



TOKYO MARATHON 2016

Rog's Latest Misadventures

Tokyo 2016

My suggestion is to read the reports of LG, Malibu and Duff to get more information about some of the shenanigans we got up to. No point me rehashing their stories here; so I'll just keep it to my own perspective.

If you're looking for lessons on how not to prepare for a marathon then read on because what works for me could not possibly work for anyone else. It tends to involve a lot of falling down and getting up if you've missed the previous instalments. Actually I just use the same storyline from one marathon to the next. There's always a happy ending though (just don't tell my wife that).

Confucius say, man who fishes in another woman's well, often catches crab



My daughter asked me to take Peso from The Octonauts with me for good luck.

The Ballot - 投票

As usual the marathon was not in my thoughts; it was all about track for 2015/16. That is until Bevo started talking up Tokyo 2016. And then the Fury weighed in. And then the potential for a semi elite start cropped up. And LG was on board. And so was I. Redemption for Tokyo 2014 was needed.

Obviously at this point, given I indicated that I was only interested if I was successful in the semi elite ballot, was I going to mention any of this to my wife. Why get in trouble for something that most likely won't happen? No, definitely not.

And so on a lovely day in August (ok I have no memory of what the weather was really like) it suddenly occurred that we should be finding out how things had gone. And back at my desk there



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was the email waiting to be read; a harmless looking little envelope titled "RUN as ONE - Tokyo Marathon 2016 Notification of the Selection Result (ID 10000160)".

I read it with little expectation to be honest. "Thank you for applying..." yeah this is a rejection. Oh, I see the work "Congratulations". Oh, now I have to tell the wife. Hang on, let me read that again. Yeah, they let ME in as a semi-elite! Those crazy Japanese!

Confucius say, bird in the hand is not better than two in the bush

Better ring LG. This would be the first of probably 150 phone conversations over the next 6 months. Probably more actually. Likely much more. Yeah, they've let him in too. I'm kind of excited and terrified all at the same time. Not terrified of the 42.195km or the brutal training ahead in summer; just telling my wife.

I opt for the Band-Aid approach. One motion, right off!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RVtTluuS1A>

It didn't go well. But at least she didn't hurt me. As she stormed off I implored her to return so we could discuss it. "What's the point, you're going whether I like it or not!" Yeah she had me there. And really from that point she was an amazing support.

Confucius say, man who eat too many prunes, get good run for money



I can only say thank god for those warm baths in Tokyo.

The Objective - 目的

I fairly quickly decided that this might be the best opportunity for me to run whatever my best possible marathon would be. I'd be 48, and having been running for about 6 years with 5 competitive marathons in the bank. Plus the Tokyo course is reasonably quick and the conditions likely conducive to good racing. So it was put all the eggs in 1 basket time. I'd train harder than I ever had and try to get pencil thin for the race. 2:48 would be the aim initially.

LG made the decision to approach Bevo about a program for the race. Given we were looking to train together as much as possible it only made sense then that I become another horse in the stables. In my case probably more a mule. In the back of my head was always the thought that LG would smash me in the sessions, but that at least on longer runs we'd have each other for company.



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And we could motivate each other to actually get out of bed to get them done at an hour such that our wives wouldn't murder us. As for Bevo, well the poor bloke had no idea what he was in for. Dealing with the daily disasters and constant mental frailties of me would send most running for the hills; poor bastard.

Confucius say, foolish man give wife grand piano, wise man give wife upright organ



The Training - トレーニング

So the plan was pretty simple, a 12 week program with a 2 week taper. 2015 was an interesting year for me; in the finish I ran over 5000km, but in comparison to 2014 I really didn't feel like I achieved a great deal. By far the highlight was an 80:03 for the Gold Coast half. Otherwise there wasn't a great deal to hang my hat on. I knew I'd been fit, but I just couldn't hurt myself the way I think I ought to.

