

I did the Great South Run yesterday. Unusually for this event, the sun was shining, although the wind was very strong, particularly along the seafront (first mile and last two miles).

I planned it meticulously this time no curries, beers or late nights. Instead, pasta, early night, porridge in the morning, plenty of fluids and a solid race plan for every mile. My aim was 1 hour 20, so I planned to run 8 minute miles throughout. I knew there was a slight incline between 4 and 5 miles so I factored in a 8:30 mile there with a couple of 7:45 miles to bring me back into line in miles 6 and 7.

Everything went like clockwork. I felt strong throughout and held myself back from upping the pace, knowing that the headwind would make the 2 mile home straight tough. One slight hiccup occurred when I passed the 6 mile marker. My Garmin said 6.08 miles, and I was timing my miles according to the Garmin rather than the mile markers, so this meant I was 18 seconds behind schedule for a 1:20 finish (yes I really did plan it that strictly). I chucked in a couple of 7:30 mins/mile until the seafront, but by then my Garmin was 0.13 miles out from the official distance, and I turned into the final two miles at 1:05:00, needing to post two more 7:30 mins/mile to get under the magic 1:20. I felt like this was definitely doable until the wind smacked me in the face. Very, very strong. I laboured through it, feeling like I was sprinting but not actually going very fast! Everyone was slowing down and I lost count of the amount of people I overtook. In the end I came up just short, with a finishing time of 1 hour 20 minutes and 19 seconds, 1828th out of 21,000 overall.

And over ten minutes faster than last year, when my running was in its infancy. Gotta be chuffed with that.

Jon