

My Boring race report.. don't yell at me if you waste part of your life reading it.

So Joel says to me one day last year..

Let's do the Barkley..

Im like seriously? I like to know when a race starts.. If it wasn't for that damn random conch start maybe.. I don't know.. let me think about it..

After a bit of reading.. I started getting excited.. F*ck it, lets do it..

Sent in my application stating.. yea I suck. Let me in..

Got a condolence email.. read it again.. and again.. about the 49th time I read it I realized I really was in..

I was pretty booked up with races the first part of the year, at least once or twice a month.. but whatever its good training right..

So my Barkley training consisted of Racing.. be sick for 2 weeks.. heal up for a week.. race.. be sick for 2 weeks.. heal up for a week.. repeat until mid march. Looking back now I realize this was the perfect formula to earn awesome results..

Week of the race I'm starting to get excited, making sure all my ducks are in a row.. scattering them and doing it again.. when I get this email from Joel..

Dude I'm going to drop..(paraphrased and translated into dudespeak)

It occurs to me at this point that doing a race with someone else may not be the best idea overall... hadn't really been an issue with Joel, he is one of the few people who I think are dumber than me (very few). After a few emails back and forth he agrees not to quit until I get there..

When I get to Tennessee I have flashbacks to growing up in Indiana area, I have participated (yes I do know big words, they just scare me) in adventure races in the Midwest and I had loved running around in the woods. When I moved to SoCal I almost went back home because everything is so dead here. I was just happy to see so much life around.. . Overall this might have been part of my undoing..(Love blaming everything on external factors it makes life easier)

The first day Joel and I decided to go to the first book (from last year), not push too hard (just a couple of days until the race) and it did feel good. Joel got some of his confidence back, and I felt loosened up. Of course I said the same thing everyone always says .. that first hill isn't so bad.. followed by the standard comment.. that's the easiest hill on the course..

Yes.. but if it had sucked I would have been in trouble.. .

The race itself..

What a blast.. I made some serious mistakes during the race, and when I quit.. I was still smiling, (well maybe on the inside, perhaps on the outside it looked like I was baring my teeth...) The course is beautiful, the hills are grand and alive with the sounds of music.. or that might have been the ringing in my ears from falling on them so much..

There are so many race reports out there, you can pretty much put together how the race goes overall so I am just going to add a few comments from my perspective..

The hills aren't bad.. there I said it.. no one hill is bad.. however the constant up and down seems to shred your legs until they feel like pulled pork.. I felt fairly good going uphill, but down my feet kept slipping.. I was used to shoes with more traction but shortly before the race I had to change them out due to blistering.. the shoes I wore instead might as well have had grease on them..at one point, going down rat jaw I had fallen and landed on my hand... which had unfortunately landed on a stub. I didn't want to look at first because I just felt like I was going to look down and see it poking through the top of my hand..it didn't.. it wasn't that bad.. but as you will read later im obviously a puss. Luckily the French guy with us had some bandages or I would have had to jam as much dirt in it as possible so it would stop bleeding (that works right??)

Navigation..here is where I made my biggest mistake.. during the first lap I didn't pay enough attention to it.. occasionally I would look at my map and say yep I'm here somewhere.. But mostly I just ran alongside Joel and enjoyed being in the woods..

Ok if your still reading this you either have way too much time on your hands or your mind skips around as badly as mine.. so I'll get to the meat of why I wrote this.. I quit..I quit I quit I quit..

I've never quit a race in my life.. this is my first DNF (yes its almost a guaranteed one, I knew that going in, and I was ok with it..) Since the race, I have been turning over in my head why.. and though I have come up with many excuses I have to boil it down to just not being prepared..

Mistakes

- 1) My training.. not taking it serious..
- 2) Preparation.. I have lots of mountains where I live.. I didn't spend enough time on them.. I should have read more race reports.. to get a feel for it..
- 3) I was enjoying myself too much on the first lap.. I should have focused on Navigating, understanding the trail.. this may have been crucial if I hadn't been such a puss and quit after 1 lap

Basically at the end of the lap, when Joel quit, I realized I had made too many mistakes and I was essentially starting blind in the dark and rather tired..Overall I have to admit I was strong enough to continue physically (at least for a bit) but realizing all my mistakes, and how much they were likely to cost me I just said boohoo I cant do this waaah.. then I went back to my tent curled up in a fetal position and cried for mommy..

With all that said.. this race has scarred me for life.. I can no longer seem to take other races seriously.. all I want to do now is fix my mistakes and go again..I've even drawn up this thing called a training plan.. not sure if it will work but it has to be better than what I did this year!