



## The lead up

Training for marathon number three started virtually the Monday after MM 2016. I had run a PB which was great in the tough conditions, but felt I had more to give.

I had to find 14 minutes. The plan for MM16 was to run 3.03/05, the conditions may have cost me a couple of minutes, but I knew I had to work harder to have any chance.

I spoke to Esta (wife) and I apparently said I if I ran 3hr marathon that it would be last one. I then recommitted to working with Bevo.

I tried to be as honest as possible as to what I would need to do to crack 3hrs. Two things that I identified was to start/continue doing long runs earlier in the year. And the 2<sup>nd</sup> was to sign up for AV to get better at racing.

Jan/Feb and the first half of March were tough months, I didn't seem to be able to hit any targets in sessions. I'd even run 100k in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March, was I over training. One example of failed sessions was a 3-lap progressive of the TAN. It was one of those humid morning. The first lap took over 16 minutes, and by the top of Anderson on 2<sup>nd</sup> lap I was on schedule for 17 minutes. I jogged out the last two laps very frustrated. Spoke to Bevo, and he suggested having a weekend off. This seemed to help. I seemed to turn the corner as by the Geelong half things had started to turn around, I ran a 1min PB at Geelong, after being pushed all the way by Janice and only just holding her off, bit of revenge after she out sprinted me the Zatopek Lower grades in December

The training continued and the AV season was upon us. So much different running on equestrian courses, parks or farms, lot harder to pace, especially when falling into the Mud (Cruden farm).

One thing that also changed was that easy runs were just that, easy runs. No more putting pressure on self to run every run under 5min/k. Think I have Malibu for changing this perception.

I'd do another 9 weeks of over 100k, maxing out at 110k during the campaign. With exception of week before Burnley half I'd run more than 90k per week. My body was dealing much better with these volumes than 12 months ago, no doubt training is cumulative plus the easy runs were helping with recovery.

Luckily, I didn't miss a session throughout the campaign, some week Bevo made changes to the program if he sensed I may be getting tired. Training consisted of more up-tempo long runs, which 30/32 at 4.30 pace, we worked up from 45min at Marathon pace to 75 Minutes at Marathon pace. I found this training boosted confidence about ability to run 42ks at 4.15/pk. May of these were done at Princes Park at 5.30am with up to three layers on. At times it would take a lap before I started sweating.

I had a mini taper for Burnley, this was the big test. If I run under 84 min and the 3hr marathon is on. The first 5-6k felt Ok, but I wondered if I could keep the pace going for 3 more laps. As it happened I would keep the pace going and ran 83.30 which was more than 3 minutes better than last year. This was a huge confidence boost and confirmed that a sub3 hr marathon was a possibility.

Most of my long runs were done around Merri Creek on my own or at Eaglemont with many other milers. As we got closer to the marathon I seemed to run daily with Jumbo (Scott Smith), Ferrero (Greg Roche), Stringer (James Howe), Dug (Chris Wade), Busta (Mark Symes), Desi (Simon Tu) as well as (Yet to be nicknamed) Seb & (also yet to be Nicknamed) Janice who joined me on many occasions. Bevo was in attendance for many occasions as pacer.

The Marathon training finished with Bevo badness at Princes Park on Grand Final day public holiday. It's a tough session that includes 3 x 6k with a 1K float, first 4k at Marathon pace which was 4.12ish for me, and 2k at Half Marathon pace, which was a touch under 4min/k.

In the first week of the two-week taper, I had one moment of panic. On the Wednesday I had a temperature, was aching, and just wanted to sleep. Went straight to dr that night who put me on Tamiflu an anti-viral that helps recover from Flu. I found out on the following Monday it was a false alarm and I hadn't had a flu.

The rest of the Taper was good, a few runs of varying time and distance at MP. Finished some of those runs and you start wondering if you can run at that pace for 3hrs, should it feel easier should I be full of energy. Dozers Facebook post were very re-assuring.

