

## Diary of a 10k Race

Initially I was so nervous about this distance, because of my knee that was practically the longest I could run without the knee really starting to give me issues, it would be sore the next couple of days, then return to normal.

There was always something of a no turning back now feeling when I received my number, a finality, you're in now Graham, especially if it was a known tough course.

So, ablutions done (critical in my head these are completed on the morning. I have been known to shout 'get in' when all was successfully done), minimal food done, running gear donned and number affixed. The next important thing for me was to get there early, there is something I really hate about running late for something, especially races. I knew it wouldn't be a good run if wasn't mentally ready through rushing to get there for the start.

But there came that time from anticipating it, either with dread, or with dreams of a PB, to enough now I just need to get going, I hated waiting in the big start crowd, wondering if I was too far forward, or too far back, always the same....

And I am off!!!

Ok, maintain the breathing, don't go off fast! breathing, breathing...

Jesus EVERYBODY is coming past me !! this is going to be a slow race...for god's sake don't look at your watch...I feel like stopping this is terrible...

Approaching halfway, you're nearly there mate, breathing ok, feel ok, status check, yep I feel knackered but generally I feel ok...

There is something psychological about the half way point for me, knowing that each step now takes me closer, everybody is roughly around my pace now, it's the battle of the strongest, I pick out someone in front of me, my target, my victim I judge my pace against theirs, can I overhaul them? are they quicker on the flat or uphill? The next mile is kind of subconsciously seeing who the hill climbers are, who struggles, all noted in the brain as we come towards the last mile.

The finish looms, I am tired, my knee is sore but I know I can finish this now, judging by how many came past me in the first 5k its not going to make for good reading, still mate you tried your best, lets see what you have left in the tank...

Across the line, no clock at the finish, stop my watch, I think I am going to die, my breathing is uncontrollable, panting and just wanting to lie on the floor...

I check my watch...I look again...it's a 5 sec PB!! But it felt so slow!!

I have a spring in my step and forget my tiredness as I collect the medal and find my running friends to compare notes... Coffee and food await, for now its time to wander back to the car, legs stiffening up by the second, smiling at the medal I just earned the hard way.

Graham Beardsley, April 2020