

Race Your Pace Half Marathon: 28th March

So, after getting the mud off from the Horseplay 10k, and not having enough sleep (bad time to have a race...when the clocks change), I headed off to Dorney Lake, for the Human Race 'Race your Pace' half marathon. This is not a race for superhero costumes, or one to enter if you like the cheers of the crowd to help you along. This is a flat, timed training race, with pace runners on fixed schedules. There were 2 races, one in the morning for 'performers', who can run a sub 1.45 and another race in the afternoon for the 'improvers' with a finish time of 2 hours +.

I arrived at about 9.25 for the 10am start, only to find that the car park was almost bang on the 1000m mark of the rowing lake. So I hot footed into to registration, and began getting ready. It then came over the tannoy, 'could all remaining competitors make their way to the start line', which after asking someone, I found out was some 750 m down the rowing tank. Ooops. Managed to drop off bag, make appropriate last pit stops and arrived at the line with a minute to spare.

As I was using this as constant pace, training run, I headed off to the very back of the pack, and stood with the 8.30 minute per mile pacer (they also had 6, 6.5, 7, 7.5 and 8 minute mile pacers in this race). The klaxon went and we all moved off with the very front runners setting a very brisk pace. I avoided the temptation to head off quicker and stuck with the 8.30 guy....

For at least half a lap, before I got itchy feet and wanted to inject just that little bit more pace. So off I went and settled around an 8.15 per mile pace, and set about plodding round the rowing tank, counting off the miles. At the start of the third lap, I got overtaken by guy who eventually won. Thankfully he wasn't followed by the entirety of the field, though it was a little disheartening as I had reached the 7 mile marker and he was somewhere in his 10th mile.

I managed to continue the 8.15 ish pace until, I got to the 10 mile marker, where I suffered a real dip in energy and worse than that...Pace!! I looked at my Garmin and realised that I was now doing over 9 min miles, and was being overtaken by people that I had passed a lap or so ago. I put this down to the race the previous evening, took an extra gel, and set off to try and keep up.

I got to the end of the rowing lake, so had about 2000 m left to run. Both the recent gels I had taken lept into effect and I started to perk up again, and I decided to make it the best finish that I could. So I wound the pace up quite a bit and was comfortably running a 7.30 pace for the first 500 meters. I then passed the 12 mile marker, which gave me an even bigger spur on to up the pace, so I upped it to around 6.30 per mile pace and hoped I could hold on. I caught the people that had passed me in the preceding couple of miles and caught some people that had been ahead of me for the whole race.

I managed to keep the pace and crossed the line with a gun time of 1.49.13 (with a chip time of 1.48.48). This made me 273 out of 304 finishers of the morning race. If I'd have waited and raced in the afternoon, my time would have given me something 69th place out of 441. Overall the race was excellent as a paced training run.