

Saturday 18th September 2010

River Ayr Race - 41miles

Before the Race

I was up at 5.45am, breakfast, changed and away by 6.20am for the 50min drive to Ayr. By the time I arrived at the Citadel Leisure Centre at 7.20am there were plenty of people milling around.

I collected my race number 88 and chatted with Lucy Colquhoun and George Cairns amongst others. One of the things about keeping this blog is that people who read it know all that's going on so I had lots of questions about how my foot was feeling.

I was quite encouraged as it hasn't been as sore over the past few days and I felt confident that I should be able to finish even if it was going to hurt. I was probably more concerned about my general fitness and wasn't sure how well I'd be able to keep going for 41miles. Two weeks ago running with Ross I was definitely struggling over the last 5-6miles of our 22mile run.



Debs, me and Sharon

It was Ross's 28th birthday so I wished him happy birthday. Ross said he would be happy with anything quicker than last's year time of 7hrs 15mins. I knew he would go a lot faster than that but I was suprised just how quick 6hrs 01mins for 7th place. Excellent - well done Ross.

The organisers laid on two buses for transport us back to the start. I sat with Lucy and George and also chatted with Gary.



Photo before the start

Once at the start I caught up with Marco, Debs, Sharon, John K, Rosie plus lots of others. Just before 9am we wanted down to the Loch for a group photo and race briefing. It was a bit overcast but the forecast was for a good day so I just wore a short sleeved top.

Glenbuck Dam to Kames Car Park (4.44miles)

At 9.15am the race started and we were off. I was keen to run nice and steady for the first few

miles and I quickly settled into an easy rhythm. I could see Sharon and Debs just ahead so decided to keep them in view.

There were about 90 runners scheduled to run so there were plenty of people around. After a mile or two I came alongside Debs and Sharon and we ran together for a while. After another mile or so Sharon pushed on leaving Debs and myself.

John Kennedy joined us and ran with us. I was saying to John that I didn't he was a Super Vet until recently. He explained his birthday was in April and SUMS rules say it is your age on the day of the whw in June. I jokingly suggested it ought to be your age on 1st January!!



We ran through Kames Car Park in 38mins (8.36pace) and I was pleased to feel quite relaxed and my foot was okay. The ground was quite soft so that was helping. I also took some ibuprofen which probably helped as well.

My view for the first 20miles!



Leg: 5miles in 38mins 13secs (8.36pace)

Arriving at Kames car Park (from Kenneth Phillips)

Kames Car Park to Limmerhaugh (3.63miles)

I was running with a group of about 6 runners including Debs. We chatted a fair bit and continued to run at a steady pace. After another mile or two a runner came back towards us having missed the right turn. It was Bill Hutchison who is also a MSV and my 'rival' for 2nd place in the overall series. or a while John Kennedy, Bill and I were running together.

For me to catch Bill and take 2nd place I'd have to beat him by at least 7 places which I knew was not going to happen but it was fun to try and wind up the competition. I did Bill that I had people along the route who had instructions to noble him!!

Not long after that John pushed on and we never saw him again until the end. I arrived at North Lammerhaugh still feeling good, running steady and happy to see my overall pace was under 9min miles.

Leg: 3.63miles in 32mins 06secs (8.51pace)

Overall: 8.07miles in 1hr 10mins 19secs (8.43pace)

North Limmerhaugh to Sorn (8.22miles)

I was very impressed with the organising of the race. Tim and Ayrshire Council had worked really hard to signpost the course and there were so many marshalls out on the course making sure we didn't get lost.

Marco was doing a great job supporting Debs, Sharon and myself as well as George Cairns until he got too far ahead! We saw him at several points and I appreciated his support. I was eating some sweets and a flapjack as well and bananas provided by the organisers.



I was still following Debs who was running well. Bobby Miller was one of the runners with us. Bobby hadn't been able to train much and so I was suprised he was running as quick as he was and wondered whether he might pay for it later.

I saw Ian Beattie who was supporting Dave W at one road crossing. There were plenty of supporters out which was great. The ones I saw most was Bill's wife and friend. They seemed to be everywhere.

I arrived at Scorn again feeling good and my optimism was growing by the mile. I'd thought if I could get to Catrine feeling okay I knew I could make the end and I had only 3miles to go to that half way point.

Leg: 8.22miles in 1hr 16mins 51secs (9.21pace)

Overall: 16.29miles in 2hr 27mins 10secs (9.02pace)

Sorn to Haugh Farm (5.60miles)

A group of four of us including Bobby and Debs ran into Catrine. Bobby stopped here and I didn't

see him until the end. Marco was waiting for us at the far end of the village. Debs stopped for a few minutes and I carried on. After a mile or so I caught up with Rick.



As we ran together we chatted and discovered that we have mutual friends. Rick and his wife Victoria have 6 children and home educate them. They are friends with our friends here and another family from Stoke. So the next few miles passed quite quickly as we chatted.

Running through Catrine

We went through the checkpoint at Haugh farm together. I took some water and a banana from the official.

Leg: 5.60miles in 54mins 55secs (9.48pace)

Overall: 21.89miles in 3hr 22mins 05secs (9.14pace)

Haugh Farm to Stair (6.59miles)

Rick and I continued to run together for the next mile or so until he stopped for a wee and I pushed on. I didn't see Rick until the end when I discovered that he'd lost time by getting lost somewhere. I was suprised he got lost as the course was so well marked and marshalled.

