for us. TW had this drink handing over down to a fine art....or so I thought. Refer to Km 35 for TW drinks handover Part 2.
- Through 14th km with a combined 13/14 time of 7:05, an average of 3:33. Are we really running that fast or are the km markers out??

Km 15

- The 15th km took us on a nice downhill flyer down Fitzroy Street and right onto Beaconsfield Parade. A good crowd of support along this section.
- 15th km in 3:46 - that's a bit more like what we wanted to be doing.
- Through 15 kms over a minute ahead of schedule...this is good, this is really good...but let's keep a lid on it!

Km 16 - 18

- Started to get into a really good rhythm along here. A pack of about 6.
- Saw GG on his bike and Dozer running towards us down a side street yelling support - 8am in the morning - wake up neighbours. GGO was along here somewhere too from memory (good to see him out and supporting, must have been tough) and Thai on the median strip taking more photos.
- PM flew past on his bike on the other side - I think he was wearing lycra.
- Another good section to see the leaders come back the other side. Gave Thorny and House a big gee up as they ran past.
- 3:51, 3:52, 3:49 - bloody hell, good steady pace, quicker than planned and still feeling easy, ticking the kms off, still chatting a lot, still able to smile as we went past our strong support.

Km 19 - 20

- The next hairpin bend turn at Bay Street wasn't too bad - got back into a rhythm pretty quickly.
- Started picking off a few runners along this section.
- Kept the mind busy by watching the masses of runners running along the other side of Beaconsfield Parade, saw Dusty, Lurch (yep, still Chook at this stage) and Perc. Thai there taking more snaps.
- AL and racer at 20 km. AL yelled out some crucial advice, something along the lines of "You're going well, but don't get carried away, the hard work's yet to come.". Mr and Mrs Mitho also at this point.
- 3:51 and 3:51 - clockwork. Through 20km 1:40 ahead of schedule.



Km 21

- Knew we were coming up to the halfway point - still cruising along and enjoying the run.
- Saw what should have been the half marathon timing mats up ahead.
- Dozer was there with our 21km drinks and gels - he had one in each hand ready to pass to us based on our current running positions but as we were going for the handover, somehow Bacchus and I swapped sides and grabbed the wrong drinks. Bacchus yelled out "Hey, that's mine" so mid stride we performed a perfectly executed baton change which was captured perfectly by the official photographer positioned at the 21 km mark. The guys running in our pack must have wondered what the hell these freaks in red singlets were on about.
- Ran through the 21 km which was exactly where they'd positioned the half marathon timing mats. Too bad if there was a half marathon world record on the line - pity about anyone who ran a half PB. 100m down the road was a big circle painted on the road with 21.1 km painted in the middle of it.
- 21st km was another 3:51.
- Bacchus noted time at half marathon mark was 80:55.

Kms 22 - 25

- Headed off down the long stretch to the Elwood turnaround, this included a bit of uphill section at the end of Fitzroy Street. A big crowd around this area offering plenty of support.
- A bit quieter along this section as there weren't many runners ahead. We started to knuckle down and concentrate as we knew we were only half way there. It was still feeling easy though.
- Saw LG through this part and saw the leaders coming back the other way, more support to Thorny and House - House was now about a metre behind Thorny.
- 3:50, 3:48, 3:51, 3:49 - ticking them off
- 2 minutes ahead of schedule at 25km.

Km 26

- Got to Elwood Park and did not enjoy the multiple changes of direction through the car park, Right, Left, Right, Left, Left, Right in quick succession and then back onto Marine Parade before the final hairpin bend to start the trip back to Fitzroy Street. This was the first real flat spot of my run after the turnaround. All of the direction changes seemed to stuff my rhythm up and the leg muscles were complaining that I'd been running in straight lines for the majority of the last 25 km, why the hell was I playing mind games with them and throwing in all these turns. Mrs Bacchus and the Bacchus-ettes and other family/friends were lined up on the right hand side of the road just after the hairpin turn. Bacchus chirped up here and sprinted up the side of the ride to high five them all - I hoped this burst of energy wouldn't hurt him later on.
- 3:52 for this km - not bad considering the multiple direction changes.

Kms 27 - 29

- Kept amused by watching the hoards of runners heading out to Elwood on the other side of Marine Parade. Saw Dusty and Perc again. LG, looking slim as ever in his black gear.

