

August 2021

# LEITH LASSES



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LEITH HARRIER AND ATHLETIC CLUB

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## VULNERABILITY – why do we run from it?

*"Vulnerability is not winning or losing. It's the courage to show up when you can't control the outcome"* Brene Brown  
As our female numbers dwindled through the cross-country season (across all the Dunedin athletic clubs), we can find ourselves asking why? Granted the weather is awful, an usually large number of injuries and ailments have hit us and life in general is rather hectic through the winter months, we cannot pass the notion that more can be at play....

**Am I fast enough? Do I look the part? Will I be last? Will I be able to finish? Will I let the club/ team down?**

The human brain has a natural tendency to give weight to negative experiences. Psychologists refer to this as negativity bias – our brains are wired to scout for the bad stuff and fixate on the threat. This in mind, running is inherently one of, if not the, most vulnerable sports one could possibly compete in.

*"Don't show your weakness or your competitors will take advantage and defeat you. It seems logical, but what if, in fact vulnerability is a key component to unlocking your physical potential and achieving peak performance? What if working together, in an individual sport like running, is the best way to success?"*

<https://sarahcanney.com/blog/2018/04/17/boston-marathon-2018>

We all feel vulnerability in the sporting arena but it's how we approach it; we must embrace courage and give little to apprehension. You cannot be brave without being vulnerable and you cannot achieve great things without being open to failing.

Brene Brown gives a powerful talk on Vulnerability "The call to Courage", currently streaming on Netflix



## JULY'S EVENTS

July hit the lasses hard with injury, illness and commitment clashes putting a halt to participation numbers.

Despite it, a few lasses managed to keep the Leith flag flying in the brutal winter climate. Christine battled the Ariki XC course in Antarctic conditions while Lydia rounded out the Otago XC champs as the solo female Leith entry.

Lydia and Janice also competed in the Mackenzie off-road half marathon. Lydia 2<sup>nd</sup> female overall and Janice 2<sup>nd</sup> in her female age grade.



## NZ ROAD RELAYS

The Takahe-Akaroa Road Relay on **Saturday, 2 October 2021** is a historic New Zealand road relay, running since 1935. The event brings together teams of all ages from across the country to compete over a 48-mile course from the Sign of the Takahe to the town of Akaroa on Christchurch's spectacular Banks Peninsula.

Leith hope to enter at least one female competitive team if you are interested or have any questions do let Lydia or Chris know.



# DUNEDIN MARATHON COURSES

Entering the Dunedin Marathon this year? Do make sure you study the course!

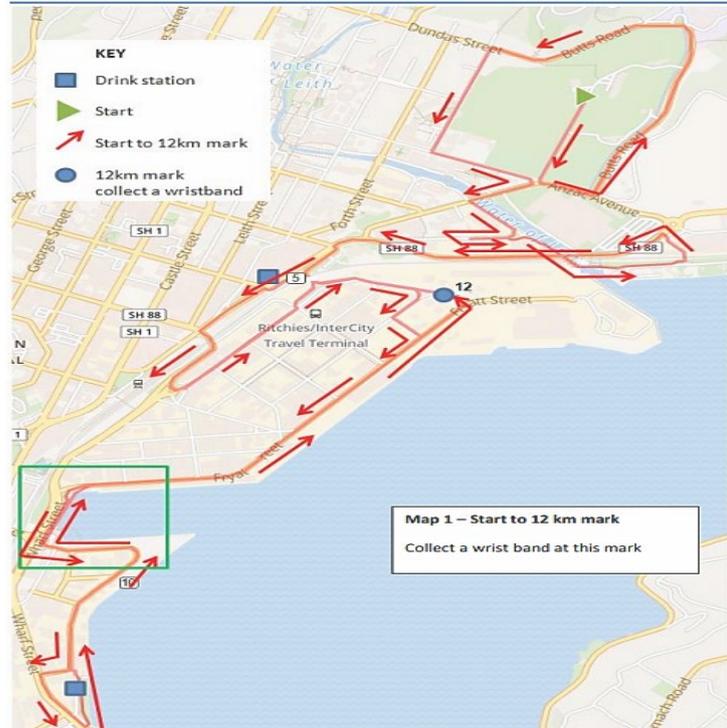
Since the event moved from the finish in Port Chalmers, the course has become increasingly centred around the city's roads where many twists, turns and annual changes to all courses have occurred. This year we will find ourselves finishing the event at Emerson's Brewery (a change from the past few years finish at Forsyth Stadium). Although still in the harbour vicinity, the courses have largely changed this year and include things such as a mid-way wrist band collection for half marathon runners.

Past years have seen several runners take wrong turns or run further than needed despite ample marshals. 2021's course appears to have a number of significant changes to each distance. Please study the maps or better yet familiarise yourself with a run, walk, cycle or drive of your course. <https://dunedinmarathon.co.nz/>

