



KL International Marathon (Half Marathon Category) Report - Mar 18th 2007

This is not a race

Yup, you read that right. I didn't approach this as a race but merely a stepping stone towards my full rehabilitation as a marathoner. This morning's run was to allow me to gauge if my training has been in the right direction and also as a proving ground.

Having laid out my gear, including breakfast the night before, I was out the door pretty quickly. Breakfast was a puff pastry with half a cup of hot Milo. In the 3 Nike bottles were some concoction (nothing illegal, I assure you) in varying degrees of dilution. I don't concoct things on race day so this confirms that the morning run was part of my training for the big one. I also opted not to wear the Forsters after testing it out on a tempo run yesterday. I felt that my condition had not reached the level where I can do away with added cushioning and support. I carried a pack of GU gel and a pack of Agel.

Due to the road closures, I was diverted off the Seremban Highway to the Taman Desa link. And I saw the 2 lead packs on the other side of the road! Very thrilling. And my heartbeat went up a notch.

Long walk to the Dataran

Not knowing where else to park, I decided on Bukit Aman. I promptly changed and together with Lawrence, we walked to Dataran with a few more runners. The morning air was absolutely still and warm, a contrast to yesterday's wet morning. At the field, I spotted many friends,



Pacemakers or otherwise and had lots of photos taken. I met more people including Yan whom I've not seen at the KLCC Park in a long time. She looked really great, slimmer and fit. She also seemed to have more ear studs now. Bottom line, she looked good. Jessica too popped up beside me.

My run plan was to start with a 6-minute pace until the 10-K mark and run according to my condition from thereon. I've yet to hit 20K for my long runs, something I'll be doing from this week onwards as my training program is upped a couple of

notches. Therefore my condition beyond 15K was really a mystery to me. The goal of today's run was to learn to lock in the pace over the distance, see how far I can sustain the pace and conditions and certain stretches of undulation, test my mental condition, maintain pace discipline and at the end of all that, gauge the progress of my training.

Off we go! The first 10

Of course everyone went off in a huff. I ambled along and chatted briefly with Tony but he too took off. Then it was me alone, which was fine. I took a sip of Endurox from my handheld bottle (see this is really a training run, I carried so many things!), and skipped the first few refreshment stations. I passed 5K in 29:51. At the Taman Desa link, I was passed by Khoo Yit Kiat who told me he got to the start 10 minutes late was just doing a relaxing run. I urge him to go ahead as I was only on a 6-minute pace. He then ran a little bit off in front. At the climbs,



my mantra was "maintain cadence" and it served me pretty well as I cleared all the climbs pretty strongly.

As I was turning into the Seremban Highway, I ran into Jessica. We paced each other until the water station just after the first timing mat. I crossed the mat a few seconds after 1 hour. That meant I was at 6-minute pace on the dot, a thought which uplifted me. From here it was a touch-and-go affair. How well would I be able to sustain the pace? How much further before I hit the wall? Last Sunday's tough tunnel run ([race report](#)) put some confidence in me but I've always hit some really bad patches after the 15K.

Next 10

At the water station just after the first mat, I made a clean grab of a cup and ran on. In the process, I unintentionally dropped Jessica (we had planned to pace together) but she caught up just as I neared [Kenneth](#) and Khoo who were together, at the Jalan Istana stretch. Since Jessica now have another pacer, I decided to up the tempo a tad and made a break up the ramp towards Dewan Bahasa and from then on, I was again running alone. [Sim](#) who was running the 10K blasted past me just about then. I clocked a sub-6 pace in the 1K stretch from the Dewan Bahasa traffic lights to the Time Square traffic lights and still felt very much in control. After clearing the Amoda and Marriot stretch of road, I slowed down a bit but still maintained cadence heading up Jalan Bukit Bintang towards the Regent Hotel.

The cops were doing a fine job with traffic control and a few of them even cheered us on. I passed a few Nike Plus (read [my report here](#)) runners at Jalan Sultan Ismail and had a burst of energy. I supposed the concoction I'd been sipping worked. Just then, I saw a familiar person in front - [Cheong](#)! He was doing his debut marathon and was slowly ambling along. As I passed him, I turned around and gave him 2 thumbs up! He would eventually complete his race under 6 hours - excellent job friend!

I then passed Narumol and [Tey](#) just after The Sheraton and then Lee from Klang and DK at TAR Road. The end was in sight but before finishing, we half marathoners had to make another loop around the Sogo Departmental Store. That would be approximately 2K. An interesting fact was I'd not look at my watch after the 10K mark. This would eventually allow me to evaluate how close to target pace I'd done without adjustment to the timing on my watch. So I didn't know how close or far I'd been to finishing the run under 2 hours. At the beginning of the loop I was surprised to see [Rohaizad](#) who obviously had made it back on time from his business trip. As I rejoined TAR Road for the final push, I passed Lai who was struggling with a foot injury.

I covered the last hundred meters strongly and then only looked at the clock - 2:02.09 (chip time 2:01.09). I was ecstatic. This had to be my fastest 21K in recent times. As I walked around after the race chatting up friends, I didn't feel wipe out. I felt I could have pushed a little more but that was unnecessary, given my objectives. 21K has always been my weak distance. It's not an easy distance to cover well as one has to have endurance, speed and power when deciding to put in surges. It's a distance where one can strategize as oppose to the 10K where it's usually all out speed. Having struggled with the half marathon in the past races (completed them between 2:08 to 2:12), I've utmost respect for those who cross the finish line under 2 hours.

I came away glad and will now be able to tweak my program accordingly. Congrats are in order for Chen, Kenny and Ah Beh who PR'd! There were also a few runners who called out to me but whom I'd absolutely no idea who they were. If you're one of them, I hope we can be properly introduced in the near future and share some running stories!



Post-race analyses

Splits: 5K - 29:51 | 10K - 1:00:52 | 21K - 2:01.09

Average pace: 5:46 (I dropped 4 secs per K from last week's tunnel run). Extrapolate the drop over 42K, I'd still probably PR for the marathon (a 4:10 perhaps), but that's not what my goal is. Over the next month, I need to build my fitness to a level where I can sustain between 5:40 to 5:45 pace over 25K. Much work needs to be done.

What didn't work

- The NB low cut socks didn't cut it with the 2120. Though not uncomfortable, they're weren't really comfortable. Shall try out the Kayano socks which I've kept for so long.
- The organizers have much to do to improve the registration and collection process

What worked

- The Nike belt worked fine. The drinks too.
- The 2120 worked well. It was supportive enough yet responsive when I needed it
- Good work by the cops, traffic control was excellent. I hope it was too for the marathon route.
- Good job by the organizers to separate the categories at the finishing



With Wan, Ivy, Kim and a familiar fellow runner (I forgot his name!)



With Kenneth, Lawrence, Kenny (who sub-4'd, hence my hand sign), Chin and Zul



With the sub-4 boy, Kenny.



That's all folks! See you at the next race!