Dozer's story

I ran with you guys for a short while from just shy of AL's 28km drink handover. The mood had very noticeable changed to workmanlike by here.

- Received drinks from AL and Racer at 28 km



- During 29th km, I felt that Bacchus was starting to feel the pinch a bit. He dropped off my shoulder a bit after receiving drinks. I recall telling him to get back on.
- 3:51, 3:52, 3:54

Km 30

- A bit of a tough section as there's a bit of a climb round the curve to Fitzroy Street then a bit of a diversion and change of direction before we actually started heading up Fitzroy Street. Back through the massive crowd that had gathered on this corner.
- As we headed up Fitzroy Street, this is where I seemed to open up a bit of a gap on Bacchus, unintentionally but I just needed to maintain my own rhythm and pace. It was at this stage I realised that our pack had dwindled to just 3, me, Bacchus and Orange Guy.
- 3:55 for this km, not bad given it was mostly uphill with a few direction changes.
- Still over 2 minutes ahead of schedule at 30km. Thai taking photo's at this point shows me checking splits on arm, and double checking to make sure I'd read it correctly.



Kms 31 -32

- This section incorporated the rest of the climb up Fitzroy Street, the merge with the half marathoners coming back out from their lap around the lake, a bit of congestion through the drinks tables, and then back onto St Kilda Road. Luckily just around the corner on St Kilda road, they separated the Full and half runners, full running up the middle section, half along the service road.
- Early on along here I could still hear Bacchus not far behind but the further I travelled, he was out of ear shot and I figured he'd dropped off a bit.
- Just me and Orange Guy now.
- I missed the 31km marker and I asked Orange Guy if he'd seen it, after he removed his iPod headphones and heard me, he said he'd seen it but it was positioned on the half marathon side of the median strip. Annoying at a point in time when you're counting down the kms and trying to tick them off.
- Split through 32km was 7:44, average 3:52 for the previous 2 kms, still hitting the pace but still 10km to go.
- Another low patch through here, realising that having to work harder but still a quarter of the run to go.

Km 33

- More of the same for this km, working hard, still no Bacchus, Orange guy started to drop me at this stage.
- 3:51 for this km - still on the money.

Km 34

- What the hell, they're merging us back with the half runners and just up ahead is the 90 minute pace group. That means I'm going to be fighting for road space, running at 3:51 pace, with hoards of runners travelling along at 4:15 pace. This isn't going to work well and not what I need mentally at this point.
- Passed the first pacer, having to regularly yell out 'marathoner coming through'. The second pacer was then just up ahead and running beside him, stride for stride was the familiar figure

on Rafa. I ran past him, tapped him on the back and gave him a bit of a rev up. He returned the rev up.

- Somehow missed the 34 km marker.

Km 35

- Headed off to the left to circle the arts centre, a bit of a downhill section at the start that hurt the quads, all the while fighting through the half runners. In and under the St Kilda Road overpass and passed Peter Macknamara (Glenhuntly runner and Puma Corporate Cup regular). I'd seen him much earlier in the day around Pit Straight and he was well ahead but he was really dying at this point as I flew past him. He'd gone through half in 1:17 high and ended up with 2:48.
- Passed the 35km marker under the overpass - this isn't where we expected it to be when sorting out drink handovers. No TW in sight.
- Split for 34 and 35 km was 7:47, average 3:53, still ok, still moving well. But oh how quickly it can all unravel.

Km 36

- Continued along Alexandra Parade and saw Stevie W.
- I knew what was coming once I turned onto Linlithgow to start the 2km stretch along the tan. Uphill. I was mentally starting to prepare for this.
- But where was TW - really starting to need that drink and final gel now.
- As I rounded the corner onto Linlithgow, I had a quick glance over my shoulder at the runners coming along Alexandra and couldn't spot Bacchus.
- Looked up and there on the left next to the Tan was TW, backpack boldly mounted on his back....hands empty. He looked like a kangaroo in the headlights when he saw me. I have a vivid memory of his arms flailing wildly around behind his back/neck as he appeared to be trying to reach into his backpack to get my drinks while it was still mounted proudly on his back. This could however have been a hallucination. Sanity prevailed at this point, at least in TW's mind as he yelled out "I'll catch up!!". I ran on, waiting with anticipation for TW to come running alongside with drink/gel. Next thing I know, The Fury rides up alongside and hands my drink over. I'm not sure how Fury and TW crossed paths at that point but it was timed perfectly - I will be interested to hear that part of the story.

