

## Simon Leaning's interesting take on his Dunedin Marathon 2019

Hullo all

I've been invited to share my experience of running the Dunedin Marathon for the first time, so here goes...I'd left preparation till fairly late in the piece, so overcompensated by doing a lot of training in a short time, plenty of mileage and lots of hill work with the occasional race thrown in. Needless to say, I began to develop some quite nasty niggles as well as training in some interesting winter weather conditions which brought on a bad cold. I was curious to see if I could still run under three hours as the last time I did that was about six years ago at the final Marlborough Marathon event.

The big day arrived and I walked from home in Ravensbourne down to Logan Park and from there we were all bussed out to the Royal Albatross Colony. As the sun came up, I certainly didn't regret being there!

The anti-inflammatories kicked in and we were away, after a long and jittery wait. I made the slight hills ok and reined myself in from taking off too quickly, while at the same time fixing on the guys ahead of me. Not too hot with a slight breeze, I took my chance at the 15km mark and stepped it up...started to feel like my old running self again (Ye-haa)!

At about 25km's the niggles started...I hoped for the best and just kept going...into town and through some familiar training territory...coming into the final 10km I began passing one or two more of my fellow marathoners.

At 5km from the finish I was passed by Clinton Manderson (well done that man)! I managed to keep Clint in sight though wasn't about to try and catch him - I was just running to finish at that point. We were met by a deluge of runners/walkers as we came along Minerva St and onto Anzac Ave...the final furlong!

As we ran into the stadium and around the ground towards the finish I saw the clock and was astounded - 2:48?! I gave all I had, Clinton beat me by 7 seconds...we shook hands and congratulated each other, to the cheers and shouts of my partner Hilary, my mate Brett who'd competed in the 10km walk and my old friend Don Bate who'd taken part in the 10km run. I'd finished in a time of 2:49:06, 5th placing overall and first old fella over the line (felt like it too)!

Thanks to all who encouraged and supported along the way, the race organisers and marshals and Chris Sole for keeping in touch and maintaining the contact.

All going well, will be at it again next year!  
Until then - stay safe, run well and ENJOY!