

The Life of Bermuda (Wang 2016)



*Some things in life are bad
They can really make you mad
Other things just make you swear and curse
When you're chewing on life's gristle
Don't grumble, give a whistle
And this'll help things turn out for the best...
And...*

*...always look on the bright side
of life...
(Whistle)*

One race doesn't define you as a runner, but in my case Wang certainly defined me!

Wang 2016

I've been with the Milers for roughly 19 months, and for the first 18, I was known as Dave or Al-cock (as in Al Bundy), it's pronounced ALL-COCK - JC, Bevo and any other confused Miler! Every second Miler first name was Dave or David, so why did all the other 'David's' have some cool funky nickname like Smoothy, Duff, Rog, or the Torch. Be careful for what you wish for....please god I want to go back to Dave or Al-cock!!...Well it's never going to happen now!

So even though I admit I'm shithouse with a map, I tend to head the complete opposite direction to where I should, I always seem to make my way home eventually. Now some of you might not believe this, but even with my lack of navigational skills, I had never gone the wrong way in a race before from 2008 to 2014. I'd run heaps of marathons, and some ones that could get me into trouble like trail ultras Marysville & Maroondah Dam, but nada. I had some testing moments, and my share of pain, but nothing out of the ordinary. Sure I've

probably been lost for about 50 hours in my day to day life, and you never want me to lead you when I'm in a unfamiliar place even with google maps at my disposal but that helped with my general overall fittest.

My lack of directions as a runner has only appeared in the Miler Red. The first lost moment was the 5Ms done in Mornington in 2015. I was a runner, had zero help from my team, and had Stodds helping to lead me astray, both running an extra 1ks or 2ks up a rather unpleasant hill. The 2nd moment was a few weeks ago at the 5Ms in Romsey (Clearly you are extremely unlucky bugger if you hear your name called out by me!). I wasn't even the runner this time at Romsey, and even though we followed Duff's car and we had Thai in our team as a 5M relays vet, as soon as our team was visible, all eyes were on me like flies to shit. The worse part about it is that I think our team probably would of won the day without the unplanned detour. Anyway that struggle for a nickname was put to bed on that fateful day. I finally I had my nickname, Rafa eloquently came up with Bermuda, as in that bloody hateful triangle!

The build up

Before we get onto Wang, let's go back and reflect on some warm fuzzy stuff, or boring stuff for any non-runner. Bevo and I sat down after the 2:45:10 at Melbourne and thought that as I deferring London until 2017, it might be a good idea to do Wang as it was on the same day as Tokyo. I would have loads of people to train with of similar abilities, and we therefore could push each other to bigger and better things. The stable expanded to include LG, Rog & Malibu, who were all on the Tokyo train with Duff.

After 3 weeks of taking it fairly easy, I started to bump up the mileage from 60km, to 80km then onto 100km. For the next 11 weeks I stuck to an average of over 100km p/w, which was far an away my most consistent block I've ever done.

I started the campaign with a Tan TT PB of 13:09, shaving 7 seconds of a PB that had stood since 2012. I then did a Sri Chinmoy Tan marathon relay with Fitter, Duff and Obama, with each of us doing 3 laps except for the slack bastard Duff. We won pretty easily, even though Duff had tough competition for his first lap with Tim Clarke (Ex-Hawthorn player) flying along in mid 12 territory, which at the time seemed crazy time for our team, nearly as crazy as seeing Duff's promised Melbourne Marathon 2015 race report completed before 2017. I was very happy with my 3 legs, each under 13:41. Good early signs at the start of a campaign.

My training log wasn't too much different to the MM campaign, but where it did differ was my improvement in intensity in sessions, as well as my Long runs pacing. With a young family, I needed to be a bit better with the time management, so instead of the tempo runs on a Sat, I ended up doing marathon paced runs (all solo except for one) within my long runs, starting at 10kms with my first 30km to 17kms at the end of a 36km run near the end of January. I was lucky enough to have Bevo pace me for that, and it might be the only time I've actually seen Bevo truly in pain, good times indeed.

