

Training In The Tropics

This time last year I was introduced to my new training partner, Linda Brittingham from the good old US of A, via our gym coach, Aussie Tim Gaffney. Together we were going to tackle the Singapore marathon, my first international. Program in place, gym instructor on standby ready to rock and roll, there was only one small problem - the heat ranging from 31 to at times 39 degrees on top of that humidity at 99%. This was not going to be my normal marathon training. I would have to dig very very deep to achieve this goal. My pride was the first thing, moving a lot slower and not having the race walkers to gauge myself by and also having Linda as runner I was left to my own devices. It was a long and lonely road, unlike the clinic back home where the group was lively and if they put as much effort into there walking as there talking they all would be Olympians.

The next hurdle was the routing, with all the Shell houses in one area. Linda was adamant that no one was going to know our business otherwise we would have every Tom, Dick and Harry tagging along. Water stations were also a problem with the heat. We were drinking a 600ml bottle every ½ hour. No problems without solutions so they say. We found a little shop off the compound tucked in the middle of nowhere which opened around 7am. So between Linda's house, my house, the local clubs and this shop we were pretty much sorted. Now just the time on our feet!

The marathon was to start at 5:30am so for our longer walks/run we would have to leave around this time. Singapore gets lighter an hour after Brunei so we had a little more time up our sleeves. If nothing else it was a great detoxer. I sweated where I didn't think was humanly possible then out on our 3-1/2 hour walk I started to feel really strange and without warning stopped breathing. I have never in my life felt so scared and the more frightened I got the worse I felt. Later on I was told I was hyperventilating and water wasn't doing it for me. I had to get some goodness in sooner rather than later and I knew that for water our motto was to "have it before you need it". So every time I went out after that I had this horrible feeling that the same thing was going to happen.

Well the date of the marathon arrived and I couldn't do anything more to prepare. We caught a taxi at 4:45am and headed off to the start. My god what a party atmosphere. They have the pens for your approximate finish time and true to form Linda and I squeezed into the 3-4 hour slot (man were

we kidding ourselves?'). The first pen was for the Kenyans, Ethiopians etc and the other Olympic hopefuls. The gun goes off and away we went. After about 1-1/2 hours we heard sirens and saw flashing lights. It was the Olympic hopefuls on their way back and I had more than 4 hours to go. The Asians were very hard to walk with as they run/walk in bunches with 7 or more abreast and they tend to stop right in front of you because you are a mere walker. I thought then and there my goal was to finish and not to worry about my time. Going along the road leading up to the finish was like I was the only person in the race.

The course is very flat and starts off through the main metropolitan area of Singapore. Two hairpin turns one in the first half and another towards the airport at about 28-30kms with electronic mats placed on both as you always get the odd person testing the system.

I vowed I would never ever do another Singapore marathon again.

PS well it's a bit like child birth you soon forget the pain and I've started my training for the 2008 Singapore marathon a little older and a whole lot wiser

Good walking folks

Kim Fougere (aka Camp Mother)



1. Panaga Beach near home



2 Local mosque in Kuala Belait



3 Rod pump behind Brunei Shell Head Office