In the weeks before the program commenced I did manage a 3k PB, but it could hardly be said to be awfully good at 10:23. And in true mad Rog form City to Sea was completed in a reasonable time, with a long warm down followed by another run in the evening; making for 45k on the day. Why?

Week 1 – 132k

At least I felt like I was starting the program already very fit. A light week prior, 63k, then straight into it; 132k. That's it Rog, peak mileage hit in week 1. The main session was an 8x800m off 4mins that went pretty well, and a long run of 31k. I love the long runs; I know many that don't; but for me they are my bread and butter. I've no issue doing them alone, but having LG for company made them even more enjoyable.

At this point too I weighed in at 74kg. I had plans to try and get to about 69kg. But with Christmas and the like I knew it wouldn't be easy.



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Week 2 – 101k

Work was killing me at this point, and I had to endure an 8x1k alone at night. And I smashed it. Averaged maybe low 3:30 and finished the last 2 very nicely. This is all going bloody swimmingly. I might well have to reappraise my target because 2:45 is in my sights. A solid 4 stage progressive then a long run with 10k tempo in the middle and I was feeling rather cocky. Big Mistake.

Week 3 – 133k

The 4x2k on a stinking hot and windy Melbourne day and I've probably never felt worse than on the run back to work. I hit a bollard for goodness' sake. No time to panic though. 5k AV on the Thursday night; ended up not starting until 9.55 and I can best say my run was a disgrace; 18:16. Hm, maybe Tuesday took a lot out of me.

Week 4 – 110k

5x1500m – possibly time to start panicking. What the hell was that? For the final rep I barely squeaked under 4 minute pace. And then come Saturday and in brutal conditions I managed to pump out 32k including a comfortable 19:33 park run to finish with. I'm getting a bit confused at this stage.

Week 5 – 125k

4x2k; not bad; not great. Mona 5.5k. Back on track. The park run on the Saturday was rubbish, but the weather was worse; no cause for alarm.

Week 6 – 129k

Another 8x1 off 4:45. Not as good as week 1; not even close actually. Not real pleased about that. Around this time got a bit of a virus which I thought explained the mediocre effort. Finished off the week ok with a decent hour steady and long run of 34k.

Week 7 – 123k

What the f&*k? 10x500. Zippo energy. Maybe 1:40 avg. Wed 20k in the hills with Slips and LG and me holding them up the whole way. Thurs a 3 lap progressive of the tan that saw me pull the pin half way into the 2nd lap. Alright, now I'm getting concerned.

In 1985 I was hospitalised for approaching perfection.

Week 8 – 90k

Time for a quiet week to try and regroup and smash out a HM simulation. An easy mona, then 80% 6x3mins. Time for the half marathon simulation at PP. I'm well rested and really despite the course not being overly flash, surely with Bevo pacing I can notch an 81-82. No, I didn't break 83. If it had gone on much longer Malibu was going to go straight by me. And I gave everything I had. At least I wasn't doing Two Bays like LG. But on the day some great performances, especially Malibu and Metric. I'm getting distinctly worried. I mentioned to Bevo that something's just not right and that perhaps a blood test is in order. Yep, good idea.

Week 9 – 118k

The main run of the week is a 75 min steady with LG. He kills it as usual, while I'm struggling to get near 4 min pace. The Sunday and 36k up near Ballarat alone starting just prior to 5am. Like an idiot I ensure the last 15k is into the wind and predominantly uphill. But yet again the long run is my saviour and it is finished with me feeling great.