Besides this other keys indicators of improvement were 3 lap progressives, getting my sessions down to 14:40, 14:00 & 13:40, getting my Mona Fartlek up to 5.7kms, and doing the 3 x 3km off 15:30 - (10:29, 10:40, 10:35), massive improvements from the previous Melbourne campaign. I had both Fitter and Duff breathing down my neck, but I felt like I had developed an extra gear that wasn't there prior to this campaign.

In the middle of January 6 weeks out from Wang, I got paced for 10km by Bevo around AOP, and managed to improve my PB from 35:36 to 35:03, which was a TT I achieved in the build-up to Melbourne. It was a windy day too, so not conducive to a PB. I continued my PBs over the Tan (12:39 - 30 seconds improvement) and 5km (16:38 - 48 seconds improvement) in the 2nd last week out of Wang. While I was happy with the time, being a competitive beast would have preferred to stay in front of Duff who steamed home like a freight train and rolled me by 4 seconds. Fitter was very close behind, only 2 seconds adrift.

Basically I couldn't have asked for a better prep. Besides the pbs, the training was perfect, was injury and sickness free, and was feeling great. Was getting talked up by all and sundry, and was basically feeling fucking amazing. I never prepared myself for failure - i.e. at least a couple minutes pb, it was just how good that pb was going to be, sub 2:42 yeah, was I over-confident, fuck yeah!

Wang

Like a champion coach, Bevo was running drinks over the course. Initially he was going to just do a few with the gels, but after discussing the designated drinks with the course director Sharon, she indicated that any drinks that you place at the particular point would be in a box, so you would need to rummage through, before you headed on your way. Sounded impossible, pointless and downright crazy, especially when I was talking to a very good ultra runner in her own right. I should of known then trouble might be a foot. Anyway after further discussions with Bevo, he decided that he could meet me for all designated points except for one, and I would need to grab a sports drink off the table for that juncture.

It was a relaxed night prior to the big day. Bevo, JC, my family and I found a local Italian restaurant where we could consume out carbs fix to beef us up for the next day. The boys said they'd pick me up at 5:45am, which would give Hayley a sleep-in & would give us plenty of time to get to the start, warm-up and get ready for 6:30am kick-off. I actually had a pretty good night sleep. I'm usually a crappy sleeper the night before a marathon, and even the girls Ruby (3 y/o) & Molly (1 y/o) slept through the night, whereby we are usually playing musical beds to get the best night sleep possible.

I managed to consume my staple pre-marathon rice pudding for dessert & later for brekkie, along with a banana and a sport drink, and was ready as I could ever be to tackle marathon (or longer) no 25.

Affirmation

Now onto the cold pricklies, the 3rd line from Mr Eric Idle classic song from The Life of Brian. This line definitely rang true, unfortunately for me 21km into the marathon. The worse part about this was a week out this song came up in discussion with Duff and myself running back from the tan, can't remember exactly what this was about but this definitely put the mocker on myself there and then!

The first half of the race got off without a fuss. I knew my main competitor would be the 2015 winner in Cam Hall. I knew he would push hard in the first half, and from all reports that knew him, it's his only way. I must admit I'd also been following him very closely on strava, nothing wrong with a bit of stalking of the strava kind. I noted he'd done two 40km long runs in the 2 week lead-up to the marathon, which was nothing like I'd even seen or heard before from any person/training plan. The bloke threw the bloody guidebook out the window, good on him, but I thought this might give me a sneaky chance if he was my only competition.

The first k was a bit slower than planned, over 4mins, so I wanted to rectify this quickly, 3:50km all the way. I managed to get into a reasonable groove fairly quickly, but Cam eventually took off like a jackrabbit after a couple of ks, trying to catch another guy that was being very ballsy out in front. At 13ks Bevo indicated that I was right on the money, tracking low 2:40s at that time...long way to go...obviously. The weather was perfect, and the wind - there was zero, leaves didn't move one cm, it like an eerie movie set. While it was always going to be warm, top of 31 on the day, the really stinking heat was mostly going to be after we'd finished.

