

Great Barrier Reef Marathon Festival, Cairns to Port Douglas Ultra Marathon, 12 November 2011.

Race Report by race director – Lorraine Lawson

Photographs by Lorraine Lawson, Bec Tucker and Gareth Smith

A brilliant full moon greeted 41 competitors gathering from 4.30am in the James Cook University car park in Cairns for the 74km Cairns to Port Douglas Ultra Trail Marathon, one of the events of the Great Barrier Reef Marathon Festival, held on 12 November 2011.

At least 16 of the 41 competitors were locals, including world ultraman champion Mike Le Roux and eight Cairns Road Runners. Others came from all over Australia and there were also a couple of international runners, all attracted by the appeal of running along trails in the World Heritage National Parks of Far North Queensland, Australia.

Race director, and Cairns Road Runners president Lorraine Lawson, knew how gruelling the course would be, as she had run a 64km race along the same route two months earlier. She was to keep a keen eye on competitors along the way as conditions this time of the year can become dangerously hot for runners. Lorraine and her trusty volunteers ticked off competitor numbers and instructed runners on where to put their gear for the three drop stations along the way before sending them for a last visit to a 'real' toilet – courtesy of JCU. The race started just after first light at 5.20am.



The course was well marked and runners welcomed the water stations provided every 5 kilometres. The three manned checkpoints provided support to the runners along their quest to complete 74km. The course was broken up in to five distinct 'phases' – starting with a seriously steep 2km incline up a dirt road behind the university – part of the Smithfield Conservation Park. This gave way to a single track leading up to Saddle Mountain Weather Station. If runners thought the first two kilometres were steep, they were shocked by the next two! With the worst section of the race over within 4km, the runners helped themselves to a drink, under the watchful eye of the St John's Ambulance officers, Peter Carnsew and Pam, before heading down the road to the first manned checkpoint at 10km. Mike Le Roux passed through this section at approximately 6.15am, with the closest rivals 5 minutes behind him. Runners continued to arrive, in high spirits, for the next hour.



After a short run through the "Top of the Range" estate in Kuranda, runners hit Black Mountain Road, a dirt road used by forestry trucks and locals commuting between the Tablelands and Julatten. This second section is 27km of slightly undulating terrain, with a four kilometre steady climb at the start of it. Dotted with water stations, runners could enjoy the freedom of participating in an event where they felt like they were the only ones out there! Recent rains had kept the dirt road less dusty, although there was minimal traffic at this time of the morning.



Mike Le Roux reached the Quaid Road checkpoint (37km into the race) three hours into the race, widening the gap between himself and the next two competitors - Stephen Jackson and Mathew Davis, by 20 minutes. The three top women (Sarah Warren, Julie Sager and Michelle Edwards) who ended up coming 1st, 2nd and 3rd overall in the women's race, were only 35 minutes behind Mike Le Roux at this checkpoint. The rest of the field streamed in steadily and full of smiles over the next three hours. Unfortunately three competitors had dropped out of the race by this stage. Due to a fall along Black Mountain Road, competitor Karen Chan injured her elbow and knee to the extent that she received three stitches on the elbow at a medical centre in Cairns. She was later taken to the finish line to meet the other runners coming in. A big thank you must be extended to volunteers Marjo Simpson and Chrissy Radcliffe who did the 'looking after'. Marlene Prentice ended up getting a lift to the next checkpoint and decided to run down the Bump Track to the finish, to wait for husband, Glenn, who was also running the race. Paul Weatherby ended up with a lift back into Port thanks to a supporter, Ivan Whittle. Checkpoint marshals at Quaid Road, John Musgrove, Tina and Ellie Freeman, kept a keen eye on the runners, checking they'd collected their compression bandage and whistle for the next section - the Twin Bridges Track. Marshal, Karen Russo directed runners on to this section of the course, a kilometre further up the road.