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Week 10 – 98k

This is getting to the business end of the program, so it is time to start nailing some session's right? Long reps on the Tuesday night solo and I had to pull the pin early on; as I'm incapable of completing a single rep. If I was a car then there's just no petrol in the tank. A 1k (of intended 2k) rep at 3:50 left me completely shattered. Thursday is 10x400 with 75s rest; a session that I've traditionally done well. Unfortunately with work constraints I end up doing it solo in the evening along the road. About a 78s average. Ok it isn't the track and it is solo, but this is just depressing. Bevo's patented Sweet 16k is Saturday. Fair to say I'm not in the greatest headspace. The session involves some increasing pace from marathon, up to 10k pace, done twice and moving recovery. And it is an epic fail. I can say I had a twinge from the hammy, but it was bugger all really. The truth is I just can't go. Trying to get up to 10k pace and I feel like I'm going to faint. And yet out I go the next day and do 36k along the Capital City Trail and feel like a million dollars. At the finish I can barely hold myself back. What the hell is really going on here? I just don't understand. Poor Bevo and LG are copping nonstop Rog insecurities at this point; and both do a great job of pointing to the positives. In truth though, I'm not sold at all. Not one bit. Even poor Malibu is having to cop a barrage from me.

Week 11 – 115k

3x3km and it is worse than I could ever have imagined. Miles slower than prior to GC last year. I suppose at least I finished it unlike many recent sessions. But another quality long run of 32k. Insecurities remain intact.

Week 12 – 105k

6x750m, not terrible. At this stage I'll take that. Thursday, controlled Mona; no problem. This is all targeted at hitting parkrun on the Saturday. The plan is to run 3:36 pace with a big group of milers. It didn't take long for me to realise that for me that would likely be about 1-2k. Fell in a complete hole yet again. I do suffer from a gastro oesophageal complaint from time to time, and it did come into play here. And quite frankly this was a massive blessing in disguise. When I got home I found I only had a couple of pills left. Time to call the doc for a prescription. That'll have to wait for Monday. By Sunday and another long run with 5k at race pace to finish is done without much issue at all.

Taper Week 1 – 54k

Alright the clinic won't just give me a repeat given I haven't seen them in over 2 years. And in fact my doctor hasn't worked there in more than 2 years. Ok. My now new doctor convinces me that it is time for a blood test. I happily acquiesce. Yeah I had kind of meant to do that. Naturally I fluff about and don't get to it until the Thursday; in my defence I did go on the Wednesday, but I screwed up the fasting and they refused me. Fair call. A remedial massage on the Monday and he downright massacres me. I had actually thought the body was ok but clearly I was very wrong. I spent the next few days recovering from it. By Thursday I was much better and completed a reasonable 6x750m. But it must be said it was an 85% session, and they had not been any issue at all through this campaign. On the Sunday LG and I fronted up for the 5k at Burnley; a Sri Chinmoy. This was a desperate attempt from me to build a little confidence. I thought the road was my best shot. In the finish 18:01 which left me feeling at least a little better. It was still pretty awful, just not quite as awful as some of the previous efforts. The pancakes were very good though. Or were they?

Race Week

Food poisoning. Thanks pancakes. Went to work, lasted about 30 minutes before heading home. I can't actually have been that bad because I stopped at MSAC and bought new shorts and calf compression gear. Got about halfway home and received a text from my doctor to say I have



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anaemia and to make an urgent appointment. Gee isn't this week starting off on a good footing. I can't get an appointment until the next day. In the meantime I do a little research, and it seems that this is not uncommon amongst runners. Several milers reveal their own trouble with it from time to time.

Anyway I finally meet up with my original quack who is working on an ad hoc basis at the clinic. He's a runner so I'm sure he'll understand. His first piece of advice is not to run the marathon. Um, yeah right! Next option thanks. To his credit once I make it clear that I'm running, and that I'm flying out Thursday morning, he runs around and manages to organise an Iron Infusion for me the next day. He also insists that as soon as possible I get a colonoscopy and gastrectomy to investigate the reasons for the IDA (Iron Deficiency Anaemia I presume). My iron level is 7, and my ferritin 6. That's not good. If there's any positive to come out of this it is that it does explain why the session work has been so disgustingly awful. While there's no way to get them to an acceptable level by Sunday, at least they can be improved, and in a marathon you're not really hitting the high points of your heart rate.

