

ULTRA-TRAIL

AUSTRALIA

UTA100 - Filimon Filippou

I train under Scotty Hawker and Mile 27. I started my program with Scotty roughly In October 2015. I have never run 100km before so I was going to invest everything to do well. I done TNF in 2015 and after that I was hooked. Everything went well through all my training and I was hitting all my goals. In the last week my accommodation house fell through due to being 'double booked' and I was forced to get the only place available which was 20km away for \$2200. I had no choice and had to accept it at the time cause focus was on the race.

I arrived up on the Wednesday and went through the process Scotty wanted me to go through. On Thursday afternoon myself and 3 friends went up and registered and got our bibs and bought from goodies from the stores. On the way down we thought we would go support the Furber951 runners so we cruised down to the first platform and clapped them up. I saw Scotty Hawker with his parents and we had a chat. Spirits were good and we had a banter. He stayed whilst we went back to the top. Right at the top where the back of Scenic World is, before you hit the concrete steps for the finish line I felt a pop. We all heard the pop. I had torn my calf. I was warm, I had stretched and we had just broken into a jog.

I felt like a sack of potatoes in agony and I knew right away it was over and I was kind of all good with it. My mates weren't. Scotty came up at the time and thought I was taking the piss. He couldn't believe it as we were only chatting 2 min before. He got on the phone right away and within minutes Mark Green (The Body Mechanic) came and when I told the story he basically confirmed what we knew. Clean tear. I had two choices to make, sulks and go home, or see the 8 months as an awesome investment and behave like this was meant to happen and support the shit out of my 50+ mates, most of who were part of my local running club Trailblazers. I chose option 2 and rocked the hell out of the weekend. Sure there were some silent tears but at the end of the day my team and my mates have become a very important unit to me. More hours were spent with them than my family through all the training.

We watched the 22km runners start and finish and hung out at the finish line most of the day. I saw and spoke to Scotty Hawker again and he told me to speak to Tom about my ticket. I was tempted to speak to Tom Landon but also believed that with the enormity of the weekend I would be a thorn in his butt. I did go up to registrations, there was a guy looking to buy a bib. I told him and the ladies that I won't be selling mine. It was mine, I worked hard for it. But a spot has opened up and to please arrange something for the man looking to get a start as I was no way able to run. I don't know what happened but I do hope the guy did get a bib off the ladies working the desk.

Saturday was emotional as I was at the start line and I knew several people in every wave of the 50 and 100 km. Most didn't know the situation as I didn't advertise it cause i didn't want it to become their focus. Also I only wanted positivity, no pity. So I chose to dance, take photos and still get in on the hype of it all while wishing everyone on their way. After the last runner left I again contemplated speaking to Tom but chose not to. He had bigger fish... What I did chose to do was support the shit out of the team and Facebook the hell out of the event! So with a grade 3 calf tear I hobbled back to the car, had brekky and made my way up to CP5. I know the boys from PACE Athletic well so I told Olly, Will and stu that I will be volunteering on their turf and turning up the vibe. Once there I grabbed a fluoro vest off Olly from and got straight into it whilst seeing my mates come through and motivating them on.

After a few hrs it was to the finish line to clap home the first of the 50k runners and a few of my team who are the speedy ones. Then it was on to CP4 aquatic centre where I caught up with mates and volunteered a bit. Back to the finish to cheer on more mates and the 100km frontrunners. Back to CP4 to do more of the same and assist where I could and motivate where needed. Back to finish for more of the same. And finally over to CP5 again where I donned the vest and took over the drop bag responsibilities for a few hrs. I loved every minute of it and I saw it all as much as an investment in this ultra learning as the actual 8 months of training and preparation. I even stopped one man from dropping out because he had had enough. I told him my story and how I wish I could feel what its like to have had enough. I got emotional when he continued on his way and I later saw him at the finish line. That's who I set out to be on that day and shit like that was worth every bit of the calf tear.

Between all this I was taking hundreds of photos and writing quick reports and posting them on my FB page to keep everyone informed. I don't post much stuff but this made me feel better about things. It also made me realise what a difference I made when looking back through at the comments on not only my personal page but on the Trailblazers page. After the last of my mates left CP5 it was back to the finish line to see the two girls who are kick ass mates and who I have trained the most with over this time smash their PB's and I was content. Then I crashed. The adrenaline of the day wore off and the pain in my calf told me no more. So at 11pm I made my way home.

Still one week later I feel no sadness, guilt or a victim. I was meant to do what I did. There are plenty of races but not plenty of opportunities to freestyle a day like I did.