

ULTRA-TRAIL

AUSTRALIA

UTA50 - Amanda Jones

I stumbled upon trail running a little less than a year ago.

In 2014 my life hit 2 major lows resulting in the person I am today...

In July I snapped my Achilles, surgery and months of inactivity, frustrations and depression. I vowed not to take walking/running for granted again.

October 2014 my father unexpectedly passed away. He was the most hard working, strong and smartest person I know, I always strive to make him proud. Being the one to find my mother passed away previously and then to also be the one to find my father I will forever struggle with this, I currently hold this all in check by running/training - its the only outlet I have found that helps me get through.

In December 2014 I joined a gym, my instructor worked around my injury and slowly build back up strength and agility. He was training to run TNF100 and I was in awe of the amazing goal.

My first trail race was May 2015 6km, I finished depleted with confidence - why do people run this terrain?!! its much harder than the road - whats the point?!!! I'd already entered a 15km local trail run so tried for round 2 of trail running, I can honestly say I had the same sediments after this race.

I was told "I don't think you would have the strength to compete in a 50K"

I started running my local trails and discovered the beauty of trail running - I became hooked! Deciding to push myself I entered the UTA50. Also signing up for a coaching program with SQUADRUN.

The coaching gave me confidence and I started targeting myself more to this goal whilst maintaining daily life of working full time, a freelance business, kick starting a family business and being the mother of 2 kids.

Come race day I knew it was going to be tough. Many stairs and a lot of congestion. I ran the first 20km with a friend and this passed ok with the general chatting and no falls.

After CP501 I was running on my own and knew this was going to be the tougher part of the course, I put on headphones and UTA playlist. I'd over hydrated early so was trying to keep that in check, it was hot, I battled with this hydration problem until the finish. My mental state was starting to fatigue, my mind was wondering off to why I was doing this and thoughts of my parents and how I was doing this to make them proud, this in turned resulted in tears streaming down my face for many kms. Kedumba kicked my butt, I wanted to run, I was in a race - why was this all so steep, this is taking too long, the finish is still so far way and my progress is now so slow!

I saw an athlete in a bad way at the emergency aid station being seen to by medics and about to be lifted out - I thought 'wow, she is not very well at all, her day certainly hasn't turned out to plan - I'm doing ok compared to her so I shouldn't quit just yet - keep moving towards that finish line (RFP)'

At the bottom of Furber stairs, took a deep breath and started climbing. I thought of dad, I thought of the tattoo on my bicep which is a ECG heart rate line in memory of my dad and to signify strength- I stopped with some others on the switchbacks and we encouraged each other to push on.

At the beginning of the finish line chute I was blessed to have my kids there waiting. I took their hands and we ran to the finish, its still a blur, I remember closing my eyes to hold the tears in and just the sheer relief that it was done and I had completed it.