If I'd had half a brain I'd have cottoned onto this a long time ago. It was in the first half of 2015 (maybe earlier) that I remember remarking to Woolies that after a couple of steaks it seemed I had a truckload more energy. I seem to recall even suggesting that perhaps my iron levels weren't where they should be. And in my last attempt to give blood several years ago, they had turned me away for this reason. So, if you want to get a message through to me, use a bloody sledgehammer.

The iron infusion on the Wednesday was a fairly mundane procedure, and the doctor in charge didn't actually seem to be at all concerned with me running a marathon in 4 days' time. So why should I worry then?

In truth I was quite relieved. I was a little concerned about the colonoscopy and the thoughts of possible issues there, but I felt reasonably sure that this was largely a diet related thing. Beef isn't my wife's favourite thing; and as she's the only cook in the house it meant I wasn't consuming much of it.

So time to turn the thoughts to Tokyo. Be positive. By now there's a few things I know. I'm lighter than I've ever been as a runner; 71kg (probably another reason for the IDA); and my long runs have been unflinchingly strong. I know in many ways I'm fitter than I've ever been. A call from Hutz the night prior provided a much needed boost to the confidence. Yep, let's go to Japan!





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The Trip

For some reason we elected the daytime trip involving a stopover in Cairns for about 3.5 hours. So this involved a domestic flight initially. Bags checked, and despite flying Jetstar, LG got us into the Virgin Lounge; and based on my quick assessment that is clearly some fraudulent advertising. I hoed into breakfast pretty nicely; so much so by the time we made the decision to get to the plane we didn't leave ourselves much wiggle room. And gate 52 didn't sound promising. Still we meandered down to the gate only to find a pretty empty area, and a rather grizzly flight attendant. That would have made a great story, failed to run marathon as missed the flight while eating pancakes; yeah I got back on that horse pretty fast.

Smooth and harmless flight that involved more breakfast.

Once in Cairns the idea was to do an easy 30 minutes run with a few run-throughs. Let's just say that the best laid plans quickly came a 'cropper. In the end much easier to just eat more breakfast. So we did.

Another relaxed flight to Tokyo, only partially full (the plane not my belly), and much long chattering done to the annoyance of some people. Some even moved to different parts of the plane. Their pre-paid meals however seemed to be delivered to me. I devoured them pretty fast in case they realised. Besides beef sliders have to be a good thing for somebody iron deficient I'd have thought. Not sure about the tim tams however.





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Arrived a day earlier than in 2014 so a bit more time to relax and enjoy things. About the only thing I'd change is that we walked a lot more than is sensible in the days prior to a marathon; but you have to keep yourself occupied of course. The run around the Imperial Palace was enjoyable; once we eventually found the Runner's Station. Thought it did not fill me with a great deal of confidence. We incorporated some 1 min on/off into it and just running at intended marathon pace was difficult.



I was cold. For the record having low iron affects your ability to regulate your body temperature.

The Race - マラソン



Having the semi elite start meant a pretty relaxed start; you obviously have to be careful not to get tripped up but largely it was without any concern. I just tried to settle in behind LG and Duff. One thing that quickly became apparent was that my calf protectors were poorly positioned and began falling down very early. I made some attempts to pull them up but quickly decided that the only way to sort that out would involve coming to a complete halt; and there was no chance of that happening. So put the head down and push on. I settled into a nice rhythm and let the downhill sections do the work. I was slowly dropping off the other 2; I did put in a surge in the 8th km and got right back up on them but quickly thought it was silly as they were obviously going just a little quicker than I could realistically handle.

At 10k I was just over 39 minutes, so just the start I'd hoped for. But it was also where I just began to labour a bit. I didn't drop a great deal in the next 5k, but 19:57 certainly wasn't what I wanted, and it felt much harder than it ought to at this stage. I was focussing just a bit much on the cadence I think,



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and I mentally gave myself a rap over the knuckles and said to just run the way I run; tall and relaxed. So that's what I did. And really from that point things felt better; through the half in a little over 83, and feeling solid. I just dug in here and tried to let the km's disappear. It was only somewhere on the 28th km that I started to get worried; as the left hammy gave off some sharp pain. I half expected to have to come to a sudden halt; but no, it let me continue. I could feel it with every stride but in every marathon something (usually most everything) is going to hurt. So on we go, and 30k is knocked off in about 1:58.40. In my mind at this stage and I've decided that 2:50 is there to be had. I figure 4:10's from here should do the trick knowing that the bridges are still to be dealt with and that I've already slowed my current pace to a little over 4 min k's.