So for the time in the race after about 23miles I was on my own. I could see a couple of runners ahead. I slowly caught them and went past just before the road section through Failford. There are a few bits of road and it was definitely more sore on my foot on the harder surface.



I took another ibrupofen and hoped that would take the edge off the pain. From this point on I started to think a bit more about my finishing time and what I should aim for. I realised that sub 7hrs was on and if I could run aout 10min miles for the last 15miles or so I could be uner 6.40.

I was still cautious as I thought back to run two weeks ago but I was feeling a lot stronger than two weeks ago so hoped I could keep it going.

I arrived at Stair feeling content that I'd got this far quicker than I'd planned and feeling okay.

Leg: 6.59miles in 1hr 05mins 43secs (9.58pace)

Overall: 28.48miles in 4hr 27mins 47secs (9.24pace)

Stair to Tarrholm Bridge (4.44miles)

I was still on my own which gives more time to think about pace, finishing time and position. I asked the marshall what position I in and he reckoned 19th so I decided if I could stay somewhere around that position then I would have enough points to finish 3rd in the MSV.

As I ran through Annbank I saw Marco a couple of times and suspected that Debs was catching me. I was watching my average pace creeping up past 9.30pace and with 8miles or so to go.

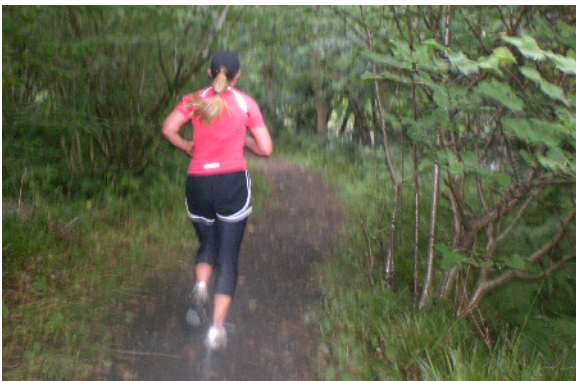
I focused on trying to run as steady as I can repeating on of my favourite mantras 'Slow and steady - make it last'. The miles passed and I arrived at Tarrholm Bridge (as least I think that is the name.) Lee Mac was there so it was great to see her smiling face.

Leg: 4.44miles in 48mins 05secs (10.50pace)

Overall: 32.92miles in 5hr 15mins 52secs (9.36pace)

Tarrholm Bridge to A77 (4.89miles)

As I went past Lee I glanced back and saw the familiar face of Debs. I ran on knowing that she'd soon pass me. Just before she did I tripped and fell fortunately it was on soft muddy path so no damage done.



Within a few minutes Debs caught up and we ran together for the next couple of miles. Debs was running really strongly and I knew it was only a matter of time before she pushed on. The photo left was my last view of Debs as she disappeared into the distance!

I walked a couple of small hills while Debs continued to run and she was away. Debs finished about 9mins ahead of me which equals about a minute a mile. Another impressive run in a very impressive season - well done Debs but I've not given hope of beating you again one day!

Over the last hour or so I knew that there was a road section coming before we crossed the A77 which I wasn't looking forward to. I saw Marco for the last time before the finish. He was talking a photo of me as he drove past so felt I had to keep running!

The road section was sore on my foot so I alternated running for 100 breathes and walking for 50 and eventually the road appeared and I knew there was about 2.5miles to go.

Leg: 4.89miles in 52mins 42secs (10.47pace)

Overall: 37.81miles in 6hr 08mins 34secs (9.45pace)

A77 to Ayr (2.46miles)

I reckoned that sub 6hr 40mins was on so that became my motivation to keep running as hard as I could. After a mile or so and just before the final marshall one runner went past me.

I crossed the foot bridge and then ran as much as I could along the river to the final bridge and the road to the Citadel Leisure Centre. George was on his bike showing me the way and then Tim was

stopping the traffic to let me over.

I had one final short walk and then ran in as relaxed as I could to the finish as I could see there was a video camera!

Katrina was there waiting which was great. I was very happy to finish the race and my time of 6hrs 34mins 14secs was a real bonus. I finished in 24th place.

*Leg: 2.46miles in 25mins 40secs (10.26pace)
Overall: 40.27miles in 6hr 34mins 14secs (9.47pace)*



Sharon (6hr 15mins), me, Debs (6hrs 25mins) and Ross (6hrs 01min)

Post Race

I had a lovely shower, sent lots of texts and updated my blog before heading off to meet up with Marco, Debs, Sharon, Thomas, Silke, Nancy, Lucy, Caroline for a meal and then the SUMS Gala Ball.

River Ayr Race	Miles		Saturday 18th September 2010			
	leg	Total	Leg		Overall	
Glenbuck Dam			Time	Pace m/mile	Time	Pace m/mile
Kames Car Park	4.44	4.44	38:13	8:36	0:38:13	8:36
North Lammerhaugh	3.63	8.07	32:06	8:51	1:10:19	8:43
Scorn	8.22	16.29	1:16:51	9:21	2:27:10	9:02
Haugh Farm	5.60	21.89	54:55	9:48	3:22:05	9:14
Stair	6.59	28.48	1:05:43	9:58	4:27:47	9:24
Tarrholm Bridge	4.44	32.92	48:05	10:50	5:15:52	9:36
A77	4.89	37.81	52:42	10:47	6:08:34	9:45
Ayr	2.46	40.27	25:40	10:26	6:34:14	9:47

I just wanted to finish by thanking Louise and all those involved in organising the race. It was so well run and a pleasure to take part in. I'll be back.