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**JPMORGANCHASE CORPORATE CHALLENGE** by Jamie Pang  
The author experienced for the first time a top-class race...

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### **A Rare Find**

I was alerted of this race by my colleague, Cheong who spotted the feature in my company's employee website in Singapore. It's rare to find a 5.6K road race in these parts of the world. In the US, 3-milers (the equivalent of 5.6K) are much more common. Having run 10, 21 and 42Ks, this was going to be something new to me and I was sufficiently excited to jump right in.

### **The Race**

The concept of this race is different. It's run in many countries across the world where companies compete against each other on an individual and team basis. Though "corporate" in nature, this race has its fair share of really fast runners. It's common to find sub 20-min timings for the US editions. The lure of the race? Tickets to participate in the New York leg for the winning individual and team. For more info, check out the [official race site](#).

### **The Distance**

Shorter distances are trickier to handle as one's body needs to function more at an anaerobic mode than would in a marathon. The distance may be shorter but the pain and stress the body experiences are also severe. Having run a longer distance does not mean it's easier to run a race this short and fast.

### **Race Day**

We left KL at 10am and took turns at the wheel. We decided to enter Singapore via the 2nd link to avoid congestion. With the exception of a slight delay at the Singapore Customs (we needed to purchase the Cash Card for driving in) we arrived safely. After circling some street blocks a few times we located [Suntec Mall](#), promptly parked and went for lunch.

### **Lunch**

We wanted something fast and yet a little filling as we've had nothing since breakfast. In the end Burger King won the toss against McD's. Everything was gulped down and by 3:30pm we were staring at empty food wrappers. In hindsight, it was a wrong choice of food but more on this later. After exchanging some SMSes, we were to meet up with Jessie (our Singapore liaison) at 4:45pm to collect our T-Shirts and bibs. After downing another banana and changing into our running attire, we then made our way to the Padang. A piece of good news was that Cheong's cousin would be available as cameraman and as the "beast of burden".

### **The Walk to The Padang**

The only distinct memory I had while walking to the field was the heat. It was scorching hot and I won't be surprised if the temperature had been in the regions of 34C. It was going to be a tough one that day. Some heat-induced delirium made us perform some silly acts involving the [Merlion](#). Check the photo album.

### **The Padang**

The scene at The Padang was like a large Bedouin encampment. Rows and rows of fan-equipped tents were there to house runners. The streets were lined with banner boards, buntings, sound systems and on stage was an MC announcing the latest updates. Two long rows of porta-potties stood at the ready to accept "depositors". The entire setup looked professionally done.

### **Jessie**

We finally met up with Jessie at the large Citigroup tent. Jessie (who is from KL) is every bit the friendly and accomodating person we've got to know through email. She comes equipped with a very nice smile too. After a quick introduction and banter we put on our T-Shirts and got out of her way. She and the other committee members were busy attending to the registration and other last minute to-dos.

Left to ourselves, we took the opportunity to scout the area. The Citigroup tent was well stocked. On one end was a table with buffet-styled chafing dishes and 2 foam boxes full of chilled drinks. CitiClub Singapore had certainly done a very good job!

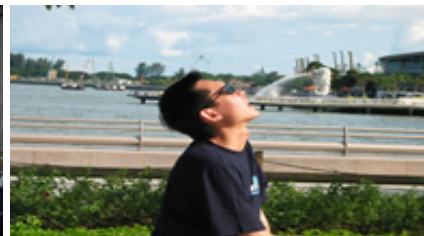
Elsewhere, the other tents were quickly filling up with participants, the PriceWaterhouse Coopers being the most populous of the lot. The entire PWC office must've had time off. In fact a total of 6,744 participants from 259 companies will be toeing the starting line! With 30 minutes to go, Jessie asked if it was OK for me to lead the stretching which I obliged. Anything for this woman.



Citigroup Team Photo



The trio with the club committee



Hydration is key!

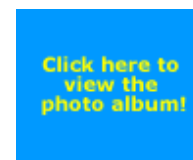
**(Click to enlarge)**

### Start

Before long, it was time to head for the starting line. But alas, the crowd had already filled the front spots extending 70 metres deep from the start line. To the left and right of the runaway were supporters, photographers and thousands of runners. There goes my fast takeoff! In fact at over 6,700, the Singapore JPMCCC set a new record as the [largest race debut](#) in the JPMCCC series.

After some token speeches, during which the Information Minister was clapped off the mike (for delivering an overly long speech!), and a shortened lion dance, the air horn sounded and we were off!

Or so we thought!



I had to walk through many runners/walkers before managing to break into a jog. And further more before managing a run, and still further before managing to stride! In total I must've wasted about 200 metres. A girl on my far left fell in the stampede and was immediately helped by the other runners.

Our side of the road was closed off for the runenrs and therefore caused an after-office traffic jam on the other side. As this was a short race, I tried focusing on sustaining the hard effort rather than monitoring the watch too closely. As it turned out, my 2K time was good - 9:53, a sub-5 minutes pace. Then I arrived at the water station (yes, there was a water station!), picked up a bottle of Newater and went on.

It was getting very humid and the T-Shirt was not helping. Even though [the course](#) (jpg file - 79K) was flat and scenic, running next to the sea added to the humidity. Pass the halfway mark, my pace dropped dramatically to the sixes. The turkey burger I had earlier seemed to be acting up also, contributing to the feeling of bloatedness. 1/3 of the runners I overtook earlier began passing me. Time to dig in and hang on.

I saw a runner on the ground. He looked in a bad shape and I found out later that he fell and cut himself up terribly. Again, there were plenty of helpers in the form of fellow runners. A little up ahead was the "durian" - [The Esplanade](#). I upped the tempo a bit and hit the final straight. Many runners and supporters lined the street here. The cheers were

loud and like during the [Singapore Marathon](#), the MC was calling out some runners' names. I crossed the line in 31:38, a bad time.

### **The Spread**

Finishers were advised to keep moving and I picked up 2 bottles of water, 1 chilled red apple and 1 banana (they had boxes of the fruits!) and walked on to claim my goodie bag. A few minutes later, after reporting my finishing time to the team coordinator, it was time to rest on the grass and do some people watching. Cheong came in with a good time and followed by CS. We then hit the food table but found that we were more thirsty than hungry.

### **Goodbye and till December!**

It was difficult but we had to leave if we wanted to get home by 3am. Having said our extended goodbyes to Jessie and her team, the four of us (including Cheong's cousin) walked back to the car. It started to rain heavily along the way. We stopped over for the [Changi Village](#) Nasi Lemak before dropping off Cheong's cousin in Woodlands.

A short drive later we reached the Customs at the Causeway. There was a jam even at 10:30pm at the Malaysian Customs but thankfully we were cleared quickly. By the time I reached home, showered and ready to hit the sack it was sharp 4am.

The day had been one great experience. I drove on the streets of Singapore for the first time, met some friendly folks, and had the opportunity to savour another great event in Singapore. I'll be back in Singapore for the marathon again this December and hopefully there'll be another chance to return for the JPMCCC next year.

### **Distance: Split / Lap**

2K - 9:53 / 9:53

Water station - 4:35 / 14:29

4K - 6:44 / 21:13

5K - 6:06 / 27:20

0.6K - 4:17 / 31:38

*Jamie Pang*

*Apr 29th, 2004*