

## **Melbourne Marathon 2017 Debut : My happiest race ☺.**

**Elisa (Elmo) Mooren**

### **Why I started running.**

I started running casually on an adhoc basis with my friend Kerryn purely for a social catch ups, back in August 2014. During this time she was running parkrun at Westerfolds and I promised to join her one day, and I did finally in February 2015. Once I realised I could run 5km comfortably at Westerfolds, I would push myself a little bit more each week. It took me a couple of months before I gained the confidence to run up the Manor hill.

For the first six months I was running by feel (no smart watch) and the PBs kept coming. After completing two fun runs (Warrandyte 8km and Werribee Mansion 11km), Kerryn encouraged me to register for Melbourne half in 2015. A year later I joined Milers in July 2016 and ran a 15 minute PB for my second half marathon at Melbourne. My running love affair was getting stronger as I was running faster and longer than I have ever had. It did come at a price, as I spent the first few months racing with shin splints. Dry needling and pain killers was how I managed to continue to run and race. From November 2016 to January 2017 I was able to overcome my shin splints through a carefully managed recovery plan, under Bevo's guidance.

### **Why I wanted to run the marathon.**

I never thought I would ever run a marathon, as it was reserved for "crazy" people. Last year, after I attended the Run Nation Film festival, I was inspired by the amazing women who completed marathons overcoming major obstacles in their personal lives. I made the decision then to join the "crazies" with the support of the Milers, Westerfoldians and my family.

### **My marathon campaign.**

Technically my marathon campaign commenced when I resumed Miler sessions back in February 2017, as my shin splints were no longer troubling me. From February to the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, when I ran Gold Coast half marathon, the main focus was to steadily build strength and endurance in my legs with the long runs and this was complemented with session work. By the time I ran my GC half PB (1:36:26), my longest run was 28km and I also picked up some nice 5km and 10km PBs along the way. This provided a sound foundation to kick start the gruelling and relentless marathon block prepared by super coach Bevo.

In week one I kicked off my marathon campaign running in the Sri Chimnoy 30km, my longest run ever at Princes Park. UT and I were using this 30km race as a training run and Bermuda joined and paced us for the last 15km. I tested gels, cheered fellow Miler and Westie runners and chatted as we completed 6 laps of the course. It was a comfortable run, where I picked up bling for my 1<sup>st</sup> age placing and thought this was a good start to the marathon training block. Weeks two and the three I was nailing my sessions that were increasing in intensity and length. I was really being pushed to my physical and mental limits. E.g. 4 x 2.5km around Lilydale Lake on my own in windy and wet conditions was a challenge but character building. It was my 1x3km/1x2km/2x1km session that Bevo paced me in, that lifted my confidence to hold on in a session and run strong and consistently. This is also when Rog commented that the longer I run, the better I am suited in a race and he

thought I was made to run a marathon. Unfortunately, during weeks 2, 3 and 4 I was experiencing light headiness during the back third of my long run. Nutrition was thought to be a possible cause, but this did not make any difference as I continued to feel very light headed and would push myself to run faster to get the long run done. Bevo suggested that I have my iron tested, and I did this as part of a full set of bloods. The test confirmed that my iron stores were down to 3. I was lucky I did not pass out during my long runs. I promptly had an iron infusion and within a couple of weeks I was starting to feel better on those long runs, where my weekly average mileage was hitting mid 85 kms.

My longest run was in week 5, when I ran 34km at Albert Park that was initially planned as a solo run that I was dreading to do. I decided to post my long run on Miler Facebook page and ended up having company for 32km of my 34km run. I started at 6:30am and Bella was my first running buddy, then I was joined by UT and then the Miler bus grew. Such an amazing show of support on a cold, wintery and wet day. In week 6 I hit record mileage at 92km and the following week after a blistering PB Fartlek session with Chez, I had a very sore right hammy. A few days after, my hammy was still sore even when was sitting down at work on the Friday. That Friday night I saw a physio and had treatment and was advised not to complete my longest run in my marathon campaign, which was 36km. I was worried that my body would not be right to race the AV Burnley Half the following week, as this was a key race to confirm my form and marathon target time. In the lead up to the AV Burnley half marathon, my training was scaled back and I focused on stretching and strengthening exercises for my hammy. LG offered to pace me, and under his expertise and brilliant pacing (even though I thought we went out too fast), I ran a 2min 30 second PB (1:33:52). The pain I experienced in the last 5km, I had never hurt like that before and it was also my fastest 5km split in the race. I loved running this half as the race comradery was amazing and Hutz and JC were there vocally supporting and taking fantastic pics. I was ecstatic with the result and more importantly on track for a sub 3:30 marathon.

