
Charlotte UltraRun 50k 2013 — Training, too

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Charlotte UltraRun 50k +

I completed my first 50k (which was not part of something longer) yesterday - the Charlotte UltraRun, on the Greenway, starting off Mallard Creek Rd. While this was a training run, in pursuit of a bigger goal (4/6/13 - return to the Umstead 100), it's always hard to see others pass you by, and even lap you in this 5x 50k event. But overall, I was pleased with my 6:39:33 - a pace of 12:52. The best thing about it was that I ran nearly 5 consecutive, consistent 80 minute 10ks. (Last year, I dropped out with an injury during the first running of this event, after 30k.) My my calculation, my marathon time would have converted to about 5:37.

I started dead last (on purpose) in a field of 78 50k runners, joined by 72 doing the 10k. After walking the first 10 minutes, I began running about 20-30% of the time, never more than 2-3 minutes at a time. After the first lap, I doubt I ever ran more than 60 seconds straight. Most of the last two laps, I did 30 second jogs. The kilometers were marked off, and I soon figured out that my pace was coming in at 8 minutes per. Sometimes, I would run a little longer to reach the marker if I calculated it was necessary to maintain the 8min/k pace. Twice, I had to make up a couple minutes for comfort stops at 20k and 40k.

It was pretty cold, starting in the mid-20s at 8:00am, but it warmed up steadily, eventually reaching 45 or so, and I shed one of my 5 shirts after each of the first 2 laps. After lap 1, I discarded my gloves and switched from a stocking cap to a baseball cap. I was able to re-supply each lap, picking up peanut butter crackers, energy bars and my own drinks. Three times, I picked up a half banana at the 4.5k turnaround. On the fourth lap I used my PED (Performance Enhancing Dr. pepper, laced with FHE - 5 hour energy).

Since this was an out and back course, with a spur, you regularly saw the same folks. Course officials recorded your number (at 4.5k and 5.5k) and directed us on and off the spur (at 5 and 6k). The longer it went, the fewer runners there were. Most noticeably, the 10k group dropped out. Then, realizing that I was lapped twice by some of the fastest, and several starters dropped after 3 and 4 laps, it grew lonelier over the course of the day. After beginning at 8:08, it was nearly 3pm when I finished. After each of the first two laps, I texted May my times. She was in NJ visiting family. I knew she was busy mid-day, so we didn't text or talk again until I was done. During the last two lonely laps, I texted JT. (What can I say? Slow and alone is...boring.) Half-way, I turned on my iPod, which helped some.

There was one deadline; runners were expected to start their last laps by 2:30. I was nearly an hour ahead of that, so the only reason to push the pace was to reach a training goal, and get home. I was definitely conserving energy, eating and drinking plenty. My goal for the day would be just over half done when I completed the event.

After three weekends of increasing mileage - 12/8; 15/10 and 22/12, it was time to stretch a bit, and get into the overnight hours. Last year, after being injured much of February, I eventually did an alternate hour overnighter - about 4 miles (a couple early 5s) for 13 of 25 hours, totaling 55 miles. The goal this week was to get into the mid-50s, but by doing a couple long blocks - late evening and after midnight. The 12:52 pace was probably a little too fast to support the goal, and my feet were hurting, along with general soreness, when I started the first block at 6:30pm. I set the treadmill at a conservative 3.5 mph, thinking I might keep this up for 3.5-4 hours. After an hour, I dropped the speed to 3.4 and later to 3.3. Mid-way, I took a couple minutes break. I stopped after 13 miles, content that I had covered "an Umstead lap." Time elapsed: just under 4 hours.

I went upstairs to watch some TV, eat, and put my feet up. My biggest complaint was sore feet. I had run very little the past week, after having a sore arch following the 22/12 weekend. Other than a couple Ibuprofen, I wasn't doing anything special. I drank some soda and sipped half a FHE. No change of shoes or socks during the 50k; of course, new shoes and socks for miles 32-44. After 1am, I went downstairs with a third pair of shoes. Seemed like a good time to start breaking in a new pair. (Probably not, but I knew it would be mostly a walk.) I started at 3.3mph, but that didn't last long. I covered 8 miles at not much faster than 3.0 mph. Just before 4:15am, I headed back upstairs. I was thinking that these last painful steps should add to my total, but I'll stick with a measured 52 mile tally, in just over 20 hours elapsed time. I was surprised to avoid significant sleep issues. I was awake from 3:30 Saturday until after 4:30 Sunday morning.

The soreness has dissipated pretty well today. I will swim once or twice this week, and I'll jog/walk a couple miles mid-week. Next weekend will be light, although I don't know exactly what that means. Maybe a 10/8 moderately slow effort.

I was not overly encouraged by the effort at first. However, I'm ahead of last year, and I think my body is adapting. I'm having no blister issues. Yes, I'll have a couple black toenails, but that's not much of a concern. I have to back off when I feel my left Achilles or my right arch getting sore, but these have been manageable. Following the 11/3 IM, November and December were necessarily light. I missed the first 7 days of January due to illness, but totaled 95 miles for the month, along with 8000m swimming. I still haven't been on a bike, but hope to start soon on once- or twice-weekly 30 minute spins. I won't go for cycle rides until mid-April.

Next event - 3/9 Columbia, SC marathon (4 weeks prior to Umstead). They have a 6 hour limit, so I could go at the same pace as Saturday or even slower, closer to 14 min/mi. Race time is 7:30 - 1:30, so I could be home by 3 or so. I'm thinking of doing 2-3 blocks of 10-12 miles. I know that there wasn't a lot of support for my 55 mile alternate-hour training run last year, and you might not think I listen to input, but feel free to weigh in on anything you've read here. Sometimes, I modify plans based upon combined comments.

Cheers.