Arguably the most demanding trail running section, the 18km Twin Bridges track, is sealed on both ends by gates to prevent vehicle access. Apart from the odd mountain biker, runners had the track all to themselves. It took considerable concentration as the terrain is rough underfoot with plenty of stones, leaves, fallen branches and the notorious 'wait-a-while' vines to annoy tired runners. They were rewarded with the sight of the first of the Twin Bridges, ten kilometres into the track; the shallow creek crossing producing wet feet in true FNQ style! The second creek crossing hardly warrants a mention, but runners may have noticed the huge trees dragged out of the way by the volunteers' four-wheel drives the week prior, opening the track for the runners to get through. No doubt there were a few sighs of relief when competitors spotted the second gate, leading back onto Black Mountain Road - with only a two kilometre jog to the next checkpoint, and cut off point, the "Top of the Bump".



Mike Le Roux increased his lead yet again, and reached the top of the Bump at 10.15am - 5 hours into the race. Stephen Jackson had moved into second place (now a 1/2 hour behind Mike), and maintained this position comfortably to the end. Mathew Davis however, pulled out of the race at

this point due to dehydration. Sarah Warren and Julie Sager were now in 3rd and 4th positions, followed by Cairns Road Runners member and upcoming Ultra runner, Keith Fearon. The other runners came through, surprisingly still in high spirits and full of smiles after 57km, over the next four hours! Happiest were probably the five runners at the back – about 40 minutes behind the others. Glenn Prentice, Warren Broad, Tegwen Howell, David Elms and Julia Bodonyi all made it to the top of the Bump by 2.00pm, 15 minutes before the official cut off. Firm friends by now, they provided great support to each other along the last section into Port. Marco Kiefer and Chika Musa attended to the runners at this checkpoint, offering them icy cold water, chocolate cake, fruit and of course Christine's Healthy Slice (recipe in the Cairns Road Runners October Newsletter) before they set off along the 6km Bump Track heading back down to the coast.



The last section into Port led runners along bitumen, dirt, grass and beach terrain! It took the runners between 1¾ - 3¼ hours to complete the 11 kilometres, indicating how tired they were at this stage! The 4km stretch along Four Mile beach led into the finish along the Port Douglas esplanade. Simon Dobbs pulled out along this section, which meant of the 41 starters, 36 completed the 74km Ultra. Overall winners were 1st Mike Le Roux (6.45.02); 2nd Stephen Jackson (7.16.40); 3rd (and first female home) Sarah Warren (7.54.26). Category winners were Taras Jakubovsky (M 19-29); Hana Roubalikova (F 19-29); Mike Le Roux (M 30-39); Sarah Warren (F 30-39); Yot Noopetch (M 40-49); Julie Sager (F 40-49) and Larry Lawson (M 50-59). Larry was also the person responsible for setting the course. Runners enjoyed the attention at the end of the race, with plenty of support from family and friends in awe of their loved-ones' achievement.



Currently runners are extremely motivated and can hardly wait for the next Ultra along this course – which will be at the end of August 2012. (The 74km Ultra will not be on next year, as the Solar Eclipse marathon is set for that date). Good luck to Teri Orr and Russell Singleton who are heading off to do an Ultra at Mount Kilimanjaro, and Glenn and Marlene Prentice who will compete in the Marathon des Sables in Morocco in April. For others who can't wait until August and those who are yet to test their endurance on an Ultra, runners in the region will be treated to a "Three Marathons in Three Days" in July, followed by a couple of weeks later by the Mt Haig Trail Marathon, a tough 45km loop on dirt tracks at Tinaroo Dam.

If not before, we hope to see all of you back for the Eclipse Marathon on 14 November 2012!

Our volunteers are the best! Gareth Smith, Marco Kiefer, John Musgrove and Tina & Ellie Freeman, Christine Bell, Mike Kennedy, Linda Adams, Chrissy Ratcliffe, Marjo Simpson, Karen Russo, Rosie Omundsen and the marshals at the start Valerie Apps, Bec Tucker, Steve Bailey and Marco Kiefer. Also Helen Kinnane, John and Isabelle Heenan, John Vaughan, Bridget Fearon, Linda Adams, Rosie and Martin Ball (at PORT side). Thanks everyone!