TW's story

Ok, here's what happened. I was at Fitzroy Street and making my way up St Kilda Road to get ready for the 35km drink handover. Ran into the Fury along here and tried to keep up with him on the bike before he got bored and took off. Also saw Fat Ass on the bike.

Got to Domain Road and figured the leader should be shooting down here soon and just caught a glimpse of him. I then decided to run the course backwards up Domain Road to see the pointy end of the field. Got around to Birdwood Avenue and soon saw Thorny flying over the crest around the 2km marker at the Tan. I would say he looked like he was doing a 3km rep but he was going faster than that. I got a bit starstruck and forgot about where I was supposed to be.

Saw Stevie W at this point and we hung around waiting for House. Didn't have to wait too long and it was good to see he was having a great race and well on his way to banishing any lingering Phuket demons. .

I then trotted down to Government House Drive where I expected to see the 35km marker. Couldn't find it. Looked left and right and thinking "where the f#ck is it?" I ask someone and they're like "dunno". I then head back up the Tan thinking it must be up the road. Finally get to a km marker and it reads 36km! F#CK!

Scoot back down the Tan (averaging 3:18 pace) and before I know it there's Slips. SHIT! Kangaroo in the headlights is an apt description. Try to get the drink out of my backpack and having no luck. Tell Slips I'll catch up whilst I rip open the backpack (it is literally ripped along the zipper) and finally get the drinks. About this stage Bacchus cruises up next to me and not sure if he knows how flustered I am but I get the drink to him and mutter some encouragement. At this point Slips is way up the road and I'm trying to catch-up and not have a nervous breakdown at the same time.

Before I know it the Fury appears out of nowhere, like some guardian angel there to rescue me from my chaos. I hand him the drink and, probably hysterically, ask him to pass it on to Slips. Cool as a cucumber he takes the drink and duly delivers to Slips. I then sit on the side of the road a quivering mess, praying that I haven't messed up Team AL's meticulously laid out plans.

- They split the half marathoners back onto St Kilda road through here thank the Lord.
- Lawry jogging around the tan towards me - good to see another familiar face and get some support.
- Fury offered to hold my drink bottle through this section - I must have looked like I didn't have the strength to hold the bottle and continue running. I politely declined....well I recall grunting something, apologies Fury if I sounded ungrateful for the offer.
- Went through 36th km with a 3:54, feeling tough now, sucking in the big ones but still maintaining the pace.

Km 37

- This stretch of road was long and very very lonely....and did I mention long, and yes....up hill. Through the roundabout at Govt House Drive and up towards the Shrine.
- In the words of Dr Seuss,
I do not enjoy this section of the tan.
I do not enjoy it, Slips I am.
I do not like it here or there.
I do not like it anywhere.
- There was a drink station through here too. A bunch of flogs trying to tell me I needed a drink and it was important at this point, whilst it was pretty bloody obvious I was carrying a drink bottle....GET OUT OF MY FACE PEOPLE!
- I found Smoothy's wall at this point - it came out of nowhere and all of a sudden I was in a world of pain and realised that I was pretty much on my own. The quads had realised they were running up hill and were complaining vigorously - it was a challenge to lift the legs up and I felt like I was shuffling like a zombie. Up near the shrine and conservatory now, I noticed that Orange Guy was up ahead of me still and some other guy just ahead of him. Apart from these two guys, it was a desolate dead zone, no onlookers, the birds had even stopped tweeting. At what point had I stepped through the gates of hell...and why the fark have they found the need for speed humps in hell?
- Note to Milers for future marathons - this is where I needed some running support to keep me motivated and keep the mind off the pain.
- I seem to recall Fury at some point through this section riding with me, commenting that as long as I maintained 4 minute kms from this point, sub 2:44 was mine.
- Through the painful mist, I could see AL and some lads (apologies for not recalling you all) at the 37km marker. AL's leaning forward, fists pumping, yelling out that the hard work was done, keep knuckling down, all downhill from now, and enjoy the run for home. Enjoyment...not here sunshine!
- Slowest km for the day through 37 km at 4:10. Honestly felt a lot slower so not too much damage done.

