

MOTATAPU MARATHON: ALICE SPILLANE

The gun with off at 8 am on a mild morning in Glendhu Bay and within 100 m of starting I had gone over on the side of my foot. Nice one I thought but felt right within a few steps afterwards. Soon there was a river crossing and the coldness of this made me gasp, it was so fresh. I felt slow for the first 30 mins, but I soon got into a good rhythm. I made sure I was refuelling every 20-30 mins with gels and electrolytes.

I made the 10 km mark in an hour, which was my goal as I didn't want to go hard at the start. The next 20 kms there was a lot of up hill, I walked some of the uphill to conserve some energy and most people around me were doing the same. The scenery was truly stunning and I was loving the race. As I approached the 22 km mark, I started to feel intense pain in my left knee. I knew this wasn't a good sign. I had some pain relief on board so I took this and carried on my way. It was very uncomfortable for 30 mins. Every step hurt and it felt like everyone was passing me. I started to think along the lines of why am I doing this, im not a runner, give up running etc. By now the pain was starting to disappear and I was firing to get going.

I passed the highest point mark and I was relieved as I thought surely there was going to be some more hills. Soon enough I passed the 10 km sign, this was at 3.30 hr. What a great feeling this was, I was feeling the best I had so far and with only 10 km to go I was firing. There were lots of short uphill and I flew up these, thanks to Karen's run group! On the downhill I lent forward and didn't put the breaks on as I was worried I would jar my knee. At 6km to go I had a drink of flat coke, this tasted amazingly and I really was flying past a lot of people.

There were a lot of river crossings in the last 3 km, which messes with the time you think your going to make. I tried to run through most of these, a lot of people just walked them. FYI, good fishing in there I spotted about 3 fish. I asked a spectator how far to go and he said 1.5 km so I ran at a fast pace for the rest. I crossed the line in 4.33 hr. I was totally rapt with my time. Pre earthquake I was thinking 4.45 hr, post earthquake I would have been happy under 5 hr.

I wouldn't have completed in this time without the training programme from Karen or the Tuesday night run sessions. (Even though I did dread going every Tuesday). These improved my running immensely and I can't wait to join again.

