

Report from the Balwin Dolphin Harriers Marathon

The Indian Ocean marathon morphed into the Dolphin coast marathon, then took on its sponsor's name, initially Deloitte and now the Balwin Marathon. It was run from Ballitto to Durban until the road washed away and no one thought to fix it, so now it is run from Durban beachfront through Umhlanga, almost to Sibaya Casino and then back along the same route. It is supposedly flat, which is true for the first ten kilometres but not for the next twenty. It is also run in Durban humidity with the constant threat of a green mamba appearing from the coastal scrub. There is however total road closure, and the event is organised almost as well as Ronnie Davel.

There were 21 of us Harriers, this Sunday past, who made the trip and ran in the marathon or the half marathon. Both were out and back on the same route, which gave me an opportunity to see all the Harriers in full stride and glory. Unqualified to cast aspersions on other runners I can only provide my observations.

In the half marathon **Linda Shrives** ran a very impressive **1 hour 39 minutes**. I had not quite warmed into my marathon when she had rounded the 10km mark and was on her way back. She was cruising. She even had time to hurl insult at me as I emerged from the bush in which I was doing my ablutions. **Lisa Hay (2 hours 10 minutes)** followed. She is much stronger than she thinks she is, and no doubt will not accept how strong she was when she passed me. Lisa may need a little post Jog and Grog Crossway's therapy – the place where people persuade you to do what you think you cant. **Di Simpson (2 hours 17 minutes)** passed me next looking comfortable, her usual smiling self. She, no doubt, has marathons and ultras in her. Hopefully, she will take the leap. **Sue Marshall (2 hours 18 minutes)** may or may not have lost time talking to anyone that would listen – as she passed me she delivered to me, at high speed, 4 incomprehensible sentences without taking a breath.

In the marathon **Carly Kent (3 hours 21 minutes)** showed us yet again what a seriously good athlete she is. She allowed us to live vicariously through **her 4th place in the women's race**. She was moving so fast when she passed me that I was not entirely sure it was her- it had nothing to do with the fact that I had just done a sub 7 minute 5 second kilometre and was dizzy. Carly came and hung out at the HH tent when us stragglers got in, and when I regained consciousness and the nausea abated, I boasted to the DHS Old Boys that I had drunk beer with her in Crossways. **Ian Driemeyer (3 hours 26 minutes)** hangs out with Colin Goosen and subscribes to the "go until your eyes bleed" theory. I could not see if his eyes were bleeding when he passed me, as unbelievably he was far more interested in his girlfriend, who was seconding him, than me. Ian's third impressive marathon this year. **Simpiwe Sithole (3 hours 36 minutes)** always gives his all and can never be accused of not going hard. He is often disappointed with himself even though his results are excellent. Trying to balance his job and life with training is not always easy and unlike me he should go easy on himself. When he passed me, he was hanging tough in true Harrier spirit. **Mark Seagar (4 hours 12 minutes)** put in another solid performance. He is a decent bloke, and he had the decency to sympathetically look at me and acknowledge that I was going to have a long day out. I

appreciated the gesture. **Robin Gardiner (4 hours 36 minutes)** did not seem particularly concerned or focussed and when he passed it simply presented him an opportunity to tell me a story. He ran a bit with me in the wrong direction to try and finish the story. After a kilometre or so, even he realised he was not going to finish the story and reluctantly turned back in the right direction. He cruised into **second place in his category. Duduza Gatsheni (4 hours 42minutes)** runs every marathon in the same way, her way. No fuss, no complaint, put your head down and keep going. She gave me her signature nod when she passed and carried along on her way. She ignored the kisses that I blew at her. This year Duduza had a much happier experience, because the 10km people, who she believes to be unfit and out of condition, did not drink all the water at the table. I am not brave enough to use the exact term Duduza uses for such people.

Paul Laing (4 hours 46 minutes) and **Kevin Meier (4 hours 19 minutes)** arrived on time for the marathon, which was a good effort. They teamed up with **Dean O (4 hours 46 minutes)** and the three wise men set off bearing gifts of testosterone. Paul is known not to restrict himself to a pre-determined pace and Dean is new to the concept of marathons – this being his second. They passed me while I was still toiling towards halfway and with some way to go. Things seemed to be going swimmingly well and in their own minds they were drawing the attention of some of the Dolphin Coast strider's netball team. The marathon, as it always does, then suddenly introduced itself to the lads at about 28km. Our chairman is far too wily to fall for the bucket of testosterone party trick and he had quietly declined the invitation to speed and continued to the end at his own pace – which was more than respectable. Paul was not surprised how hard it was when the contents of the bucket were spilled, and Dean now has an idea of how a marathon compares to Dusi.

Briget Borwick (4 hours 44 minutes) ran a perfectly timed qualifier with almost perfect splits. I saw her once or twice and she looked in complete control. Poor women did have the handicap of an objectionable and out of condition husband on her back. It was something of a pity that she only saw 2 of the 3 wisemen just as she was nearing the end. **Gail Cryer (5 hours 18 minutes)** was going along very nicely when I saw her. She and her daughter were having a little mother daughter bonding, which seemed to be going well and they were still talking to each other at the end. Gail finished well and she told me that it was far better than her last marathon, so what more could you ask.

The end was good. We lay in the shade of the Harrier tent, traded war stories, and ate ice lollies. Another good day in the life of a Harrier. We look forward to the next one.