

New Balance Pacesetters 15K 2006 Race Report

I didn't bother registering for this race. For followers of my blog, they know enough that I'm not even running more than 15K a week. A typical week will see me do 2 or 3 runs of about 5K each followed by a Saturday jaunt with the Beginner's group. With the 15K being a proven PIA, in terms of route toughness, I typically will not run it without a solid training. No amount of fantastic organization will convince me – uh uh!

But somehow, it found a way back to me. CS Wong pulled out and I inherited his Veteran bib. Oh, what the heck, argue with fate? As evidence of race preparedness, I got out of the house a little late, arrived at the already crowded and found out that I didn't bring my socks. So I laced my Glycerins up tight to prevent any rogue pebble from entering it. I felt that the arch section was rubbing a little but shrug it off. The fun part about returning to the events is meeting and catching up with the friends. Met all the regulars – many of whom have also been bogged down with work.

The event drawn nearly 1,500 runners – a record for this very niche and popular event. Many expats too turned up including the Chilean Ambassador I heard. The registration was a little unusual. Officials were deployed to distribute the registration ribbons and that caused some confusion initially but it soon worked out. While limbering up, caught up with Kelvin, [Dinesh](#), [Choi](#), [Newton](#) and [Ben](#). Also spotted Jessica and [Karen](#). I told Newton that I shall be taking it easy and was just going to go with the flow. I noted my calmness. I was totally devoid of anxiety nor dread. I didn't even think of the tough route. The sense of equanimity that I had, in retrospect was surprising.

The first couple of Ks were very very enjoyable. Didn't really feel the hills and



Newton and I spotted a couple of potential pacers. The Double Hill section didn't pose any extra difficulty and though I didn't expect my good form to last, I didn't particularly pay attention to my pace. Just go with the flow and enjoy the cool weather and sights. It was great to see many of my friends taking up the volunteer duties, good of them to give back to the sport. Both my arches had already blistered badly but I just ignored those discomforts.

At about the 7th K, I ran into Cheong. He had done very well to have kept up the fast initial pace. We ran together until just before the government building after I went

ahead. I was feeling good so I opened up the pace a little. [The Running Couple](#) cheered me and I joked whether they can "tutup satu mata" (close one eye) so that I can just take the detour back to the starting line. This was in obvious reference to one high profile fiasco a Member of Parliament got himself into. The downhill stretch got me pushing the pace and the momentum took me up the second round of Kenny Hills.



Fooling around as a result of Runner's High

Nothing untoward happened and I was able to keep the pace until the final 3K. The steep climb up the Sultan of Selangor's Palace got to me a bit but Tey (who hitherto been running to and fro taking photos of runners) told me that Kenneth was just about 100m up ahead. So I decided to keep at it, hoping that I could reel him in – after all he didn't seem to be picking up speed. Another K passed and I still didn't make that much ground. Finally I arrived at the National Monument and decided to give it everything I got.

With 400m to go, it comes down to a pure guts race>>>



Chase the KNN!



[Der_Pacemakers](#)

I ran past Ching Tai (who will be running the 86.7K [Comrades Marathon](#)) and Jackie and didn't let up. Kenneth was just 50m ahead but I was running out of yards to catch him. Just before the finish line Wan announced my arrival over the PA and Kenneth must have got wind that I was on his tail and increased his pace. I move to the right lane and passed another 4 runners but ended just a couple of steps behind him in 1:24.56. Having covered the last K in 5 minutes flat, I was simply euphoric. Not only my legs felt fresh, I was still able to duke it out with the other runners the second part of the race. I've no complains at all. There may be a discovery and a learning for me here.



[KNN with his signature greeting to PM1](#)

I discovered that I've totally over-estimated my loss of fitness. I may have lost the endurance and speed but the loss wasn't up to the point that I need to beat myself

over it. I may even be able to do a sub-2 half marathon. A marathon will be different, no doubt. The other thing is that if I enjoy myself, and I mean *really* enjoy the occasion, the course of the run will take care of itself. Perhaps not monitoring the pace so much is a good thing. Just run a conservative first half, use my experience and go with the flow.



With Shahrom, the country's top duathlete who ran debut 3:05 marathon last year

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