

ULTRA-TRAIL

AUSTRALIA

THE BALLAD OF UTA50 - Matt Menegazzo

This yarn is best read by a bushy with a low, rumbling voice.

Enjoyed around a campfire, it goes down well with a whiskey that burns your throat. Or so I'm told.

Well, what a day and what a finish
As I climbed that final stair
It's honestly quite the story
So have a listen, take a chair.

I'd run the 100 back in 2014
A decent ultra to test the spirit
So I knew the 50 would be relatively easy
And in truth, I didn't fear it.

I'd trained little, and with a one year old
My runs with pram were oh so short
And in the weeks leading up to UTA
It was some lengthy runs I sought.

A few 30 plusers and some trails
With back to back long runs on a whim
I was lean and fit and ready
Yet my prospects remained somehow slim.

Start group number 2 beckoned
My time predicted from the start
And I knew if I was to complete a decent run
It'd not be with legs, but with heart.

I toed the line at 22 past and shivering
I waited in the cold
Surrounded by fearless warriors
Some old, some young, all bold.

We dashed off up the first hill and
Down Narrowneck we drifted
Finding a pace as we adjusted our packs
And as the sun rose, spirits lifted.

By 10km it was decided
That a sub 7 was on the cards
I'd done the maths and worked it out
But who'd have thought - stairs are hard?!

At the QVH by 4 hours and 2
My ambitious time was shattered
Making it down and out of Kedumba with dignity
Now, was all that really mattered.

Negotiated run walks to manage descent
Followed by a slow march ever up
Taking in the majesty of my surroundings, though
Couldn't fill my proverbial cup.



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I felt a blowout 8hr+ approaching
When something magic came
Some call it the famed 'second wind'
But let's be honest, it was easier terrain.

I pulsed through flats and single track
A cracking pace through the trees
Where was this energy hours ago?
I was moving with such ease.

Don't get so cocky, now Matt
Maintain a controlled and steady state
At the bottom of that mountain
For all... countless stairs still await.

I climbed those monsters slowly
Lost maybe 30 places to those behind
But the alluring scent of sub 8 hours
Was all I really in mind.

It's funny when you think you're spent
And then you reach the finish line
The people, their cheers and all of the elation Tingles
energetically up your spine.

I sprinted to that finish arch
And with a time of 7:54
I felt humbled, grateful and surprisingly hungry To do
UTA once more.