By 18kms I had managed to catch the ballsey bloke who obviously didn't realise a marathon was 42km, he crashed and burnt to the highest order, and I'm not sure he even cracked 3hrs in the end. Things were swimming along nicely for the next few ks, and managed to get to the half and the end of lap 1 in 1:20:43, which was right on the money @ 3:50 pace. The next 500m will probably be imprinted in my head forever, and I'm sure there's many a Miler that will slip it in conversation if it starts to fade, and fair enough I would too.

I arrived at a point where it was unclear of the exact direction I should take. When you are running at a fair clip, you shouldn't have to worry about the direction you should go in a race. There were a bunch of runners in a smaller event - 5km or 10km and I followed them as there was nothing telling me otherwise, there was a course marshal, but she certainly wasn't marshalling me! While the course for the marathon was 2 laps that were completely the same, kick-off was in the dark, and I wasn't analysing the course at this time, thinking there might be one person pointing me in the right direction. Anyway I drifted off for 250m and I knew something wasn't right as I did. This was confirmed when I dude on bike rode past me on a bike. While he explained that I was going the wrong way, the bugger didn't actually head me in the exact way, so while I ran an extra 500m, it certainly cost me more than that. I ended up looking back with my head going in about 10 different directions like a confused dog that can't

see the ball that you've chucked in his vicinity. When I finally managed to get pointed in the correct route, I was dropping F bombs left right and centre, and acting like a right lunatic. I later found out that I was 2 minutes behind Cam before the detour, but I dropped a further 2+ minutes and gone from 2nd to 4th overall, and that didn't even include the ballsey bloke, who was obviously crawling by this stage.

I didn't know where I was placed, but I ran angry for the next 5km, all that bloody hard work seemingly out the window. It was a time goal for me, and I thought I'd realistically have Buckley's chance of catching Cam. When I saw Bevo at 26km, I give him a shake and a few more un-choice words, and he told me I wasn't too far from the 3rd guy, 3rd - what a bloody disaster!!

I eventually pick off the 3rd guy somewhere between 28km and the 30km mark, but the 2nd guy (Tom Beilby - top bloke) seemed to be running very strong, and I wasn't gaining any ground. Saw Bevo at 32km and 34km and it was still roughly 30 seconds, but by the 35^{km} mark he'd started to fall into a bit of a hole and I managed to catch him.

The last few kms weren't easy, but I didn't noticeable feel like I was dropping off too much. I made a rookie mistake and didn't have the km lap on my garmin, and maybe I thought that after catching the 2nd bloke this was the best I could hope for. Anyway, as my splits indicate, the heat & the energy of swearing and running an extra 500m had all caught up to me.

I cross the line in 2:47:00, only 30 seconds adrift from Cam. This was a pb for my first 42.7km event, but definitely not what I was after for the marathon. I later found out I'd made up 3 ½ minutes in the last 5kms of the event, even with me slowing down. So not only did I run a time well off my mark, I'd got duded into 2nd and a likely pb. They also did the presentation early, with Cam already bugging off, and then to cap off the day, a few hours later Duff ended up running 2:45:04 at Tokyo knocking 6 seconds off my MM pb & knocking me down one on the marathon milers PB board, when before I was busily calculating all the people I would be soon overtaking! One thing I can say is never get ahead of yourself with regards to the marathon, it's a very fine line between glory and a race report sob-story!

The positives, got to see JC become a marathoner first-hand which was brilliant, well done Irish! Also got to meet a couple more top blokes in this running caper, Tom coming home in 3th - first marathon and a sub 2:50, good work young man! Also had a good chat with a Brazilian bloke by the name of Dan Aragao who came 4th. Dan is a positive ball of energy, and I don't know of any other Brazilians in the Milers fraternity, so have already try to recruit him along. Lastly you don't have to call me Dave or Al-cock any more, I have a nickname that will be now bloody hard to shift. With regards to my running marathon goal, I know with some harder training I can get there, balls on the line time, sub 2:40 here we come!!

Melbourne marathon is well marked right?

*If life seems jolly rotten
There's something you've forgotten
And that's to laugh and smile and dance and sing
When you're feeling in the dumps
Don't be silly chumps
Just purse your lips and whistle
- that's the thing.
And...always look on the bright
side of life...
(Whistle)*

Come on.

*Always look on the right side
of life.*



Tom and I standing on the podium, I should have taken my chance to stand on the 1st possie! Tom thought I need to take a dunny break, and couldn't believe my luck when I told him.

