

CROSSFIT and CROSSFIT ENDURANCE ROCKS!!!! In July, I joined Crossfit Coronado due to an article that I read in *Competitor* magazine. The simple reason: I was intrigued by the prospect of improving my marathon times in a way that reduced my training mileage and increased my strength, flexibility, speed and endurance. I began running at age 56, training for the 2005 San Diego Rock n Roll so that I could run with my daughter and raise money for cancer research with Team in Training. I continued to post better times over the years, with my 2011 San Diego PR of 3:38:02.

Marc took me under his wing, with some pointed lessons from Charlotte on Thursday nights. Clint continued to encourage me despite my many inabilities due to surgeries, injuries and basic upper body weakness. My 6am Crossfit companions have been incredibly encouraging and supportive. And Michelle Petit has been a wonderful training partner.

This weekend I had the privilege to witness the US Olympic trials for the men's and women's marathon. Due to the course design, we were able to see the racers up close and personal multiple times, beginning with a 2.2 mile loop, followed by 3 repetitions of an 8 mile loop. From our vantage point we saw them seven times before the finish. Awesome is an overused word, but it described the battles for the three spots on both teams. I was really happy that Meb Keflezighi, a San Diego product, triumphed, setting a PR after having run the NYC marathon in November, a very challenging choice for an elite marathoner. Watching him thrown down the hammer on Ryan Hall (who set a torrid pace right from the start) at mile 25 was only surpassed by his incredible joy as he passed the 26 mile mark, waving an American flag he had accepted from a spectator.

Shalene Flanagan, an accomplished track star with 12 national and world records at various distances and settings including the bronze medal at the 2008 Olympics at 10,000 meters, running only her second marathon, set a PR by over three minutes, outdistancing another San Diegan, Desiree Davila, who finished second in Boston in April. Here too having a strategy and executing it was the key success ingredient.

On Sunday morning, in the pre-dawn, Melinda and I stood in Corral A reviewing our targets for the race and our execution plans. I had gone out too fast in the early stages of the Twin Cities marathon in September in my quest for a PR. I decided that I would hang with the 3:40 pacer for the first half of the race and then gradually increase my pace. The 22,000 runners in the narrow streets of downtown Houston assured that I would not go out too fast, but at mile 5, the pacer advised me to go out ahead of her rather than waiting too long and then having to run too fast in the latter parts of the race.

So, I went ahead with the plan to run a steady pace until the last 1.2 miles and then give it everything I had left in the tank at the finish. In the end, I ran a steady 8:11 pace throughout the race until mile 25. When I asked for more, it wasn't there. The concrete surface throughout the race had taken its toll, requiring me to run-walk that last stretch.

Throughout the race, I concentrated on what my Crossfit Endurance coaches had taught me in their retooling of my running form. Marc had trained me to run by picking up my feet rather than pushing off accompanied by a forward lean. Charlotte had shared a phrase—"do a perfect 50 strides." So, throughout the race, I kept saying to myself, "Lift, Lift, Lift." Whenever I found myself straying back to my prior form, I repeated Charlotte's "50 perfect strides mantra." Michelle and I had been discussing the focus on interval training rather than long slow running the Saturday before the race. I listened to Meb's advice and repeated it to myself continuously through the race, especially the second half—"Trust your training; trust your training."

Tamar had worked on my foot which felt very tender after the Dallas marathon, a race run in horrible cold and rainy conditions and one in which I relied on my new "barefoot" running shoes. He taped me on Thursday afternoon. He wanted to make sure I had no doubts about the taping. As it turned out, on Thursday evening, I realized that I had doubts about my shoes and the taping, so I decided to revert to my usual running shoes and to forego the taping. Given the concrete surface and my discomfort with the feel of the taping, my decision to eliminate any source of negative thinking and to "Trust my training" (and the gains I had made at Crossfit) proved correct.

Despite my inability to generate extra speed in the last 1.5 miles, I achieved my goals—a PR (3:36:32, although I missed my top ten age group finish by one position (11<sup>th</sup> out of over 183 60-64 year olds). I was also very satisfied with my ability to run a steady pace throughout the race. Marc has been trying to help Michelle and I find "our pace."

I am so excited about what lies ahead for the rest of the year with my Crossfit and my running goals. And I am so grateful to Crossfit Coronado for helping to transform me. Clint's and Marc's encouragement for adopting the Paleo eating program, fortified by my reading of the *Paleo Solution*, is another ingredient in this transformation. Tamar will continue to work his magic on my body. As a total approach, I am reinventing myself, a gift from all of the Crossfit and Crossfit Endurance experience. My sense of gratitude to all of you is only surpassed by my sense of excitement about the future. Thanks! --Bill