Km 38

- Seeing the lads spurred me on a bit and the last final climb up to Domain Rd wasn't too bad.
- Did I look over my shoulder as I turned into Domain Rd and see Bacchus climbing the hill that I'd just climbed? That's a serious question - I don't really know, I think I did, can anyone confirm this???
- I caught someone here and ran beside them down Domain Rd for a bit and then I recall they dropped away. Orange Guy still ahead of me.
- I made a semi-conscious decision to up the pace down the Domain Rd hill - quads weren't happy about it but stuff them, I'm doing it anyway.
- Through 38km with a 3:57, this included the last up-hill section along the tan. Phew, back on track temporarily.

Km 39

- Down the rest of the Domain Rd hill and right onto St Kilda Road, finally the run for home.
- Dozer, running with me, it looks so easy for him.
- Where's Dozer?
- Photos show Dozer's running with Bacchus, must be 30+ metres back. Was the Fury with me?
- Another long lonely section. How the hell am I still moving - I look at the Garmin and can't believe it still show's pace at sub 4:00. I feel like I'm barely moving. I have noticed that I've shortened the stride length but must have upped the cadence as the pace was still there. Photos along this section show that I've maintained the form and posture pretty well, surely this is 12 months of Pilates kicking in.
- Finished the rest of my drink and hurled my pop-top bottle onto the nature strip - p1ss off extra weight I'm carrying, I need you not!
- Starting to get some twitches in the quads and calves. Memories flood back of my 2004 marathon experience where the last 8km was decimated by cramps. I sent up a quick prayer that this wasn't going to happen now and forged on.
- 39th km in 3:56 - go you old ba\$ard.



Km 40

- Half of this km was the same as 39, but then I hit the half marathoners as they funnelled back onto St Kilda Road. Surely now I'm amongst the 1:50 halfers, all cruising along at 5:15+ pace. Through a crowded drink station, lost count of the amount of times I had to yell out 'Marathoner', some of the half runners were helpful enough to take up the chant on my behalf and called for a path to be cleared.
- 40th km in 4:02, mainly due to a lot of dodging and weaving, partly because I was maggoted. Couldn't be stuffed checking my arm for the 40km target - I knew I was well under. At this point, still about 2 minutes ahead of 2:45 pace.

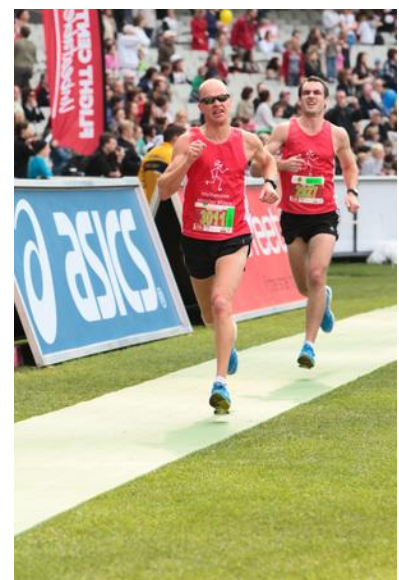
Km 41

- Around the corner into Flinders Street - there's the MCG in the distance, geez it's a big ba\$ard, how can it still be nearly 2km away?
- "MARATHONER!"
- Run, dodge, weave.
- "MARATHONER!"

- Run, dodge, weave.
- “MARATHONER!”
- A bunch of girls yelled out “Love your Adidas runners!”
- Run, dodge, weave.
- “MARATHONER!”
- Around the curve and down the Wellington Parade hill - like this downhill bit, get stuffed quads, I’m not listening.
- 41st km in 4:07
- Time to open this baby up and bring it home.

