

Cradle Mountain Ultra Sandy Suckling

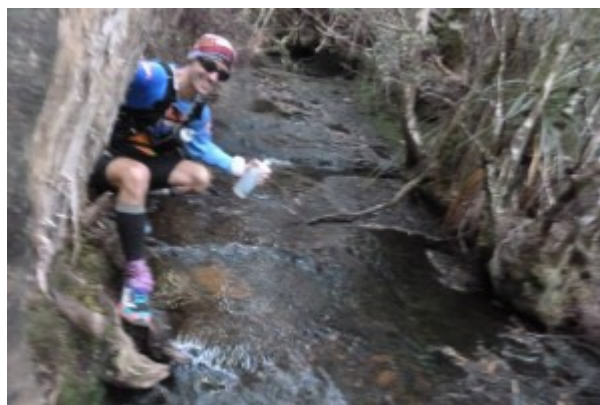
<http://runsandyrun.com.au/2015/07/06/cradle-mountain-ultra/>

Cradle Mountain Ultra was only 3 weeks after I finished the gruelling HK100 but my thoughts were that if I managed to get an entry I would just enjoy the spectacular scenery and the amazing wilderness of the 84km overland Track were the event is held.



This part of Australia is not only iconic but also magical and the thought of running the track in complete wilderness through wild Alpine areas unsupported even to the point of filling water bottle down by a creek as you pass over them was the reason so many wanted to participate in this event and I was no different.

Only a limited amount of entries were available and it was well and truly sold out in the first 15 minutes or so.... Wayne, Phill (who we meet doing the Big Red Run) and myself had sat by our computers fingers at the ready as soon as registration was open... then we had the agonising wait for 3 weeks to see if we qualified to get into the race... but finally we all got an email to say we had been successful.... it was going to be a real lot of fun not only with these two lads but also with my husband Colin our team manager come support man, come video man and photographer who always managed to be behind the lens not in front of it although I do remember a moment that we managed to steal it from him capturing some silly moment of laughter between us all.....





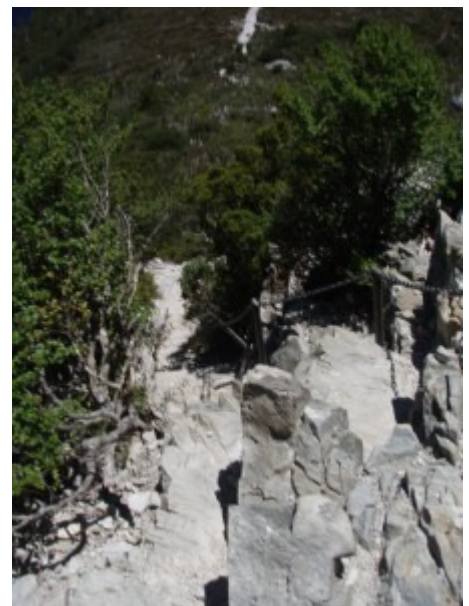
Once you take on this challenge you are in the wilderness from start to finish there was no where I would see Col along the course of 84km as there is no way of spectators accessing the track.....



For me that is why I wanted to do the Ultra it would be very different from many others and it wasn't about a time it was simple about the place, the stunning views and the fun of filling up drink bottles anywhere you past a stream of water.....It was a very technical course and at one stage we were pulling ourselves up on a chain attached to a rock wall ...

I may not be good at technical Ultras but I just love the challenge of them and when I get a bit of the track that I can have a good run I go for it... right or wrong that is what I do...

The morning was ever so cold and about 60 of us all congregated around together in the dark and fog of the early morning ready to start....



When they say go the faster ones go first down the wood stairs which are single file and as you leave the stairs to trail and rock underfoot the field soon mixes up and I was only too happy to stay at the back for awhile why my still not recovered muscles from my last race warmed up.



Phill and Wayne were gone which was great both on a mission and looking really strong. Col I knew was going to drive the car from the start of Cradle Mountain around to Lake St Claire the finish line of the race and wait there... Of course he did rub in to us all later how he had a wonderful breakfast at a local cafe..... even took video of it...

OMG what a character....

As the sun came up behind the Mountains and we started to climb up up up to Mariotts lookout it was breathtaking and I paused for a moment to take it all in.... WOW below was a lake definitely a picture moment....

Well the day continued and the sun got hotter but I was loving the warmth....many didn't and I was told at the end of the race that there were many that had pulled out the heat was too much for them.

I crawled down into creeks to get my water, I climbed up rocky Mountains,



I ran through scrub and bush trying to avoid snakes....screamed as I stood on ones tail

.... then had a crying melt down pulled myself together and kept going there was only one way that was to the finish line. I passed hikers who were camping in at



huts they were all so wonderful and would cheer and clap as I past..... I took in the view of Mountains, lakes, old wood settlers huts, and flat plains of magical beauty....

After 63 odd kms you come in to the only checkpoint which is at the start of the lake then there is the last 24 odd kms to go in the forest floor of entangled tree roots and slippery mud it was hellish after such a day of technical rocky paths.... but then it opens out and the last few kms are a great run to the finish line..... so I pounded my way past a few competitors and around the corner to a cheer squad....



Col gave me a big hug and kiss and sat me down on the nearest chair..... What a wonderful feeling I was done.... Woot hoo..

Phill had an amazing day and smashed it up coming in some hours before me... incredible effort. Wayne's great day turned to disaster before the check point at the 63km and when I meet him there is barely walking I offered to stay with him but like most of us he wanted to go it alone.... unfortunately he went back to that checkpoint and pulled out ... a wise move at the time in the shape he was in but I was gutted for him.... felt like I should have insisted to stay with him... but the track isn't going anywhere so I know he will be back to conquer it another day...



Never know just might be a reunion for us all.... till then there is other journeys to unfold for us all...



Thanks guys for an awesome time xx