

Andreas Kacofegitiss – Kepler Challenge, Te Anau

Well, it was all going pretty well until about the 40km mark, at which the body said 'STOP'. And stop I did. Abruptly.

Andreas – Running...So, in an attempt to not grind myself into the ground and save myself for some good training during the rest of summer, I began walking, then running, then walking, then running. I also stopped at the remaining food stations for many minutes and devoured as much of their orange supplies as I could. I believe I won this competition. I left with at least six segments of orange from each and every station. At Moturau, I rested there for at least five minutes and must have gone through a minimum of a dozen... an act worthy of champion status.



Mucking around as I did didn't seem to make much of a difference to my placing in the end. After being passed by about 20 or so runners when I first started walking, I pretty much maintained my placing. I guess all those running around the same time as me were also poked.

Up until the 40km mark, I was running conservatively and comfortably.... oh well, I'll give it another crack (AGAIN) next year.

I did enjoy the day though. I was taking it easy in the last 20ks and had a great opportunity this year to appreciate a lot of the beautiful views of the track. It truly is a stunningly beautiful track.

Also, I was very inspired by the old fella (I'd place him at about 65 years of age) that I ran along with for nearly an hour. We paced each other during this time – I followed him down Hanging Valley to Iris Burn, and I returned the service after that. Although I crashed and burned about 10ks later, so did he and I only saw him twice after that – when we passed each other on our way to the finish line. We finished only minutes apart and seemed to hit the wall at a similar time. Talking to him after the event, I was amazed to discover that he'd been training 200ks per week! If I can simply run the Kepler at that age, irrespective of time, I'll be a very happy old man.

The following day was also quite inspirational also... I managed to fluke the timing of my recovery run and team up with none other than Phil Costley (now record holder of the Kepler challenge AND the Luxmore Grunt) whom I swapped stories and thoughts with for about 5ks. And then I happened to bump into and converse with the very down-to-earth Marty Lukes. It seems that crashing at the 40k mark is a common phenomenon. It is only then that one is able to truly determine whether they've done the correct training or not... I guess I hadn't. A good excuse to try and get it right next year. Fifth time lucky.

Andreas.