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OF DUBIOUS RACES AND INCOMPETENT OFFICIALS

Over the recent couple of months, the local running community have seen more than its fair share of debacles. As runners, we're not wishing for post-race massages. Only that the officials get some basics right.

1. Stick to what's promised

Don't shortchange runners. If the published distance is 7K, then stick to it. Even though the final decision still rests on the race director, increasing the distance to 10K on race morning may result in many casual runners not able to complete the distance and therefore put them off from this form of exercise.

On the flipside, don't reduce the distance because runners take pride in their achievements. Most runners will gladly run 10K (if it's a 10K) and not 9K as they will feel shortchanged, literally. We will be proud to say that we PR'd on a 10K course but not on a 9K one.

Variances in distances exceeding 300 metres is not acceptable.

2. Refreshments

We sometimes wonder how many race officials actually run because if they do, they would have appreciated the fact that having sufficient water and fluids served at the designated stations are most helpful.

3. Traffic control

Whilst we don't expect all roads to be closed for us (in this country anyway), it is reasonable to expect proper diversion of traffic at junctions, turn-offs and flyover entries/exits. Traffic marshalls should be positioned a sufficient distance away from the entry and exit points. Traffic cones should also be placed to dissuade drivers from getting too close to the runners at narrow points of the roads.

Providing sufficient directions such as directional signages for runners on the roads will prevent confusion. Some runners, especially out-of-towners, are actually unfamiliar with the course.

4. Timeliness

It's becoming a sickening trend of certain race organizers to delay the start time and prize giving, sometimes more than an hour. After running, we runners only need about 45 minutes tops to catch up with our fellow friends. Some of us have to return to our families waiting at home. If 45 minutes is insufficient to compile the winner list, then the set of officials should be re-trained.

5. Get the position correct

Horror stories abound on wrong classification of winners. 2nd placed finisher becomes non-placing. If this goes on, we should start addressing the officials by the wrong names.

Because of these mismanagement, I've personally stopped participating in many "races". Not only I spare myself from angst, my Sundays can be devoted to doing my long runs.

The journey continues...

Jamie Pang
Aug 16th, 2004