At around 30k and depressingly LG is in sight. And he looks to be in a lot of trouble. Ok I'll admit it, I wanted to beat him, and I genuinely thought it was possible, but I'd have much preferred it in very different circumstances. On I press. In many ways I'm pretty pleased with how it is all going; yeah it hurts but I'm moving along ok. Run the direct lines, stay relaxed. The longer we go the more the hammy hurts and the more I'm worried it is going to go pop, but thankfully it does its job.

Those pesky bridges late on are about as much fun as a dose of crabs, but strangely going by a few other runners just makes me feel a bit better. And before you know there's only 2k to go and sub 2:50 is within touching distance. Like every marathon you're really just hanging by a thread at this point. Gee 2k is a long way when everything hurts. And finally the finish is in sight. I don't risk a sprint as much as I'd like to, and cross the line.

2:48:53 on the watch. Unbelievable. F^&king elated.

I'm fist pumping, hands in the air jubilant. The journey was a bloody tough one, and mentally I felt like I'd been completely through the ringer, so at this point it is fair to say I was pretty emotional.

Quickly catch up with Duff and express my concerns for LG, but Duff has spotted him and I'm just enormously relieved he's ok. A PB for us all.



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F^&k Yeah

東京マラソン2016 大会結果／Results of TOKYO MARATHON 2016

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個人記録／Runner Record

総合順位 Total Place	ナンバーカード Bib number	氏名 Name
567	8069	Mellings David／DAVID MELLINGS

参加種目／Event	マラソン男子／Marathon Men	参加種目別順位／Category Place : 537／27096
年齢／Age	48	年代別順位／Age Place(45～49) : 45／5690
性別／Sex	男性／Men	性別別順位／Gender Place : 537／27096
国籍／Nationality	AUSTRALIA	国籍別順位／Nationality Place : 9／174
タイム(ネット)／Time(net)	02:48:54	
タイム(グロス)／ Time(gross)	02:48:59	



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通過点／Point	通過タイム／Intermediate time	ラップタイム／Lap time
5km	0:19:15	-
10km	0:39:08	0:19:53
15km	0:59:05	0:19:57
20km	1:18:51	0:19:46
中間点／Halfway Point	1:23:10	0:19:46
25km	1:38:37	0:20:09
30km	1:58:46	0:20:09
35km	2:18:55	0:20:55
40km	2:39:50	0:09:09
フィニッシュ／Finish	2:48:59	-

Confucius say, man who keep feet on ground have trouble putting on pants

Rog and the Marathon

For whatever reason, I've been very lucky with the marathon. I've walked away from all 6 competitive ones very satisfied. I've run PB's at ages 43, 44, 45, 46 & 48. I didn't run a marathon as a 47yo. I feel that if this is the best time I ever do that I can happily live with it. As always I retired from the marathon immediately upon completion. And then only days later starting thinking about the next one. Watching the replay of Tokyo and it just stirs up great feelings. Perhaps there is an ultra in me. But right now I just want to recover and then try to get a real 5k PB (postscript lowered it to a more reasonable 17:20).

Confucius say, man who have last laugh, not get joke

Thanks

LG is an extraordinary individual. Without him I just couldn't have done this. A great sounding board, a great confidante, a sensational training partner, funny, loyal ... need I go on. He made the entire journey something special.

This was a fantastic trip, a group of people who genuinely got along very well. Some people didn't have their best day but none allowed that to spoil the experience.

Marathons hurt. Marathons are hugely rewarding. Being a Miler is the bee's knees.