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**GREAT EASTERN PACM 30K RACE REPORT** by Jamie Pang

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### Next To No Training

This race came 2 weeks after I officially kicked off my KL Marathon training. Of the 2 weeks, only the 1st was worth any mention. The 2nd week degenerated into a daily battle with work. That seemed to be the distressing trend of things lately. I only managed only 2 tempo sessions in the final days leading to this highly anticipated race. As it turned out, the reduced running did me some good. On race eve, I lend my help for a short while with the setup of the railings and A-boards. You could feel the energy as things were taking shape for the next morning. When we got home (my son played at the playground while I was helping out), we had a quick dinner at the Giant foodcourt while he played some more. At 10:30pm he still refused to go to bed while my wife and I were already pooped. In the end he and I fell asleep in the hall. By the time I woke up and carried him upstairs, it was already close to midnight. How to race well in a few hours' time when I can't even get my sleep?

### Just Do It *lah*

Woke up at 4:15 feeling groggy. After some stumbling around, I grabbed my gear bag (already readied the night before) and headed downstairs for some drinks and food. I downed half a cup of joe (I really needed a jolt of java), 1 Powerbar, 1 cereal bar and a bottle of electrolytes. I spent the entire journey wondering how I was going to survive the torturous route and distance. I kept reassuring myself that even though I felt not confident, I was to treat this run as training and with the endorphins flowing, I'd definitely feel better after it.

### First 10

I made my way to the starting area to deposit my bag and along the way I saw the usual running friends. The site was well laid out. Fantastic atmosphere with good crowd. We spent about 15 minutes bantering inside the starting pen and when the gun went off, there were loud cheers. Before even 100 meters, we had to climb a 500 meter slope. I went quite slow and [Dinesh](#) and [Rohaizad](#) (both debuting in the 30K distance as part of their KL Marathon preps) were running close by. Lawrence were slightly in front as were Kelvin and Alden. Even though the crowd were thick at this stage, I was generally running at my own pace on my own terms.

There wasn't much happening except that at the Bukit Tunku uphill, someone kicked into one of the small domed road reflector and tumbled into a heap. He got up pretty soon, with nary a scratch. Just before the left turn up the infamous Double Hill (a misnomer as there are actually more than 2 climbs there!), Coach Chan was standing on the roadside with his bike reading out the pace to one of his charges running next to me. I learnt that I was on a 6:10 pace, which was faster than my marathon pace. I started overtaking many runners throughout these series of climbs even though I didn't intend to. My pace was still even until the top of the hill and I started to pick it up coasting down. I dropped more runners and fell into a "battle" with 2 others. I wasn't really bothered and found myself back at the Tugu traffic lights in 1:11. Uncle Sonny joked to me that I should lead the group of runners behind me to Hartamas. He said it with a wink which led me to think that he was implying that those runners didn't know what's in store for them - more hills!

### Hartamas - 10 To Go

The cheer team had woken up at the Tugu junction and gave us some very rousing cheers. That in a way woke me up too that perhaps there could be a race in these legs after all. I rode the downhill momentum to the Central Bank turnoff where I waved at Tony (Penguin-3) who was the traffic marshal in charge there. I overtook more runners all the way to the IRB office. Here I've to record my amazement at the efficiency of the club volunteers and the police who coordinated this tricky crossing remarkably. Soon enough I caught up with Alden and Kelvin and held the lead until the Petronas station. I was on a roll and I detected only a slight tightness in the legs. Many faster runners were returning the other side, including the 20K racers. I would eventually catch up with quite a few slower 20K runners. Kelvin, Kevin, Alden and I walked for a couple of seconds while drinking at the Hartamas water stop, joking about a certain runner who was bent on gaining on us. Not wanting that to happen, we resumed running!

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### 20K Race Reports

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Picking up the pace nearing the 20K mark (courtesy of [Runwitme](#))

The return was always easier and I was conscious - I was always mindful on my breathing and body form - that I was surprisingly able to hammer the pace. I was definitely close to a 6-flat pace. I also made sure I repeated my mantra to stay loose and relaxed. It helped a lot. Despite the good feeling, I was a bit apprehensive that I'd stall soon. It just isn't possible that I was running so well and being ahead of many familiar faces and that doubt came up intermittently after the halfway mark. I reminded myself a couple of times that [Terence](#) (who is fighting a brain tumor) would've given anything just to be here, so I shouldn't be a wuss and just race as hard as I can, if not for anything else, then for Terence. Only when we suffer can we learn to appreciate Life!

But the expected crash didn't come. At the IRB crossing, [Ben](#) came from behind and surprised me a bit. I hadn't seen him but with him running next to me, it was a little disconcerting which meant that I had to up the ante to lead or keep up. But again I found myself outpacing a faster runner. It must be the hills or early pace that got them. I then caught Kenny Choo just before the final water station. He'd cramped and admitted he went too fast too soon (he was chasing the indomitable Penguin-2).

### Home Run!

With 3K to go, I really let loose. For the first time, I did some calculation on the timing. I had to run even 5-minute pace to break 3 hours. Quite difficult as there's a 1K gradual climb towards the Lake Gardens. I cast aside those thoughts and just focus on the running form and breathing. Gave Julian a grunt (sorry fella, I had no breath left!) on the way to the finish line. I kicked and kicked passing a few more runners to the finish and suddenly thought of giving a good pose at the finish line for the cameramen. My timing was 3:02.27. It was such a rush.



Aiya, the bloke in front spoilt a perfect photo (courtesy of [Runwitme](#))

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### What Happened?

I really do not know. Things just clicked though I must say that my early pacing saved me. The rest and the couple of tempos perhaps perked up the legs for the tough race. I've always liked the Powerbar Endurance drink and I think the sufficient stations provided me with ample hydration opportunities. When I reached home, I immediately (yup even before showering!) got straight down to household chores - vacuuming and mopping the upstairs while the wife tackled the ground floor. It's so great to be alive and we need to be constantly reminded.

Next up, the KL Marathon!