### **The day of**

The morning of the Marathon I was up at 4am, banana on Raisin toast with cup of coffee. Esta gets up to wish me the best. She was no doubt keen on me getting 3hrs considering what I had said earlier about not running another one. Hopefully she'll forget over time what I said.

Met Bermuda (one of the 3hr pacers) at my front gate at 5.20am and we drive to the city. Bit of talk about day ahead, at this stage I am nervous.

Get to the city and park the car. We run into Fitter and walk to MCG together.

I then meet Dug, Jumbo & Stringer at MCG before heading to check bags in and a lap under MCG to look for a loo.

It is then to the start. Jumbo and I work our way to the front of the none preferred start, we watch the pacers go to the river side of Bateman Ave a little away from us. We agree to just head up hill and then to get on board to 3hr train.

The gun goes and up the hill we go, can see Desi & Busta a little ahead and few other Milers ahead.

As we hit 1km we thought we were spot on pace, but not sure of accuracy due to trees and buildings. We were ahead of the 3hr pacers, hopefully we are not going to hard. At about 4k we can hear the voices of the 3hr group (Duff & Bermuda) which was re-assuring, but it was another 2k till we were officially on the 3hr bus. I was hoping Bevo hadn't seen me ahead of the bus.

On catching the bus, it seemed to 300 deep including plenty of miler red. Once with the 3hr group I was able to relax and let the pacers worry about pace.

As we head off St Kilda Rd and onto Fitzroy St I wonder how I'll be feeling when I return to this point.

We run around Albert park, great chance to see how everyone is travelling both those in front and those behind. All the milers seemed to be in the groups they had had planned to run with. Lots of support for each other.

Coming out of Albert Park and onto Beaconsfield Parade there still seemed to be a huge 3-hour group. At about 16k the two front runners passed going the other way, they would have been doing through about half way. As we head towards Port Melbourne all the Milers still appear to be in expected groups.

As we turn at Port Melb, I hear two guys talking about how they are about to set new PB's a half marathon this is about the same time as everyone in 3hr group knows of the famous JC, as he'd

given us our first two drinks and gels. Including a 100m sprint as I missed taking mine out of his hand. Not sure what Jumbo & Ferrero thought of me at this point, as he had there nutrition as well.

Still feeling good as we go through half way in what I thought was 89min which I felt was spot on. But I remind myself there is still a long way to go

Plenty of support out on coarse cheering on, ears are still recovering from Bella's screaming.

As we head along towards the Elwood turn we are reminded by Bermuda to run each kilometre on its own.

As we were getting closer to Elwood and you saw people coming back towards Fitzroy st you could sense groups had started to break up, even the 3hr train felt like it was down to 20-30 people.

As we head past St Kilda marina and the wall, I thought back to last year and felt a confidence boost as I felt so much better this year. At the top of Fitzroy St we meet a wall of Half Marathoners. It was at this point that Drill Sargent Bermuda started to get vocal. He was telling the crowd to cheer the 3hr group and telling half marathoners to get out of the way.

As we head down St Kilda Rd, Seb and I somehow got a little ahead of three-hour group. He asked if this was deliberate I said no so we let the 3hr group catch us.

Still seemed to be lots of Miler support along St Kilda Rd. Didn't realise St Kilda Rd was so steep until this year. Had a short run with Bevo as he checked up on how I was travelling. I think I remember saying to him, "that I think I can make it". He seemed more confident which was great. I remember thinking as we went through with about 10k to go that all I need to do is run a 43min 10k that still seemed achievable.

By the time I get to Arts centre I start thinking how Esta (wife), Ella (daughter) and James (son) will be at MCG and have been tracking my progress. My parents (down in Burnie Tas) will following. But I know the toughest part is in front of me.

The climb up Birdwood Ave goes well, both Duff and Bermuda had worked in front of me as had all the other Milers still on 3hr bus. As I expected to drop a little pace, and I was still running with Jumbo I was comfortable dropping a little pace. Hopefully I get a little back on the downhill sections. Kept reminding myself about the effort, rather than pace.