Week 9 I was still having more treatment for my hammy, but I managed to run 91km for the week, that included a 28km marathon simulation run with Bevo at Albert Park. After a heavy night of rain, I met Bevo at Albert Park at 6:15am on Saturday morning with my A game. I needed to nail this session as it was essentially my last long run before going away on a family holiday to Phuket. I needed this confidence boost and confirmation that I could run two thirds of marathon at 4:50/km pace. The rain, wind and constantly jumping puddles whilst still running at marathon pace was a great result.

Weeks 10 and 11 I was away in Phuket with my family. I was not able to complete any long runs as I did not feel safe on the roads and running was very limited on the beach. In the first week I only managed 34 km as I was sick for a couple of days with a stomach bug. My running was confined to a treadmill in the hotel gym. I was sick again on the last day of my holiday, but managed to pull myself together to complete a tailored Bevo Badness session the day after arriving home from an overnight flight. Ingrid Morrison ran with me which was fantastic as we supported and encouraged each other. We were both shared the same marathon goal of achieving a sub 3:30 time. In my last week of training before my taper period, I had fallen ill again and could not complete the Beach road recon with Desi, Dug and Gary. I ended up going to the doctors on the Monday and was put on a strong course of antibiotics. During the taper period apart from not feeling physically great particularly in the first week, I was very concerned about being able to physically complete the marathon in the

time frame that I was targeting and even questioned how hard I would hit “the wall” as I had never run that distance at that level of intensity. I had thoughts of down grading to a half marathon too. The mind games and the nerves were difficult to control. Had I trained hard enough? I never ran my longest run. Will my body breakdown? I was reminded by Bevo, Dug, and Desi to revisit key sessions and races, such as Burnley half and the marathon simulation to give me the confidence and to remember the consistent training achieved each week. The Sunday before the marathon, as I was getting ready to drive out to Eaglemont to do my last longish easy run (18km), I was overcome with emotion and just broke down crying. I thought I am not going to do this. Somehow I managed to pull myself together, drove to Eaglemont and joined the back of the group when they looped back at the car park. Desi ran with me initially and I opened up how I was feeling. I started to feel a bit better and then I chatted to Smurf and Bevo about their marathon experiences and the do’s and don’ts. By the end of the run I was feeling heaps better within myself. The Friday hand over lunch and the chat I had with Robyn Millard (my support person for marathon), also helped put my nerves at ease. The messages I received in the days leading up, helped push aside the negativity and refocus on believing (trust your training), and to relax and enjoy your first marathon. 😊

## **The marathon race**

The weather gods were shining down on Melbourne marathon day. I drove into Richmond and parked at my work, before I met up with Bevo outside the Precinct at 6:20am. We then ran down to AOP, I had my final toilet stop before the race. We then ran to the start line and joined the rest of the Milers and I would start with Fitter who was the official 3:20 pacer, but I would run my marathon pace of 4:50/km. Ingrid who had a VIP start, was starting ahead of me but was going to run to the left and look out for me, as she was also planning on running sub 3:30. My target time was actually 3:25, so I was not able to run with a pacing group as I was in between 3:20 and 3:30 pacer groups. -Seeing, chatting and hugging the other Milers before the race was exciting, as we were about to embark on the marathon adventure. I felt I was ready, so let’s do it.

As I ran down to Flinders Street Station I heard my name being called out and it was NJ and LG! I could not help but smile and wave as I set off to clock up my first 5km split of 24:09 against a target of 24:10. I kept thinking to myself I must stay relaxed and stick to my pace target, so I can take on what lay ahead of me. I actually ran passed Robyn at the first drink stop at Albert Park which momentarily threw me, which was at the 7km mark. I cruised to 10km with a 5km split of 24:14 and still tracking well on target as I made my way around Albert Park Lake. I could hear my name being called out and seeing the other Milers that were being paced by Duff and Bermuda for the sub 3 hour time was uplifting. I was smiling, waving and enjoying the moment and then Scott Trickett (Westerfoldian) appeared and started to run with me for a couple of kms. He had previously run with Dug (Chris) a few minutes prior. Then I saw and heard Hutz at around 14km and of course I posed for the photo as you do when running your first marathon.