Special Thanks

- My family, especially my wife, thank you, thank you thank you. Hayley you are a fantastic wife, mother and sponsorship manager (for the Women's Day classic – jump on board Milers, and tell your friends!), I couldn't do anything like this without your amazing support.
- Bevo – what more could I say. Jump on board people. Definitely squeeze more out of myself than I thought was possible due to guidance & support. Thankless task of pacing 5km, 10km and MP long runs. Never a complaint, and always plenty of feedback. Man you have one understanding employer. What do BA's do again?
- All the Milers but a special shout out goes to the Bevo stable of Malibu, Metric, LG & Rog, and especially the originals in JC, Fitter & Duff. Massive improvements by all, looking forward a hopefully a few more pbs with you in 2016.



Coach Bevo, even without the result I wanted at Wang, it's been a bloody good 9 months, learnt so much thanks to you, cheers mate!

Wangaratta Marathon 2016			Melbourne Marathon 2015		
KM	Pace	Elev	KM	Pace	Elev
1	4:09 /km	3 m	1	3:54 /km	12 m
2	3:52 /km	-6 m	2	3:49 /km	-3 m
3	3:41 /km	2 m	3	3:51 /km	7 m
4	4:00 /km	2 m	4	3:56 /km	3 m
5	3:44 /km	-1 m	5	3:55 /km	5 m
6	3:47 /km	1 m	6	3:54 /km	-12 m

7	3:49 /km	1 m		7	3:51 /km	-12 m
8	3:46 /km	0 m		8	3:54 /km	-0 m
9	3:49 /km	1 m		9	3:51 /km	6 m
10	3:50 /km	-2 m		10	3:49 /km	-4 m
11	3:43 /km	-0 m		11	3:54 /km	1 m
12	3:49 /km	4 m		12	3:54 /km	-2 m
13	3:49 /km	2 m		13	3:52 /km	0 m
14	3:55 /km	-7 m		14	3:57 /km	13 m
15	3:51 /km	-1 m		15	3:49 /km	-7 m
16	3:52 /km	4 m		16	3:51 /km	-5 m
17	3:58 /km	-1 m		17	3:53 /km	1 m
18	3:53 /km	0 m		18	3:53 /km	-2 m
19	3:52 /km	4 m		19	3:53 /km	0 m
20	3:54 /km	-2 m		20	3:54 /km	-1 m
21	3:52 /km	-4 m		21	3:50 /km	2 m
22	3:46 /km	2 m		22	3:50 /km	2 m
23	3:50 /km	1 m		23	3:51 /km	6 m
24	3:46 /km	-4 m		24	3:57 /km	-10 m
25	3:50 /km	-1 m		25	3:52 /km	2 m
26	3:59 /km	12 m		26	3:51 /km	0 m
27	3:53 /km	-9 m		27	3:48 /km	4 m
28	3:53 /km	2 m		28	3:50 /km	-5 m
29	3:57 /km	-1 m		29	3:49 /km	3 m
30	3:56 /km	0 m		30	3:50 /km	2 m
31	3:57 /km	-1 m		31	3:51 /km	15 m
32	3:57 /km	-0 m		32	3:52 /km	-5 m
33	3:55 /km	9 m		33	3:53 /km	6 m
34	3:56 /km	-5 m		34	3:58 /km	-8 m
35	3:59 /km	-0 m		35	3:55 /km	0 m
36	3:56 /km	-6 m		36	4:08 /km	-5 m
37	4:00 /km	1 m		37	4:03 /km	14 m
38	3:58 /km	6 m		38	4:03 /km	-6 m
39	4:00 /km	-6 m		39	3:54 /km	3 m
40	4:09 /km	7 m		40	3:59 /km	-6 m
41	4:15 /km	2 m		41	4:04 /km	-4 m
42	4:19 /km	-8 m		42	4:03 /km	0 m
0.6	4:14 /km	2 m		0.3	3:41 /km	-3 m
	2:47:00				2:45:10	

Last 2 marathons side-by-side. Massive improvements over the shorter stuff doesn't guarantee success, everything has to go right!