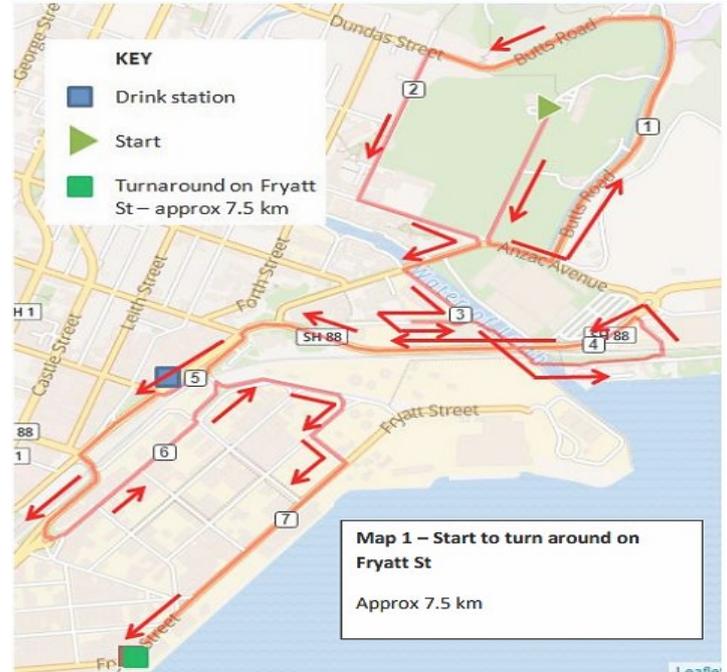
## 2021 Emerson's Dunedin Marathon – Full Marathon Course



## 2021 Emerson's Dunedin Marathon – Half Marathon Course



## 2021 Emerson's Dunedin Marathon – 10 km Course



# MAN'S BEST FRIEND???

We do love our four-legged furry friends, but any runner will know of their unpredictability when running toward a canine unfamiliar to you. Between 2017 and 2020, ACC took on 54,799 dog bite related claims in NZ, many of which, no doubt, involved those out for a run.



The motion of running toward a dog triggers their prey drive sparking an overwhelming desire for the dog to chase. Aside from being a natural behaviour that is left over from their wolf ancestry, chasing is fun for a dog and triggers the pleasure centre of their brain. This behaviour can go from fun, like when your dog is chasing after a tennis ball to a real nightmare if the drive becomes too high and a dog begins displaying inappropriate behaviours e.g. aggression or biting. When we couple this prey drive with a highly territorial dog, a runner would no doubt find themselves in a spot of bother.

A short online article gives some sound advise on how to approach a territorial dog when running and what to do if you do find yourself being chased (or worse).

<https://www.cesarsway.com/when-dogs-attack/>

# NOT CREATED EQUAL – why are men so much faster?

We've all run a race when we're at our absolute physical limit then a bloke comes flying past us barely puffing as they effortlessly glide across the terrain – oh how Physiology can be so cruel to us! So (in a nutshell), what is it exactly that gives them such an advantage?

Firstly, men can have up to 20 times more testosterone than women do. Testosterone plays several roles, including telling the body to create new blood cells and keeping bones & muscles strong. A man's leg is about 80 percent muscle, compared with about 60 percent muscle in a woman's leg. In addition, women have more estrogen, which leads them to have a higher percentage of body fat which can also lead to a small disadvantage for running performance.

Women have smaller lungs than men do, meaning their maximal oxygen consumption (VO<sub>2</sub> max) is lower. The VO<sub>2</sub> max for a sedentary woman is about 33 millilitres of oxygen per kg per minute, while a sedentary man's is about 42 ml/kg/min. This means women have to work harder to breathe in oxygen that they can deliver to their muscles. Women's hearts also tend to be smaller which means they have a smaller stroke volume – the amount of oxygenated blood that the left ventricle pumps out in one beat. Women do have a higher heart rate, but it's not enough to counterbalance the lower stroke volume. Each time the heart pumps blood, that amount of blood is less in a female which means less blood and oxygen are delivered to women's muscles. To top that off, women also have less haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen to the body's tissues.

As far as biomechanics, men usually have longer legs than women, meaning they have more room for muscle, as well as a longer stride. Moreover, because women tend to have wider hips, their running stance is not as efficient as a man's. Muscles work efficiently when everything is in line, if your hips are very narrow, like a man's, then your quads are running straight from your hips, past your knees in the same direction you're running. For a runner with wider hips, however, the muscles almost have to turn a corner with each step.

So, to sum it up, women's lungs and hearts have a smaller capacity to breathe in oxygen and pump oxygenated blood, respectively, and they have less haemoglobin in their blood to carry that oxygen. Moreover, women tend to have less lean muscle and shorter legs than men do, as well as wider hips, which makes running less efficient.

It's quite impressive; even with these disadvantages at baseline, some women are still quite competitive with men.

*Credit: Laura Geggel, Why Do Men Run Faster Than Women? Live Science, 2017*



## RUNNY HONEY

After discovering honey had a similar carbohydrate profile to commercial sports gels, researchers from the University of Memphis compared the performance effects of honey vs. carbohydrate gels. Results showed honey was as effective as the sports gel in preventing fatigue and boosting performance, with no side effects or water supplementing needed!

What's more, because honey is already digested – the bees do that for us – the sugars hit our bloodstream much faster without the need for metabolising.

One tablespoon provides around 17 grams of carbs – two or three per hour during a longer run should keep you buzzing along!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

7 August: National XC Champs

15 August: Surf to Stadium

22 August: Otago Road Race Champs

26 August: Leith Harbour Free – course 1

26, 27 & 28 August: Great Naseby Water Race

28 August: Clyde to Alexandra Road Race

Every Tuesday: Chris Sole's training group, approx. 5:20pm from Caledonian and fields

Every Thursday: Group run from Tomahawk/ Chisholm Golf Club, approx. 5:20pm.

Every Saturday: 5km Park Run 9am at the Botanical Gardens