Km 42 and 0.195

- Down the remainder of the Wellington Parade hill and stuff it, I’m cutting the corner across the footpath at the turn into Jolimont.
- See a sign as I’m running around into Brunton Avenue, 500m to go....don’t think I’ll be running this 500m in 1:30, sub 2:00 would be nice.
- Marathoners to the right as I near the entrance to the ‘G.
- Pace is back up now as I can sniff the finish line, knowing my family will be in the stands to see me finish.
- There’s Silver Fox at the entrance. “Go Slips”....”Go Bacchus”. WHAT!
- Didn’t look over my shoulder, I knew Bacchus was there. Through the tunnel and about to turn right onto the hallowed turf and there’s a bunch of bloody half marathoners 6 abreast across the exit.
- “MARATHONER!”
- I’m in the clear, a separate running mat for the marathoners around the outside, clear running.
- The pace is lifted as I can feel Bacchus breathing down my neck
- This running on a plastic mat is not comfortable. I step off onto the grass, too bad MCG curators, try and disqualify me now.
- Bacchus is running on the plastic mat...I can hear him. He’s getting louder.
- I kick it up a notch, this doesn’t feel like the famous Slips kick, I can guarantee there was no visible increase in pace to the naked eye too.
- I look over for the finish line, still half a bloody lap to go. Run you old ba\$tar.
- Back on the plastic mat now. Bacchus is still there.
- In the home straight, 40m to go. Look at the clock - 2:43 is mine!
- I hear some loud yelling from the crowd, it must have been for me as there were no other marathoners in front of me. Turns out it was my mum and my sister.
- Cross the line, stop the watch, 2:43:17 on the watch.

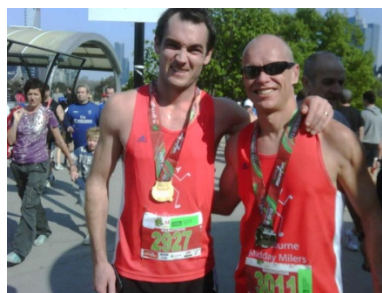


The immediate aftermath

- Hand's to knees. Stuffed. The way it should be. Nothing left to give.
- There's Bacchus, shake my hand mate. Ok, let's have a cuddle. Hands back to knees.
- Look up into the crowd of a few thousand. The first faces I see 20 rows back, Kim and Bailey (my wife and youngest son), my mum and my sister and her kids....wow, they saw it, they're beaming, their chests are puffed out, they're proud of me.
- How good is this? Bacchus and I are stunned at what we've just achieved. Did that just happen?
- Struggling to walk in a straight line, picturing Dozer from 2008 doing the same.
- Walk over to the fence to see the family and chat to Bacchus. Some official suggests I'm not supposed to be in this area. I suggest to said official that I've just run a marathon, I can be wherever I damn well like.
- Wave farewell to the family and head down into the bowels of the 'G'.
- Collect medal, proudly place it around my neck.

Post race

- Staggered around under the 'G for a short while. Was planning on grabbing a massage but somehow lost track of the signage directing to the massage rooms so got a severe case of the CBF's. Grabbed a banana. Grabbed one of the cups of water laid out on some tables - tasted like watered down chlorine, tossed it in the bin.
- Grab my bag from Storage guy and head out with Bacchus up onto Brunton Avenue. The walk up the ramp is excruciating, calves are starting to cramp.
- Headed towards the stairs to get back up to the main level of the 'G, ran into Perc who unfortunately had to pull out with a calf problem...he'd caught the tram back up St Kilda Rd.
- It was at that moment that the calves decided enough was enough, cramping now, big time, fell to the ground and spent the next 5 minutes trying to stretch them out. Bacchus was no help, couldn't bend down to help me without cramping himself.
- House drops by for a chat and we trade war stories.
- Cramps finally out of the way and we head upstairs. Immediately bump into the Bacchus clan and get a few Umbilical brothers happy snaps. I feel for Bacchus as it is then time for him to hold both Bacchus-ettes for a family photo. Farewell Bacchus clan, I'm off to find the Fielding clan.
- Drop by the R4YL tent to give Mark Gorski an update of our times. I'd seen him on Friday afternoon when I went down to the 'G to collect my marathon gift pack, and Bacchus had been into the Richmond store earlier that day to get some new socks for the race. He knew Bacchus and I were both chasing 2:45 so he was happy to hear we'd achieved 2:43.
- Into the stands and soon found the family. Kisses and hugs and congratulations all round, a few photos.
- Put the Skins on to give the legs as much assistance as I could.
- Watched the other marathoners come through for the next half hour but wasn't really watching. Was in a state of euphoria, didn't feel tired, didn't really feel sore. Holy crap, what had I just achieved?
- Getting cold standing in the shadows of the MCC Members stand so time to head for home.
- Home...should get some food, stuff it, got to download the Garmin watch data and start the analysis.



