

Cradle Mountain Run 2021 Race Report By Damon Whish-Wilson

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Cradle Mountain Run 2021 Report
Photographs: Ben Hirst, & CMR

<https://findyourfeet.com.au/blogs/the-wilder-blog/cradle-mountain-run-2021-race-report-by-damon-whish-wilson>

Weather:

CMR2021 was shaping up to be a very wet and wild day out if the weather forecast was to be relied upon, however, my gut feeling proved right with the day being for the most part, free of rain.

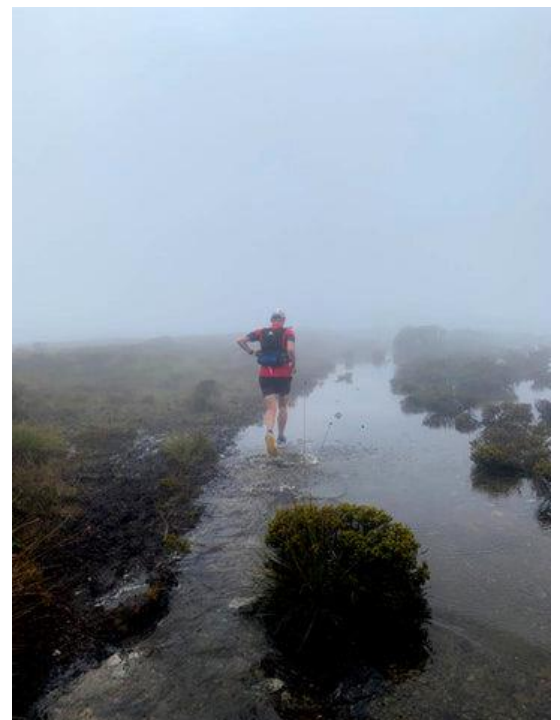
Friday night at Cradle Mountain, we were subject to a thunderstorm and heavy downpours, but come 6am Saturday morning, the stars were shining through the dispersed cloud cover. The temperature made for perfect running conditions. I would say the day was almost identical to 2020. The Overland Track (OT) was soaking wet! Running through streams, creeks and large ponds in some sections. This added to the difficulty of running the technical sections for some, but for me a wet OT makes for a faster run! I love pushing myself in a race over technical trails – adding a little bit of risk that I would never otherwise add in to my training. It left me with scrapes and bruises from a couple of falls, but thankfully nothing too serious. Over the 9hrs I was out, I was only caught in rain for 15mins, this led me to becoming very cold very quickly, but it went as soon as it came and I quickly warmed back up as my legs continued to carry me further into the course.

Unfolding of the day:

I had times mapped out in my head that I would need to meet throughout the run in order to run close to my goal time which was 8 – 8:20. This went mostly to plan...

The idea was to start off at a quick pace from Waldheim to Marion's Lookout and then run comfortably through to the first checkpoint – Pelion Hut. I thought 3:10-15 would be a good time to get there. However, running with Matt (Crehan), we (or I) may have pushed the pace a little too hard, arriving there in 3:02!! In my defense, I felt really comfortable. Matt did say he liked to run to feel, even though it can become risky when we are talking about running for 82k. It clearly did not affect him, as he seemed to become stronger and stronger with every passing kilometer.

After reaching Pelion, the next section was to Kia-Ora to Windy Ridge. This, for me, is always the toughest part of



the trail. It was where Matt ran off into the distance on me. I had a down patch for 10-15min around the 38k mark. After getting some more fuel into the system, I perked up and managed to shut out the negative thoughts, making it my mission to get to Windy Ridge moving as consistently as I could. The original goal was to reach this 50k checkpoint is around 5:10. I reached there in 5:24 which I was still quite pleased with. At this 50k, I didn't feel great, but I also didn't feel bad. I stopped and tried to look for my beanie for a few mins to no avail... (lesson here is pack the beanie with the gloves – not at the bottom of the dry sack full of thermals!)



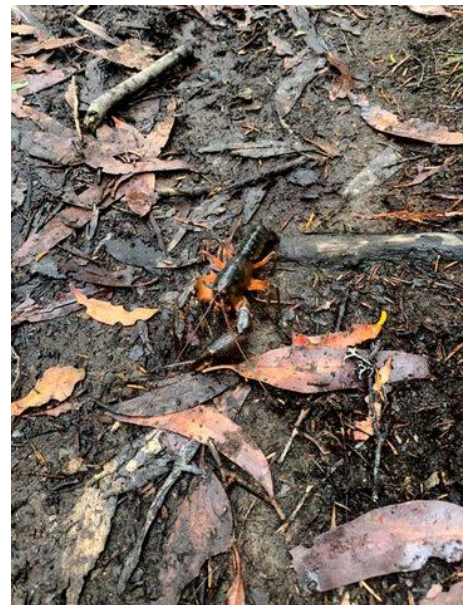
The second last section is from Windy Ridge to Narcissus – 10km of reasonably flat, flowy (for OT) trail. The past 2 years I haven't run this section as well as I should have, so this year's goal was to run it at constantly the same pace and in under 1hr, this, I achieved! I made it to Narcissus (62k) in 6:29. This put me well on track to run a sub 8:30 CMR.

From Narcissus to Cynthia Bay, is an 18km section of trail around Lake St Clair and it cannot be underestimated! It is tough on tired

legs and feels like it takes as long as the first 62k of the OT. I struggled, a lot, along this section. In hindsight, I should have forced in more fluids. I had one very hard fall on to rocks from slipping on a rock, which for me says that I needed to have taken in more food. This section took me 2:15, much longer than I anticipated. This left me as third person crossing the line in a time of 8:46, 5 minutes quicker than last year.

Highlights

- Running under a pocket of blue sky as the sun rose, hitting and lighting up Barn Bluff! I jokingly(?) asked Matt if we should detour to summit Barn Bluff...
- Seeing a yabby, yes, a yabby, on the boardwalk! Rather random.
- Running through flowing water and over technical trails – my favourite!
- Coming across a beautiful snake next to Lake St Clair. I was very surprised to find one laying across the track considering the weather was not favorable for them. After allowing me to get a photo and video, he slithered off to the side.
- Matt running an incredible time – the 4th fastest in 41 years! 7:49. QUICK. Very quick.





Final Thoughts

Whilst CMR2021 wasn't totally the run I planned for (but what ultra is?), I still had a great time out running and enjoying being able to move light and fast over the OT. This is the third time I've been lucky enough to run CMR and each time the OT has dished out something new, I've learnt more about myself, and I've met and shared experiences with new friends.

It is an iconic run, over an iconic landscape, in an iconic state.

Hopefully I'll be back for CMR2022, whether to try to run 8hrs or to run 12hrs, no one minds – as long as it's enjoyed!

Stuff Used/Carried

Salomon Sense 4 Pro shoes

SLAB Sense Short / SLAB Boxer / SLAB Belt / SLAB Sense Shirt / Salomon Bonatti Race WP Jacket + Pant / Salomon Gloves

SLAB 8L Pack / Salomon soft flasks + soft cup

Suunto Spartan Ultra

Spring Energy – Canaberry / Speednut with Hemp Oil / Power Rush / electrolyte

FindYourFeet socks,

Icebreaker thermal long sleeves x2 + pants / beanie

Space bag / lighter / compass / whistle / first aid / parks pass / \$50 / snake bandage / Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair map / Petzl Bindi headtorch / SeaToSummit dry bags x 4