As I get passed the Shrine I see a guy stopping and stretching. Great reminder that this race was far from over, but I felt good at this point.

Whilst getting tired I still felt pace was achievable and body whilst tired could get me through. Heading down Domain Rd I even try to push the pace to ensure I catch up some of the time lost up Birdwood.

Then at the turn of Sir Dallas Brooks drive I had my first cramp, for moment I even thought the race was over and I said so to Jumbo. The cramp then went as quickly as it came.

As I head down Birdwood Ave the cramps come back but in quads this time. At this point Malibu cruises past and says, "Pain is only temporary". I then remind myself of those early morning tempos at Princes Park, and the 6.30am Eaglemont runs. All that work will mean nothing if I stop at this point.

As I hit St Kilda Rd, I am not exactly sure how far to go, but I thought I was slightly ahead of pacers. Once again, I break the run down by convincing myself I only must run 3k in 13 minutes to achieve my goal.

At this point I hear my name being called and I do see familiar faces, but I am so focused on just running that very difficult to acknowledge people.

The turn onto Flinders street makes me feel like I am get very close to the MCG, but the Flinders st climb seems to take an eternity. I use the last drink station, as I used each on the course as well as JC's. I think I poured more water on myself than I drank, as I wanted to stay as cool as possible.

Bunton Ave again seems to go for an eternity. You can see the MCG and you know you are close but you cannot see the entry point and till just before you can enter.

On entering the MCG I knew my family will be there. I don't know what is happening behind me and I haven't heard Bermuda or Duff for a while. I feel like I have two minutes to get to the end as I enter the MCG which seems achievable.

As I hit the plastic around the MCG my calves cramp up. But at this point I don't care, I felt like I was limping to the end, but I didn't care. I was looking up in stands hoping to see family, but I couldn't see them. With about 20m to go I can see the clock and feel for the first time with certainty that I will break 3hrs for sure.

Mission Accomplished. As I work my way towards recovery area I see Milers everywhere. All seemed to be very happy.



I wanted to lie down but I don't think I'd get up again, so I stay on my legs.

We have the miler photo and then make our way to bag retrieval and then to meeting family who by now will know I did it.

I meet my family before all the Milers start coming through and we get a chance to have a photo with Robert De Castella. For someone growing up running in 80s it was a great privilege to meet and have a photo with the great man.

I'd like to thank my family for putting up with all training runs, dragging my kids to cold farms whilst I run and AV event. Without the support of Esta, Ella, & James I couldn't have done it.

Thanks to Bevo for the training programs, the chats, not doubt dumb questions and for believing I could do it if I did the work.

Whilst I have had great support from many milers I'd especially like to that Bermuda and Malibu. Both have been supportive and have helped push me to believe I could do this.

Will I run another marathon, I not sure I am ready to commit? For those considering it, do it. You will not regret it. You just have to set your aim, and then do the hard work.

### **Spilts**

Run 42.2km							
Location	Split	Race Time	Pos	Div	Gen	Speed/Pace	TOD
5k	00:20:45	00:20:45	243	44	227	14.46 / 4:09	07:20:47
10k	00:21:20	00:42:06	293	52	275	14.06 / 4:16	07:42:08
15k	00:21:21	01:03:28	326	57	307	14.05 / 4:16	08:03:30
20k	00:21:09	01:24:38	315	56	297	14.18 / 4:14	08:24:39
21k	00:03:54	01:28:32	303	53	285	15.38 / 3:54	08:28:34
25k	00:16:38	01:45:11	299	55	280	14.43 / 4:09	08:45:13
30k	00:21:18	02:06:30	284	55	269	14.08 / 4:16	09:06:32
35k	00:21:27	02:27:57	263	54	248	13.99 / 4:17	09:27:59
40k	00:22:25	02:50:22	256	54	240	13.38 / 4:29	09:50:24
42.2k	00:08:59	02:59:21	235	50	220	14.69 / 4:05	09:59:23