- First task, update the Facebook status - the people in My World need to know about this...call me narcissistic if you like, you may be right, stuff you, I just nailed a marathon.
- Spent the next 30 minutes crunching the numbers, split by split, km by km - they look pretty bloody good if I do say so myself.
- Showered, ate, coffee, Bathurst on the recliner with ice packs on calves, ankles and knees, huge greasy Hamburger with the Lot, fried dimmy, potato cake, chips and a beer for dinner, bed.
- Contented 44 year old marathoner!

Post race thoughts

- A few reasons I'm so stoked about this:
 - The best part of three years of training to finally get to the start line of a marathon, after four failed attempts. I didn't know if I'd ever get there. Persistence. Stubbornness. Obsession.
 - It's not often in life that you exceed even your own wildest expectations but when it happens, holy crap, it is an amazing feeling. My target time was 2:45 but to me, this was a stretch target for what was essentially my debut marathon - I'm discounting my first marathon as I am an extremely different runner now. If it had all gone pear shaped near the end and I'd finished with a 2:49, I would have walked away contented. I'd never run at 3:54 per km for more than the half marathon distance (21.1 km) before. How was I supposed to know if I could maintain it for double the distance? All I had was belief. Belief that I'd done the hard work needed to achieve this target. Belief that the preparation had been as meticulous as possible. Belief that race day was well planned and I was smart enough to stick to the plan and not get carried away with the hype and blow all my bikkies too early. Belief that I could do it. I did it!
 - To run 2:43:13 (the official time) meant that I'd been able to average 3:52 per km and in doing so improved my personal best by a lazy 52 minutes 55 seconds.
- The Adidas Adios runners are without a doubt THE best racing flats I've ever run in. They were like a second skin during the run, I didn't know I had them on, and when you're running a marathon that is near the top of the list of important items. Not one blister. No Achilles soreness the next day. Do yourself a favour!
- It doesn't get much better than running a marathon in your home town. You couldn't 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.
- Long live the Melbourne Midday Milers. A great bunch of guys (and gals) who push each other to the limit on the training track, are free with their advice and support, are genuinely happy when their Miler mates achieve their goals, but above all they have a bloody good time and enjoy their running.
- Paul 'Bacchus' Marsh and I have EXPERIENCED something together that we'll never forget. We did a lot of training together. We started side by side. We ran side by side for the first 29km, enjoyed the ride, kept each other honest and helped each other stick to the plan. We went our own separate ways for the next 13km, me out the front feeling strong for a lot of it so running at the pace I felt comfortable, Bacchus realising that it would be smarter to back it off a fraction and run at pace he felt comfortable with. Closer to the end, I was slowing and Bacchus, having conserved some energy, closed the gap. With a final sprinted (I use that word loosely) lap of the MCG, we almost finished the same way we started, not quite side by side, but only one second separated us over 42.195 km. We may forever be known as the Umbilical Brothers.

The great Czech runner Emil Zatopek once said:

"We are different, in essence, from other men. If you want to win something, run 100 meters. If you want to experience something, run a marathon."

Next marathon

- The day after the marathon, I was already thinking of the next one.
- Melbourne 2011 is the obvious choice for all the reasons above. Can conditions be perfect for a third year in a row? Melbourne weather in Spring is all over the shop.
- Next goal time: Sub 2:40 has a nice ring to it. Belief!

Thanks

- My wife Kim and kids Corey, Bianca and Bailey - I try to get most of my weekend training done while you're all still in bed but the racing does sometimes get in the way of family life.
- Anthony 'AL' Lee - mate, mentor, coach - generous and genuine, advice invaluable.
- Milers that have offered support over the last 12 months when I've been training and not getting to the line and finally training and getting to the line. Company during the cold Wednesday morning runs in all conditions or around the Tan late on a Friday arvo, ball breaking long runs in the Dandenong's or just marathon running advice - it's all been appreciated and valued. In no particular order PM, TW, Dozer, AW, Hally, Smoothy, Thorny, Mitho, Woolies. Sh1t, I hope I haven't missed anyone.
- Drinks support crew on Sunday - your help made the run a lot less stressful, not having to find and fight for drinks at the drink stations, being able to keep the momentum going, and a big cheer along to go with it - AL, Dozer, Smoothy, Fury, TW, AW, Racer.
- To everyone else that was out on the course giving support, taking photos - it all added to the great experience.
- To everyone that has offered congratulations since Sunday.

