

<http://teamrubicon.blogspot.com.au/2011/02/cradle-mountain-run.html>

**Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

### [Cradle Mountain Run](#)

The next event for the year on Ed's calendar, what more could you ask for than to run from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Claire on the Overland Track? The logistics of just getting to the start line for most people outside Tasmania is daunting save for the fantastic organisation of the race committee, everything is taken care of. Most folks fly into Launceston while I chose an early flight to Hobart so I could catch up with an old mate and also take in the Mona gallery and museum, what a fantastic experience in itself. A small group caught the mini-bus from Fitzroy crescent in downtown Hobart mid Friday morning with a transfer en-route for the final leg out to Cradle Mountain late Friday afternoon.



The pre-race briefing was held that evening on the deck outside the bar at Cradle Mountain Lodge, a small but informal group of runners with about 51 entrants recorded for the Saturday start. The race director and park rangers explained the business end of the run with dinner and drinks to follow before retiring to bunk accommodation at Waldheim. It was a somewhat different mood Saturday morning however, everyone looked so serious with their 'race face on' as one runner put it. We were greeted early with a star filled sky and cool breeze as we gathered at the trail head at Waldheim. A brief roll call and no frills start right on 6am with me deciding to tuck-in at the back as the last runner out along the 'duck boards' and across the moor headed toward Cradle Mountain. It seemed no time at all before we reached the chains going up the steep pinch leading to Marion's Lookout, then Kitchen Hut in about 50 minutes with the cool breeze strengthening and clear views of Barn Bluff.



I was starting to pick up other runners heading down into Waterfall Valley and enjoyed chatting with different folks as we worked our way through muddy sections, the result of a few wet days. It was nice running with various people before I found myself mostly alone coming into the Pelion check point in 4h52 and well within the cut-off time of 12 noon. The only exit point at this stage is the Arm River Track and not a pleasant option if for some reason you are forced to leave the run. We started passing small groups of walkers on the track and by the time I reached Pelion Gap there was a large number of deserted walking packs with bushwalkers taking side trips climbing Pelion East and Mt Ossa, time for a quick photo and then keep moving. It didn't seem to take long before reaching Kia Ora and then Du Cane huts although the roughness of trail was starting to wear on me, picking my way through the odd mud bog and the ever present slippery tree routes. I was surprised just how much time I spent staring at the ground throughout the run, it was nice to come across raised plank sections of trail so you could relax a little and take in the scenery. After the steep climb of Du Cane Gap it's reasonable travelling along to Narcissus with the aid station there stocked with Coke, cookies and other goodies. The support crew were fantastic, in fact the whole organisation of the Cradle Run and the volunteers are be congratulated. My time of 9h48 at the Narcissus checkpoint suggested I might be on for a sub-13hr track time if I got a wriggle on, so I determined not to waste time and kept up a good pace along the lake running then walking most of the way. The 18km section around Lake St Claire is well known as a bit of a trudge, however the trail does smooth out as you get closer to Cynthia Bay which makes for good running. Once I hit the swing bridge I upped the pace after a quick glance at my watch. The last kilometre seemed to take forever running at pace, a couple of volunteers on the vehicle track pointed in the direction of the visitors centre and I put on a burst to made sure I hit the finish in 12h57.



An interesting aspect of the Cradle Run this year was the opportunity to participate in a medical experiment. A part of the testing was accurate weight measurement pre and post run and I discovered I lost exactly 1.5kg (81.4 - 79.7kg) over the 82k and 13hrs, interesting as this suggests my hydration strategy is probably close to the mark. Gaiters would have been a good addition on this run, the Injinji's took a major hit coming to terms with the mud and slush and my Salomon XA Pros were at times indistinguishable as if they'd been dipped in chocolate. Having said that, the socks were again a success particularly considering my feet were wet for most of the day, Gurney Goo was a new addition in place of Body Glide and together with Injinji's seems a good combination. I've ordered a pair of Dirty Girl gaiters to try, unfortunately it's trail ultras - two, white Injinji socks - nil... most folks I talk to that have those gaiters rave about them. The socks are still soaking in napisan!

Would I go back and do the Cradle Run again - you bet. Fantastic organisation by the run committee, really nice people and such a magnificent setting for a trail run, most definitely an iconic event. As for preparation, I do think the B2H was a good lead-in event however whether I was still recovering after 4 weeks I can't say. I took some wise advice and rested for about a week after B2H then focused on some quality hill sessions with time on the mountain bike in the heat of the Canberra January afternoons, combined with a good taper the week before Cradle, I have to say I felt pretty good for this run.

The North Face 100 is only 14 weeks away now and I think my legs are in good shape going into preparation for that... see you in the Blue Mountains in May.