

## Pichi Richi Marathon 2009

There's more to running than just running! Especially when you travel with a group of friends to the Southern Flinders Ranges to finally fulfill a dream of completing the Pichi Richi Marathon...

It is about living in Sydney for 12 years and reading about the Pichi Richi Marathon and thinking that you would one day like to do it.

It is about moving back to Adelaide and finding out that 2006 is to be the last Pichi Richi and deciding that you will be there.

It is about the long training runs you do on your own as part of your preparation. That run from Tea Tree Gully to the top of Mt Lofty and then down to the Waterfall Gully car park where you have arranged for your wife to pick you up. It is her question as you lay across the back seat, totally exhausted, trying to recover, "Are you alright?"

Or that other run when you kept running up Lower North East Rd into the hills and having to stop when you got to the top of Anstey Hill, and finally getting to the Tea Tree Gully pub, but just not being able to go any further and ringing home for a lift even though it is less than a kilometre away.



It is about getting an invitation to the 50th birthday party of the wife of a very good mate and discovering that it is on the night before the last Pichi Richi and it's in country Victoria. It's knowing that you have to be there and it is about telling her at the party that she doesn't know what you are giving up to be there and her telling you, for all the times that you have dragged her husband away, that she doesn't care!

It is about hearing that the last Pichi Richi is not actually the last Pichi Richi and that you might in fact get another chance to run it.

It is about driving back from Alice Springs on the day of the 2008 Pichi Richi after a 6 month contract and the wind pushing the vehicle all over the road, and being glad that you are not out there running and wondering how the others are doing.

It is about putting your hand up, weeks out, to join the Dodgy Brothers Tour to run Pichi Richi 2009.

It is about the emails you get from Dodgy John about how much money to put in each envelope.

It is about being in Port Augusta two weeks before the run and your colleague driving you up and down the course and deciding that it wasn't a very good idea after all.

It is that last run you do on the Friday morning before the run.

It is finally heading off from Regency Park on the Saturday morning at 9.00am and then stopping soon after in Clare for toilets, coffee and cake.

It is about that pie you ate in Stone Hut. And the beer in the Quorn pub.

It is the pre "pasta party" party on the Pichi Richi Park porch and deciding that this would be the ideal location to eat a plate of bacon and eggs as you watch the runners go past at 10 o'clock the next morning.

It is the colours of the ranges around you as the sun sets and you head inside for the pasta party.

It is meeting old Keith from the Port Augusta Lion's Club at the pasta party as he serves the salads and rearranges the dressings. It is him telling you that he will be at the 15km drink stop and you promising to give him a special cheerio call tomorrow.

It is Barbra Streisand blaring in the common room as you head off to bed. It is going to bed at about 11pm and finally getting to sleep then waking up with a start all ready and finding out that it is only 12.30am. It is not sleeping well and the relief when you can finally get up at 5am.



It is the long drive down to Port Augusta in the dark and seeing once again how steep the course actually is and wondering if you will ever be able to get back up these hills.

It is catching glimpses of the walkers in the darkness, who are already on the road and wondering if that was Sue Worley out there already.

It is meeting the Taiwanese runner at the start and finding out that he ran Traralgon two weeks ago and will run Gold Coast next week and that this run will be his 181st marathon.

It is the light rain stopping and the wind dropping just as the sun starts to rise over the distant ranges as you head off from the Standpipe Pub.

It is the colours of the sky behind the Flinders as you run past the stopped traffic and head off across the first of the Port Augusta bridges.

It is running with Stan Trzepacz for a while and then deciding that you must be running too fast if you are running with Stan, and slowing down.

It is catching up with the early starting Sue Worley and her telling you that it isn't going to plan.

It is knowing that Kym Williams' elderly parents will be up at Stirling North, looking out for them but not seeing them. It is hearing later that the old man has been rushed to hospital and that Kym has been dragged off the course.

It is running with Peter Kotsoglous who you met the night before at the pasta party. It is his stories of how the run began and how after running the first few runs he returned to run the last Pichi Richi and hasn't missed a run since. It is teasing his support crew about spoiling him too much.

It is calling out a hello to old Keith at the 15km drink stop and him finally remembering who you are when you are closer to the 16km mark!



It is about an old friend from Stirling North pulling up next to you for a couple of minutes to say hello, then disappearing only to be found over the next hill sitting behind a sign posted into the ground. "Good Luck Terry. All good things come to an end". It is seeing that sign at the top of every hill all the way to the final summit at 36kms.

It is running past Jenny the Orienteer at about the 20km mark and then her running past you at the 36km mark.

It is running down into Saltia Creek right on 5 minute km pace and feeling great. It is the cheering and encouragement of the half marathoners 15 minutes out from their start.

It is you telling yourself that if you can manage a two hour second half you will finish with a 3 hour 45 minute finish time.

It is hearing the train tooting as it goes past and finding out later that Lynn Symthe's dad is the driver.

It is knowing that Doug Smart is some way behind you but knowing that if you start to slow then he will pull you in. It is about hearing his footsteps as you struggle up the last long hill.

It is Michael Slagter catching you and encouraging you as he leads the first of the half marathoners past you.

It is the number of times you tell yourself that it is just about getting to the top of that last hill at the 36km mark and coasting home.

It is getting to the top of the last hill at the 36km mark and finding out that you don't have any "coast" left in you.

It is seeing the "Quorn 5km sign" and the Quorn silo in the distance.

It is running for 10 or 15 minutes and that silo not getting any closer.

It is about not feeling good at the 40km mark and your stomach turning and reaching over the last two kilometres.

It is finally taking the turn off the highway and then seeing the oval and



seeing that the finish line is thankfully not so far from the front gate.

It is running through the gate and the finish chute and crossing the line and stopping and the congratulations and the tears and needing to be left alone to allow your body time to recover.

It is about finishing in a time of 3:52 and realising that you have run a 2 hour 7 minute second half.



It is about waiting in the barbeque line for about 15 minutes to get a soft drink to be told when you get to the top of the line that they have run out. It is the two cans of solo that you finally get to drink when the stall gets some more drinks in.

It is the joy of hot water as you recover under the shower and it is the pleasure of soap, shampoo and clean clothes.

It is waiting for your number to be called out from the lucky number bin then discovering after half an hour that you actually have to take your number off your shirt and put it in the bin to have any chance of winning. It is finally putting your number in the bin and it being called out straight away and winning a \$30 meat voucher at the Quorn Butcher.

It is being called up on stage with all the other marathon finishers to get your medal and be photographed.

It is the beer and the chicken parmigiana at the Old Willows Brewery Restaurant with the crowd after the run and meeting John and Carol Bennett there.

It is the long drive back to Adelaide in the dark.

It is getting back in the bus together at Port Wakefield having just heard that Kym's dad has died.

It is getting back to Regency Park and everyone dispersing and getting their cars or lifts home.

It is getting home and crawling into bed.

It is not being able to walk the next day....

It is about dreaming of running even splits next year...

Yep... there's more to running than just running!

Terry Cleary  
First time Pichi Richi Marathon Finisher

