

Mind The Ducks 2010 Race Report- Ben Clardy

Mind The Ducks was, for me, a race of firsts. It was my first 12 hour, first race with a crew and the first race where after a certain point I had no idea what to expect. Scratch that. The last one seems to happen at every race.

With clothing choices ranging from very hot to snowy and an almost equal range of food choices, Mack and I headed to Rochester. Shelley and Jim hosted a delicious pre race dinner allowing us to see a number of the runners that we would see again (and again) on the loop.

With the weather looking agreeable, we arrived at the race site and set up the tent. I was happy to see a number of familiar faces including a number of UMers-some who would be out on the course and many more who were there to lend support.

One initial concern was the course itself-12 hours on a .49 loop was something I had taken into consideration when training. Consideration means I was worried about it and spent time running the .47 mile loop in my neighborhood during training. As it turns out, the course was deceptively long feeling. The inability to see across the pond, with the exception of a few sections, the rise after the bridge and the downhill before the narrow turn/Aid Station and timing pads all contributed to the feeling that the loop was taking the runner through, for lack of a better word, more and was a huge help as the race progressed. I can honestly say the biggest problem with the loop was a pain on the outside of my right calf that came from the constant turning. I also regret not wearing a larger shirt-from both a fashion and practical sense.

I wanted to run a steady race-keeping pace slow and conservative in the beginning-allowing me to have a good finish. Most of that plan worked. Mack was a tremendous help-keeping food and drink available to me as I passed by. I drank every third loop. Running went well until about hour four when I had my second experience (of the day) with everything becoming very bright and quickly dark. I had come in to our tent and commented that I felt off. Mack was walking with me when I asked to turn around because I thought I was going to pass out. This was the low point of the race. After ten minutes in the tent with my eyes shut and sweating (and being checked on by Shelley, Todd and Jim S) I felt better and wanted to go back out. I walked two laps. I felt better and started to run again. I was concerned and spent the next hour or so running and walking at a conservative pace. Ginger Ale replaced, for the time being, Endurox and I listen to my need to ice water and Pringles. I worked through the mental junk that can come with feeling sick.

As time progressed, I felt better and was happy to spend the rest of the race running and walking in a practical and practiced way. The middle hours passed with music, time to see other runners and dodge the ducks who had been enticed onto the course by people feeding them. I changed into a different pair of shoes and a new shirt. This was the longest part of the race and yet the one that stands out the least because it was marked by nothing remarkable. I ran. I walked when it felt needed. I enjoyed the rhythm of the run and community that formed on the loop.

The last four hours were, in many ways, my favorite. I felt as though the goal of 60 miles was possible and having a goal (as well as clearer sense of time until the end of the race) allowed me to run well. The earlier problem was, in many ways, paying off. The slow moving early in the race gave me legs later in the race. It felt good to return to a pace at the end that was similar to the pace at the beginning. Every loop ended in clapping, a smile from the people at the aid station and the renewed sense getting closer to a goal. I stopped at 11:58:13 with 124 loops and a distance of 60.78.

We are lucky people-all of us who connect to ourselves and others when we are out of a comfort zone. I admire all the runners and walkers who were out on the MTD course. Thank you to all the MTD volunteers, to all the runners and walkers who helped make the day terrific and special thanks to Mack

(and the blessing of heated seats.)

Ben Clardy

Dewitt, NY