Results

Position	Race #	First Name	Surname	Category	Category Placing	Time (h.m) at 36km	Time (h.m) at 57km	FINISH Time (h.m.s)
1	10	Mike	Le Roux	M 30-39	1	3.01	5.00	6.45.02
2	12	Stephen	Jackson	M 30-39	2	3.19	5.26	7.16.40
3	43	Sarah	Warren	F 30-39	1	3.36	5.58	7.54.26
4	40	Julie	Sager	F 40-49	1	3.36	6.00	7.59.04
5	28	Petr	Uhlik	M 30-39	3	3.41	6.08	8.06.57
6	30	Michelle	Edwards	F 30-39	2	3.36	6.09	8.13.10
7	42	Keith	Fearon	M 30-39	4	3.38	6.06	8.22.58
8	49	Yot	Noopetch	M 40-49	1	3.47	6.27	8.44.42
9	50	Taras	Jakubovsky	M 19-29	1	3.53	6.47	8.44.51
10	48	Mark	Adsett	M 19-29	2	3.38	6.26	9.04.59
11	46	Corinne	Smith	F 40-49	2	3.44	6.41	9.12.38
12	39	Joseph	McCann	M 19-29	3	4.02	6.57	9.18.38
13	33	Jonas	Prein	M 19-29	4	4.08	7.09	9.19.53
14	27	Larry	Lawson	M 50-59	1	4.07	7.02	9.23.36
15	55	Hana	Roubalikova	F 19-29	1	4.10	7.02	9.25.32
16	51	Roy	Willetts	M 50-59	2	4.09	7.05	9.33.15
17	37	Benjamin	Cornelius	M 30-39	5	3.42	6.42	9.37.32
18	36	Ben	Schutt	M 30-39	6	3.56	7.25	9.41.50
19	195	Amy	Palentile	F 19-29	2	4.24	7.25	9.46.50
20	32	Pieter	van Vuren	M 40-49	2	4.17	7.21	9.50.33
21	35	Mel	Akmentins	F 30-39	3	4.26	7.31	9.54.52
22	53	Will	Flynn	M 30-39	7	3.53	6.47	10.00.16
23	20	Allan	Moustoukas	M 50-59	3	3.54	7.06	10.04.17
24	23	Leela	Hancox	F 30-39	4	4.40	7.08	10.06.48
25	69	Russell	Singelton	M 30-39	8	4.18	7.37	10.11.30
26	47	Teri	Orr	F 19-29	3	4.18	7.37	10.11.30
27	34	Josh	Campton	M 19-29	5	4.03	7.25	10.14.35
28	22	Vanessa	Everett	F 19-29	4	4.31	7.32	10.18.06
29	14	David	Burn	M 30-39	9	4.30	7.56	10.21.00
30	13	Robert	Apps	M 30-39	10	4.43	7.51	10.28.22
31	44	Andrew	Bethune	M 40-49	3	4.20	7.48	11.15.38
32	25	Glenn	Prentice	M 50-59	4	4.44	8.30	11.22.24
33	45	Warren	Broad	M 50-59	5	4.51	8.31	11.36.50
34	11	Tegwen	Howell	F 40-49	3	4.58	8.21	11.38.20
35	21	David	Elms	M 50-59	6	4.58	8.21	11.39.33
36	31	Julia	Bodonyi	F 30-39	5	4.43	8.33	11.46.38
	16	Simon	Dobbs			4.30	7.53	DNF
	54	Mathew	Davis			3.21	6.27	DNF
	29	Paul	Weatherby			4.44	DNF	DNF
	26	Marlene	Prentice			DNF		DNF
	24	Karen	Chan			DNF		DNF