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[PUTRAJAYA HALF MARATHON RACE REPORT](#) by Jamie Pang

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Nearly Didn't Make It

Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes...ok, not. 3 days prior to race day, I'd given up on getting to the race. I was feeling bad enough to give away my race bib. But somehow the fever abated and my body recovered enough to allow the thought of toeing the starting line creep in. Luckily there were plenty of spare numbers and I was able to get back my bib from Ronnie.

This was going to be a large event - celebrating the satellite city's 10th Anniversary as well as a proving ground for the ambitious organizers to stage their first full marathon in 2006. Putrajaya's landscape while spectacular is also quite barren at the same time. Devoid of shade, runners will have to battle the heat and rolling terrain. Visions of bleached skeletons laying on the scorching desert sands briefly crossed my mind.

Readiness & Race Morning

I wasn't at all. If you'd force me for a measurement, I'd say I was 40% prepared. I laid off running for about a week due to illness and whatever running I managed to put in before that was limited to a couple of 5Ks. If you call that training, you must be new to the game. Why I turned up was simply not to miss the experience of running this difficult race. Even finishing was going to be an achievement for me but since I was running, might as well give my best.

As agreed, I picked up Kien Mau, an elite runner working/studying in Singapore and took a 20-minute drive to Putrajaya. I was interested to find out how the K4 would fare in a slow burning race instead of a forced 10K race pace but little did I realize that it was nearly too much for me to handle. Read on!

We got to the car park pretty early. Parked and prepped ourselves up. Walking to the starting point, I was dismayed to find out that I've parked a little too far away as there were plenty of parking spots nearer the staging area. Like in the recent Klang race, one of the first friends I bumped into was [Justin](#), followed by CM. And then many many more including SH, Woofy aka Ervinna and [Karen](#).



Draco, Cheong, The-One-Who'll-Be-Suffering, [Ronnie](#)



The-One-Who'll-Be-Suffering, Phyllis, Rowen



Draco, Cheong, The-One-Who'll-Be-Suffering, Tey



Trying to avoid Tey shooting the PACM group

First and Second Quarter

After the customary photo sessions, we we're suddenly let off. I was running at a steady clip and after the first few markers, noted that my pace was accurately 5:30 as intended. I was running close to CM, Alden, Uncle Hooi, and Kelvin. The crowd was thick and fast this morning. I knew I couldn't sustain that kind of pace throughout the distance especially with the lack of shade and presence of so many climbs. What with my lack of fitness. In football, the coach could field a half fit player for some minutes, even 3/4 of the game but in a footrace, there's no such thing as doing it for a portion. You just have to stick through it for the whole distance. So there I was running considerably well and in sight of many familiar faces, even clear of Kelvin and Alden for the first 4K. I spotted Kien Mau having a go at the Indians on the other side of the road. This chap is damn fast. His position would not change for his entire 10K race. The second quarter was pretty much the same and just before the 10K mark, my split was 55 odd minutes, which was good.

Third Quarter

My pace thus far has been dictated by feeling. If I felt good at this pace, I'd try sticking to it for as long as I can. The sun was already long up. The climb up the PICC (Putrajaya International Convention Centre) was despatched using a fresh pair of legs but now it's a different battle. My pace had slowed to a 6-minute pace. Not too bad. The crowd was still large around me. Some climbs were tough, but managed to overcome them with no particular problem.

Final Quarter

This was when everything collapsed. the sun was beating down our backs. Many runners had slowed down but not many walked. I think generally runners in the country have improved and it's getting quite competitive regardless of race distance. My pace had dropped to nearly 6:30. The Powergel didn't help. It's not about that then. It's all about the training - which I didn't have on top of my illness. It was going to be tight to finish under 2 hours. Nearly all my friends had passed me, even Draco had crept up alongside. Soon, I had to walk.

[Rohaizad](#) accompanied me for awhile and soon left. The sun was getting really hot and there was still 2 long climbs to contend with. Wan, the PACM ex-President and Francis Toh the present VP, passed me. That would give you an idea of how slow I was going. But still this wasn't a football game where you can be substituted. You've got to finish the game, get home and reflect on the humbling experience and try to glean some positives out of it.

Singapore Redux

The last 3K saw me surging a bit but it was already too late to catch Wan and Francis. The heat reminded me of Singapore, a statement agreed by many after the race. Never had I felt so tortured in completing a Half before. It





hearkens back to my school day debut of the Penang Bridge Run in the '80s. As I was walking back to the car with Kien Mau (who finished a fantastic 7th in an ultra competitive 10K field), I cheered Cheong coming in. My lower legs were tight and my left knee pretty sore - this always happens when I suddenly run longer in a sudden, unsurprisingly.

End Game

After chit-chatting with Ronnie, CM and Penguins 2 and 3, I called it a day and drove back home. After downing plenty of fluids, showering, I vacuumed the home, washed some clothes, started the washing machine, drank some minestrone soup, drank some more fluids, ate friend rice for lunch, taught my son his alphabets, read the papers before catching an afternoon nap. After waking up, I washed the car, watered the plants and took the family out to Carrefour Subang Jaya where I sat near the Starbucks downloading these photos that you're seeing from Tey. It's 11:20pm now and my son is asleep on the sofa, my wife is in bed and I think I'll call it a day. I'll reflect further tomorrow. What a day.

Course Features: Flat, wide avenues, undulating and challenging climbs, unshaded throughout, late start time

Plus Points: Wide open roads, well coordinated traffic, sufficient drinks (isos and plain H2O), the fire department's water sprays, transportation ferrying runners from KL and PJ, plenty of finishers' medals

Negatives: Late start time, no shade, mist fans at the finishing chute should be directed at those sitting or standing post-race and not at the incoming runners who won't reap this benefit this late.

Race reports galore!

[BoSe](#) | [Ronnie](#) | [Rohaizad](#) | [Karen](#) | [Runwitme](#) | [Tey](#) | [Mystery Man](#) | [John](#) | Justin (coming) | Cheong (coming) | [Kenny](#)

Jamie Pang

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