

'19 HALCOMBE RELAY JULY 27

It was a cool but clear morning at 7.30am, when Eric & Michelle pulled up outside to pick up Anne & myself for the journey south, Sue was already on board. On the way down we also collected Dave Barrett, Serena, Helen and Peter Fox.

We stopped at the café next to the BP garage, just before Wanganui for our coffee fix and sustenance.

When we eventually arrived in Halcombe, the sun was shining, the sky was blue with no clouds and getting quite warm, so on getting out of the vehicles, the thermals were already being peeled off.

The organisers had changed the format this year, inasmuch there were no staggered starts according to the total times, teams expected to do. This time it was a mass start.

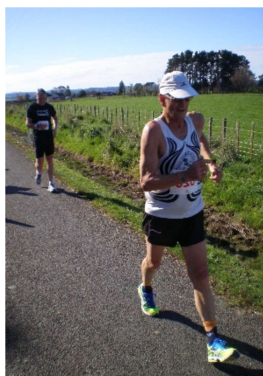
Eric had sorted out the two teams and everyone agreed, either team could win this, with Helen's team being the favourite, just. I heard Anne say to someone that she needed at least 5mins start over Helen; these two, were team captains and doing the last two legs.



Mike Lane had driven up from Wellington to take part and was resplendent in his club skirt, sorry kilt. Did anyone know there was such a thing as a racing kilt? Well I didn't but Mike showed me his one which was a bright blue tartan. I forgot to ask if it was the Lane Clan tartan.

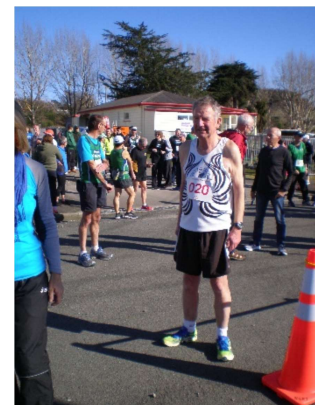
Now, one thing Eric didn't know when he drew up the teams, was that Mike has been training to take part in the Sydney, City to Surf race and was nearing the end of his training regime, so was as fit as a buck rat.

He was leading out with Dave as his opponent. Poor Dave, he never stood a chance despite giving it his all. At the changeover, Peter had a four-and-a-half-minute lead



over Eric and is walking the best we've seen, this season. Now fast as Eric is, he's not going to make this up on Peter over 5km, especially as he's still recovering from a hamstring problem.

This, was the longest leg and one of the hilliest; didn't anyone tell you, you shouldn't 'do' hills with injured hamstrings Eric?



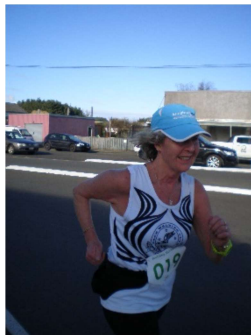


Despite this, he only conceded 35secs on Peter to hand over to Michelle. Of course, by then Serena was nowhere to be seen. The sun was beating down and the first three starters certainly felt it. Michelle did very well, only conceding two and half minutes.



I was fortunate inasmuch I had a small cool breeze blowing against me. Sue was nowhere to be seen and except for a few runners and one walker doing the whole thing, I was my own for my leg. To keep myself amused I counted all the cans littering the ditch on my side of the road; 23 in total, Dave.

It was a pity Sue and myself never started together as our times for the fourth leg was only 24secs apart, so would have been a good race within the race, as would Eric & Peter's.



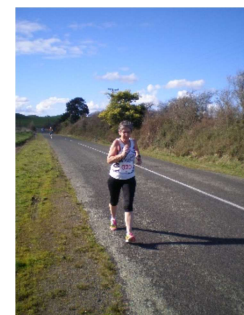
Handing over to Helen, she had the task of running down Anne who now had a nine minutes lead. She's getting fast this girl but not that fast. Anne had the bit between her teeth and was going flat out, so much so, she was feeling sick but was able to keep that to herself, lol.



The fifth leg isn't very nice with loose gravel for much of the way which ends in a flipping great hill which is also covered in grit, so pretty hard going for walkers.

At the end of the fifth lap, Helen had clawed back one and a quarter minutes. Serena was all set to take over from Anne if she was feeling too bad but she was determined to finish ahead and declined the offer.

Helen despite pulling back the lead by two minutes by the end, was always going to come second. So, the favourites had to settle with being runners up. Ivor would be pleased to see his change over technique being used again and again in this race.



We had a group photo before going into the hall for tea and tab nabs, listen to a few speeches and hear our teams were third and fourth, then get back on the road home. No stopping this time as the ABs were playing at 7.30pm



I really enjoy these little trips away, there is a great feeling of comradery and it's a bunch of laughs, with everyone at one time or another being the butt of jokes, all taken and given in good spirit. So many thanks for the

organisers of this trip, our drivers for getting us there and back safely and everyone who took part in the race, for a very good day out.

VIEW FROM THE BACK