Race Report – Krayzie Ks 100 mile (Fri 14 Nov 2019) – Chris Bisley

With three 100 milers in the bag for 2019, most would think that I would have been well confident for KKs. However, few knew that I had in fact had 2 1/2 weeks of no running coming into the race while trying to sort a hip flexor issue that had arose during my final heavy training week. So, going in I was unsure of how the injury would react (I knew I was fit and in pretty good running condition), however that didn't mean much if you cannot run! Silver lining though, the other niggles I had been managing were feeling great, so I had my fingers crossed.

8am Friday morning I was sun screened up and chamois creamed up and ready to run. KKs is a lap race which consists of 13 laps (of 13kms) in which you travel two loops (6.9km / 5.9km) and each lap has around 600m worth of climbing (that's a fair bit when you repeat it 13 times).

With the standard countdown and "GO" we were off and following our noses (as we were all first timers at this event). I moved my way to the front of the field and settled into what I though was a steady pace and was soon running alone. Now the prerace plan was to run and hold 1hr 40min – 1hr 50min laps (which would give you a finish time of 24hrs). Well as I hit the first climb the body was feeling great, running was easy and flowing, my hip flexor was pain free (Thanks Chris Sole) and things seemed to operating well. Feeling strong I held that intensity for the rest of the loop. Running the top section, bombing the steep downhill, jumping the gates, it was on, sub 24, todays the day…. Second loop of the 1st lap was just as good, bounding up the long set of stairs, charging through the mud, taking risks on the steep downs. Remember the goal time (1.40-1.50), well for some reason still unbeknown to me I hit the first 3 laps all in sub 1.30hr pace and the fourth in sub 1.35hr. The race plan had gone out the window. My crew told me I was going too fast, they told it was going to get hot, they said be careful. Didn't listen.

Through the first 5 – 6 laps I kept to my nutrition plan, however the intensity I was running at was not a good match for the type of food I was taking in add the heat of the day and it was a ticking time bomb situation. I clearly remember pounding up a grassy climb and noticing how much I was sweating. Like pouring down my face and arms, just flowing out of me. I thought, I am taking in plenty of water each lap, a salt stick each lap, I did heat adaptation training beforehand, I'm good in the heat, I can handle this. Yet little did I know I had another 5-6hrs of running in that heat plus the fast start (you can see where this is going).

By lap 7 my appetite was completely gone (not in the play book), I moved to fluids and fresh fruit (that still tasted ok and was going in ok). My lap times had slowed, and I was struggling with cooling myself and praying for night-time when it may cool off a little. As my crew could only stand by and watch my deteriorating state as I started to stumble through each loop. Night did come, people said it did cool off (however I felt I did not and regularly took dips in

the streams that regularly crossed the course). Feet were sore, legs felt ok but the nausea was only just bearable and energy levels were dirt low. Possibly the most shit I have felt in a race. 60kms to go, feeling like this, only taking in water and a little fruit, things weren't looking great. Plus I was starting to turn on myself, "why did I push that hard in the heat at the start?", "you finished three of these and your going to fail at the final one". Things got a bit dark and I truly started to hate what I was doing and what I was doing to myself. This was not good pain and suffering, I did not feel I was 'learning something about myself' or 'pushing my limits'. I felt ill, unwell. Then the vomiting started. Now I have thrown up in ultras before, but never full-on empty your system of everything you have consumed in the last 6hrs. This took it back to the days of beer bongs and drinking games! Heading up the steep climb on the first loop I felt a gurgling that I knew was leading to something. I made it to the top then leaned on my poles, opened my month and the heavens opened. Fluid, creamed rice, mashed potatoes, tonnes of fruit, out it all came. I must apologise to fellow miler competitor Leo who unfortunately poorly timed his passing of me and witnessed some of this, he did kindly check in on me, I said I was "ok", and he said "I will leave you to your business" and moved off into the darkness. And at that moment my business was not great. Another couple of spits and gags around the rest of that loop, and it looked like survival would be the only option from there on.

This continued for another 3 laps, as I take on water / coke and some fruit at the end of lap aid station, then throw it up before I left to start the next loop. People had long stopped calling "your crushing it!", now it was more "just hang in there". I had come to terms that it wasn't going to be the perfect race, I was in damage control, and I was starting to do the math. Three laps at two and bit hours per lap, I can handle another six and a bit hour (trying to put some context on the situation). Focus on the parts of the course you enjoy, run what you can, power hike what you have to, run all the downhills, sub 24 is gone but the course record might be in reach, get as much done before the sun comes up, the next drink might stay down, you might freshen up. Well with 3 laps to go a couple of drinks did stay down, half a salt stick, a sip of cola, I felt my body soak up the fluid, some strength returned to my power hike, someone said your moving better now. We were turning this ship around. I told myself get it down to two laps, then you can push the second to last lap and let loose on the final one. I always look forward to that final lap and can really use it as a powerful motivator. Now we were getting into good pain and suffering. Two laps to good and I had 4.5hrs to get under the course record. The last 17 odd hours were now a bit of blur, it had turned into a 26km effort. I knew I was digging into reserves that should be left for survival situations, however I thought to myself that I had worked so hard over the last 14 months, why not burn some of those reserves, it's the last effort of the year. And that's what I did. Pound the ups, run the flats, try and bomb the downs, run the batteries dry. I took a peak at my watch when I knew I was about 15mins from the finish line, I knew I was well under the course record and a wave of joy and relief washed over me. I held what I felt was a good pace through to the finish and luckily had the 25k field there to cheer me in. Arms in the air, cross the line, fall to the ground. I just could not believe I had endured that and was so glad

it was over. So happy to finish. Disappointed to miss the sub 24, but stoked to run another course record. Finish time 24hrs 41mins.

I spent the next 30mins throwing up everything I tried to take in (it was not a dignified scene, and I do apologise to those who had to witness it).

This was a brutally hard technical race, but with a beautiful course with wonderful people competing and running it. Congratulations to all those miler finishers, and well done to the brave racers of the other distances.

Big thanks to the following people who form Team Bisley Endurance, my mum (Alene) and sister Cath who took care of my girls whilst I did this silly thing (KKs). Chris Sole for helping to fix my body and ready my mind. Kate Spenceley for crewing through the long night and feeding me even though we both knew it was going to come straight back up and for not doubting a finish.

A special mention, thankyou and love to Nicky Bisley (my wife, crew chief, advisor and truth provider), she has been with me every step of the way, not only support through training phases, but crewing at races whilst completing the 50kms at each of the events we went through. I have witnessed some special moments of inner strength and selflessness from Nicky this year and I am truly greatfull (and lucky) to have her by my side both at races and in life.

Unsure what 2020 holds re ultra-racing (well I kinda have a good idea but am not saying anything yet), however if (when) I toe the line, it will be with 100% commitment and a true drive to do my very best. Thanks for your support. Team Bisley Endurance.