

Paul Davies – Motatapu Adventure Run

49 kilometers of exposed back country terrain.
2790 m of climbing (give or take) 4 BIG climbs

I am lying on the ground in utter agony, my legs hurt bad, I have never felt so smashed in any event I have done, thank *&@\$ I am over the finish line and I don't have to think about putting one leg in front of the other anymore. I am just happy to lie here and forget about the pain!

We started at 6am that morning full of beans and ready to go. There were 34 other teams ready to tackle this run. There was a lot of quiet anticipation in the darkness around the registration tent. It was not too cold which was nice so I started with just a polypro underneath my CP top. (That's for u Richard)



There was a short briefing and then we were off across the road and onto the DOC track. The first 3 km or so is nice level track leading up the first section of the Fern Burn. 1st mistake! My torch (I had borrowed the night before) had flattish batteries! I had been assured that they were new, but there not! I still made pretty good time but whenever a runner with a brighter torch got behind me I couldn't see anything but a large shadow so I had to let them past. (Needless to say up team mate was just a little annoyed by this) I kicked myself for a time but it soon lightened up enough to see without it.

We pushed on up the first climb and soon passed the teams who had overtaken us during the darkness. It was good to get to the top of Jack Saddle, the first major climb and all had gone well. Into the first descent, my legs were not feeling too hot, I am praying they are not going to get any worse! We got through to Highland Hut check point in good time a little bit of flat then hit the next climb, we got up this one quick as well, were feeling good & going well. The next descent into unnamed creek was hard! Wow this is not easy! My legs are starting to scream & the worst is to come. (My team mate is starting to think he is running with a snail) 2nd mistake! When people were telling me to rest up after the coast they are probably right!

Going uphill was no problem we powered up the two climbs over Knuckle ridge only to be hit with the next downhill to Roses Hut check point. It was hell, my legs hurt, my toes have got blisters, and all I want to do is collapse! 3rd mistake these shoes are useless for this sort of running/walking/groveling!! My team mate was at the check point with time to lie down and watch my painful descent off the ridge, it was a crippled run into the check point, shoes off, bandage out, blisters covered – got to say the check point staff were just awesome! Shoes back on and off up the last major climb to Roses saddle, again we made good time up this one, I even caught and passed my team mate! This was another six hundred meter climb and we were starting to feel it. We could see a few other teams and they all looked like there was plenty of suffering going on. Getting to the top of this climb was just magic! The views are incredible, back toward Wanaka and down into the Arrow River, this is going to be the steepest descent yet! If I had trouble on the last one this was just a grovel fest, my legs were just screaming, it hurt to take a step! All I wanted to do was sit down and slide but I couldn't even do that as it was too steep, so the grovel continued down into the Arrow River.



Once we hit the bottom, things picked up unbelievably! I was back in country I could handle, boulder hopping down to Mace town – again I got in front of my team mate (had to make the most of that, it wasn't going to last!) We soon hit Mace town – 15km to go! I knew that this was going to be the hardest part of the run for me. Flattish 4WD track with a few river crossings thrown in. We have 3 or 4 other teams close behind us and my team mate

was looking dangerous! He wanted no part of getting passed! I kind of had to break it too him that I was smashed, It was just a mind game to keep running / hobbling! I just can't believe how much I was hurting.

We got down to Soho creek there were still runners and mountain bikers coming through from the other courses, so I had lots of encouragement from them. I couldn't believe that in my state I was still managing to pass other runners! I was just running on willpower now just focused on the finish, a short hi to a few people as I went past was all I could manage & into the last river crossings, what a relief I can walk through them without feeling guilty! Out the other side and force myself to run again, this was hard!! We must be getting close I can hear the loud speakers in the distance and just need to keep going a little more... I am telling myself no walking just running, my legs are listening. Looking across to my team mate he looks as fresh as when we started, he just wants to power off (the sod), I can't, I am just about done in, we hit the last river crossing & before I know it we are down the finish chute! Then the pain really begins!

Reflecting 3 weeks later. The pain has gone, flatness remains. Leah just beat me in a hill sprint – ridicule begins! Jeezz, I will get reminded of that for a while I bet!

This was a great race, without a doubt mentally the hardest thing I have ever done, darn proud to have completed it. If you enjoy pushing yourself & like adventure get a team mate & do it next year, it rocks!