The second drink stop transition was a lot smoother. I was feeling so good within myself and buzzing with the marathon running comradery. My next 5km split was my fastest at 24:03 and I was 2 seconds below target at 1:12:28 at the 15km mark. Rog then joined me for a couple of kms from 14 to 16km as I ran onto Fitzroy street; from coming off the lake. This was an unexpected and a pleasant surprise. When Rog dropped off, I was running up Beaconsfield Parade and I saw Elmo standing to the right of the road, which I naturally high fived and said that I was Elmo too. I couldn't stop smiling. After the turnaround point I saw and cheered some Westerfoldians, Zoe and UT who also cheered me on too. I was thinking running a marathon was fun. At the 20km mark my 5km split was 24:17 with a cumulative time of 1:36:45. I was happy, relaxed and in the zone. The next thing I remember seeing, well actually hearing Bella as her vocal support was out of this world. Bella screaming and Stodd's pep talk helped keep the momentum going. Shortly after my third drinks stop I was joined again by Rog along beach road. I was thinking when would I see my family? I was hoping to see them before the 30km mark. Then like wishful thinking, I suddenly saw Andrew and my three children, Stephanie, Hannah and Jaron. I was so happy and so surprised to see them at around 23km. I said to Rog that is my family! I saw my family again after the turnaround at around 27km and high fived the kids, that were so excited to see me. I loved those special moments during the marathon.





My next two 5km splits were 24:27 and 24:23, that brought me to the 30km point in the marathon (2:25:33). I was starting to feel the pinch at this point and running back onto St Kilda road and merging with the half marathoners made it tricky to keep the even pace and to avoid running into the half marathon runners. It was the least enjoyable part of the marathon, but I was guided by Rog through the sprawling crowd of runners which helped.

At 30km I knew I had to continue to push myself and stay on pace as best as I could. It was going to be a mental battle to keep the body going, but I was determined not to let the pace slip. I had worked too hard for this to happen. Having Rog running next to me it felt like I was going on a Sunday long run in the city and joined by 6,000 odd other runners. I was feeling relaxed and I wasn't stressed. Whilst I just wanted to continue to run strong, I was getting a little excited of the thought of finishing in the MCG and becoming a marathoner. Again, I was hoping that my family would be there to see me finish.

I finally caught up with Ingrid under the Arts Centre, but she was cramping and not able to join me to finish the marathon together. I didn't like seeing her in pain, but she assured me her coach Jason was not far and had pickle juice that deal with her cramping. I knew at the 36km mark there would be a Westerfoldian cheer squad at the Rotunda on the tan. I was starting to tire and Westie cheers did not disappoint and gave me that much needed lift. My 5km split at the 35km mark, I held steady at 24:22. Bevo popped up around 37km, and he



ran with Rog and me for a km. This was a special moment in the race too, Bevo was across all of the training and things I had to overcome to get myself to the start line of the marathon. I was still running happily and Rog was telling me that we were passing lots of runners. I really didn't notice. In fact, Rog was correct from 30km to 40km I had passed 195 runners.



At 40km my slowest 5km split had slipped to 24:58 and I realised that I had avoided the dreaded “wall.” I was on a high and then I saw NJ’s beautiful smile and LG again near Flinders Street station, Leon yelled out around Federation Square and then Biggers cheered as I was nearing the MCG tunnel. I was buzzing! As I ran onto the MCG I was trying to spot my family, but then Rog told me to sprint to the end and take down those two guys in front of me. I sprinted when I entered the MCG and from the 40km to the finish I had passed another 23 runners and moved up to my final overall placing of 900 and I finished 9<sup>th</sup> in my age category and 86<sup>th</sup> out of all the females. My official time was **3:26:41**. Even though I did not see my family, they all saw me cross the finish line as I threw my arms into the air to say that