The data

The following table is based on watch splits taken at the km markers as placed on the course. Some splits between 7km and 12 km are long/short indicating the markers weren't entirely in the correct place. I also missed some markers so averaged the splits for those 2 kms.

Km	Distance	Split	5km	10km	20km	21.1km	Comment
1	1.000	04:02.46					
2	1.000	03:49.35					
3	1.000	03:55.58					
4	1.000	03:51.95					
5	1.000	03:48.00	19:27.34				
6	1.000	03:47.15					
7	1.000	03:59.85					Long
8	1.000	03:49.32					Short
9	1.000	04:03.88					Long
10	1.000	03:39.30	19:19.50	38:46.84			Short
11	1.000	04:06.65					Long
12	1.000	03:30.42					Short
13	1.000	03:33.00					Missed marker
14	1.000	03:32.48					
15	1.000	03:46.60	18:29.15				
16	1.000	03:51.37					
17	1.000	03:52.18					
18	1.000	03:49.30					
19	1.000	03:51.60					
20	1.000	03:51.57	19:16.02	37:45.17	1:16:32.01		
21	1.000	03:51.90				1:20:55.00	
22	1.000	03:50.48					
23	1.000	03:47.99					
24	1.000	03:51.01					
25	1.000	03:48.92	19:10.30				
26	1.000	03:52.83					
27	1.000	03:51.01					
28	1.000	03:52.10					
29	1.000	03:53.60					
30	1.000	03:54.92	19:24.46	38:34.76			
31	1.000	03:52.00					Missed marker
32	1.000	03:52.45					
33	1.000	03:51.20					
34	1.000	03:53.00					Missed marker
35	1.000	03:54.30	19:22.95				
36	1.000	03:54.22					
37	1.000	04:10.06					
38	1.000	03:57.80					
39	1.000	03:56.55					
40	1.000	04:02.05	20:00.68	39:23.63	1:17:58.39		
41	1.000	04:07.00					
42	1.000	03:51.00					Missed marker
43	0.195	00:44.60	08:42.60	08:42.60	0:08:42.60	1:22:18.00	
Total	42.195	2:43:13.00	2:43:13	2:43:13	2:43:13	2:43:13	

The following table is based on km splits as determined by the Garmin watch data. This has tended to smooth out the big variations in some of the kms based on the course markers and indicates that I maintained a very even pace through to about 37 km.

I imagine the true story lies somewhere in between these two tables as Garmin measurements, although reasonably accurate, do have their shortcomings when corners and curves, and hairpin turns are involved.

Km	Distance	Split	5km	10km	20km
1	1.000	0:04:00			
2	1.000	0:03:50			
3	1.000	0:03:51			
4	1.000	0:03:51			
5	1.000	0:03:50	0:19:22		
6	1.000	0:03:50			
7	1.000	0:03:49			
8	1.000	0:03:52			
9	1.000	0:03:56			
10	1.000	0:03:52	0:19:19	0:38:41	
11	1.000	0:03:56			
12	1.000	0:03:50			
13	1.000	0:03:51			
14	1.000	0:03:51			
15	1.000	0:03:45	0:19:13		
16	1.000	0:03:52			
17	1.000	0:03:52			
18	1.000	0:03:50			
19	1.000	0:03:51			
20	1.000	0:03:50	0:19:15	0:38:28	1:17:09
21	1.000	0:03:52			
22	1.000	0:03:50			
23	1.000	0:03:47			
24	1.000	0:03:49			
25	1.000	0:03:49	0:19:07		
26	1.000	0:03:52			
27	1.000	0:03:52			
28	1.000	0:03:53			
29	1.000	0:03:53			
30	1.000	0:03:54	0:19:24	0:38:31	
31	1.000	0:03:50			
32	1.000	0:03:52			
33	1.000	0:03:51			
34	1.000	0:03:53			
35	1.000	0:03:46	0:19:12		
36	1.000	0:03:56			
37	1.000	0:04:08			
38	1.000	0:03:57			
39	1.000	0:03:57			
40	1.000	0:04:01	0:19:59	0:39:11	1:17:42
41	1.000	0:04:04			
42	1.000	0:03:48			
43	0.195	0:00:30	0:08:22	0:08:22	0:08:22
Total	42.195	2:43:13	2:43:13	2:43:13	2:43:13