I had done it! I was now marathoner. The race plan was executed and I achieved my target time in the best possible way. The Melbourne 2017 marathon was the happiest and proudest race of my life. I was ecstatic to see so many Milers still at the finish line. I gave Rog a hug and then Dug grabbed me whizzed me around. I was still processing what I had accomplished. I was excited to hear about how everyone else's results and to share my news too. Dug and Desi who were also debuting ran super amazing times!! I was so proud of them. There were lots of hugs and photos were taken. Ingrid also managed to run her a sub 3:30. I was happy to see and celebrate with her too. What an amazing, wonderful and happy running experience it was to complete my first marathon in my home city of Melbourne, on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I will be back next year for sure. ☺

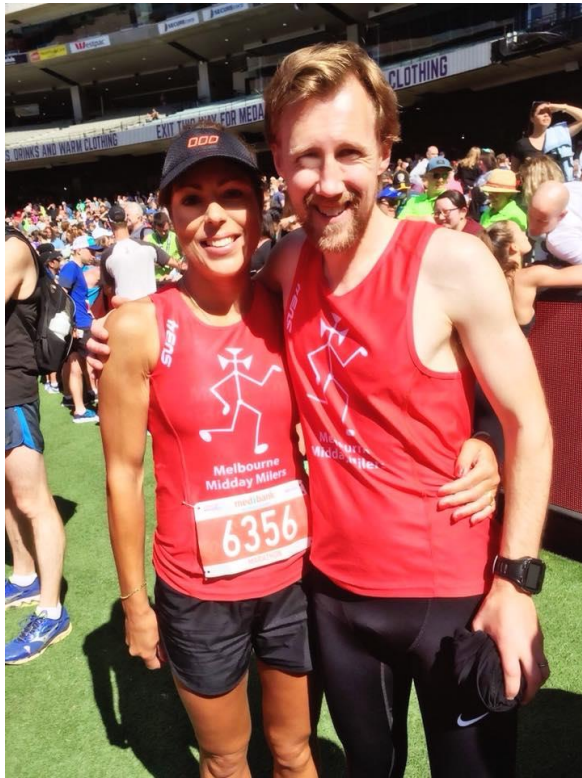


## Thank you

Thanks to Bevo for his advice and support throughout my marathon campaign, it was amazing and a testament to the time I achieved. Thanks to all of the Milers that I ran with during my long runs and sessions, and to those who provided encouragement along the way, especially to the following people; Dug, Desi, UT, Zoe, Jessie, Rog, JC, Vonny and Ingrid. The Westerfoldian support was and has always been awesome with your messages, hugs and polls (Barney Henry) to lift me up when I needed it. Too many to list, but Kerry, Lee, Narelle and Alison you ladies rock. Lastly, a big thank you to my family for your support and



understanding particularly during my marathon training block. Now that I qualify for Tokyo 2019 semi-elite ballot and provided I get, we will make it a family holiday. ☺





## ELISA MOOREN (#6356)

FINISHED

GUN: 03:26:52

NET: 03:26:41

PLACE

900 OF 5928

FEMALE

86 OF 1752

45-49

9 OF 255

MY CERTIFICATE

RACE PHOTOS

+ COMPARE YOUR FRIENDS

VIEW COMPARED FRIENDS

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Run 42.2km

Location	Split	Race Time	Pos	Div	Gen	Speed/Pace	TOD
5k	00:24:03	00:24:03	891	13	102	12.47 / 4:49	07:24:14
10k	00:24:44	00:48:48	1129	19	136	12.13 / 4:57	07:48:58
15k	00:24:26	01:13:15	1182	18	140	12.28 / 4:53	08:13:25
20k	00:24:28	01:37:43	1195	16	137	12.26 / 4:54	08:37:54
21k	00:04:38	01:42:22	1196	16	137	12.95 / 4:38	08:42:32
25k	00:19:26	02:01:49	1173	16	135	12.35 / 4:52	09:01:59
30k	00:24:44	02:26:33	1118	16	125	12.13 / 4:57	09:26:43
35k	00:24:39	02:51:12	1013	10	104	12.17 / 4:56	09:51:22
40k	00:25:11	03:16:24	923	9	87	11.91 / 5:02	10:16:34
42.2k	00:10:16	03:26:41	900	9	86	12.86 / 4:40	10:26:51