

Saturday January 18th was the first time I lined up for a 100KM race and I was super excited. I trained not as much as I wanted, but if my knees were not going to fail, I was ready to do it.

My friends were all targeting less than 20hours, but my running buddy and me were targeting 26. We kept a good pace until the CP1. I was super tempted to take pictures with my phone as the beaches were empty and the water was greenish blue and the sun radiant; but it was only the start of a long race, so I decided that focusing on running/walking was a better idea. .

After 30KM my buddy couldn't run anymore, she started to have tendonitis and her quads were burning. We arrived at the beginning of the ascent of Kai Kung Shan just after watching a nice sunset. It was painful and slow, but we know some friends were waiting for us at Kei Ling Ha and that kept us motivated.

We arrived at CP5, our friends were there waiting for us with hugs (I apologize to them for the sweat and smell) and they had collected our bags with change of clothes and brought some yummy sandwiches. The others were on fire and were out of the CP5 2 hours before us at least, and 2 or the other running friends stopped at this CP for knees injuries. After some small talk while we changed and ate, we were ready to run again!

The ascend to Ma On Shan is never an easy one, but with my belly full and my friend who couldn't properly climb steps, I started to feel asleep while walking and waiting for her. I decided to lie on the side of the path and sleep, but the cold kicked me after 3mn and I was up and "running" again. I did it again after 5 km and felt a bit better. I drank some gels and water to wake me up while walking.

At CP6, Gilwell Camp, I switched to my "don't argue with me" mode, and urged my buddy to have her injuries checked, while I was gulping glasses of Coca-Cola. She didn't feel like walking again, so we decided to take a quick nap under the warm blankets, and after 30mn as my friend was not going any better, I decided that it was better for her to go back home, and I rushed out of the Camp (after drinking one more Coca-Cola glass).

I had so much energy, I was running pass many fellow runners, in the dark night, and I was feeling really good! And then, after a few more kilometers, I started to feel tired again. I drank water to wake me up.. and then I realized I forgot to refill my water at CP6! So I couldn't take any gels as I can't have it if I don't wash it down with water. So I decided to go as fast as possible to the next checkpoint and take a nap there. But, like 3 kilometers before the check point, I saw a pavilion, the one after Lion Rock and before Beacon Hill from where you can have a clear view of the city, and I felt like it was a good place to take a nap, besides, from that km to the end I know the trail better than the back of my hand, and I can set the autopilot mode; I sent a quick message to my boyfriend, so he doesn't worry if he's checking my times and it's not in line with my plan. When I

woke up 15 minutes later, 3 other persons were also taking a nap .. so I guess my spot was a good choice.

I still felt a bit tired so I decided to have a good rest at CP7 because what matters most is to finish and not the time. I arrived, with cheers from the volunteers, it felt so warm and not only because of the fire camp, the vibes also were good and I'm not only talking about the playlist, I didn't need to stay as long as planned (although I would have enjoyed staying longer) and went back on the trail with strong motivation, knowing I could do it!

I was on autopilot, and was just hoping I won't have a decrease of energy when I'm walking in monkey hills, as I don't want to nap there or take out anything that might look like food for them.

I started to feel a tendonitis between my hips and my thigh, but kept on going, just a bit more slowly than what I was hoping but it was fine. I still manage to run a bit until I reached the dam and CP8, and then I thought, "alright, 20KM to go, I got this!" I took my phone out to send a quick text, and saw many messages from my friends, cheering me up and tracking my race online. That build up my spirit and I was ready to go again.

I then walked up Needle Hill, slowly, alone, but feeling so good. The sun rose and I had this weird sensation, as if I just woke up, on a Sunday morning for a super early training. At the top, I felt good, even with my tendonitis making me going super slowly downhill, I was confident because during trainings my boyfriend put in our brains that once Needle Hill is walked, we're almost there! Even though this is not quite true, it works with my mind.

At CP9 I couldn't stop, only 10km to go. I stopped a bit to refuel my energy, and refill some water just in case, but I knew I was on the right way and I just needed to stay on my autopilot mode. My boyfriend and two other friends who were also at CP5 came back to see me cross the finish line and knowing that they were waiting for me I could really not stop or they would be super upset to have come all the way for nothing...plus I have no idea of how to go back home at this part of the race.

I started to walk uphill again, and I was overtaking most of the persons with less person overtaking me for once even if everybody was walking in slow motion. I wanted to run on flat path, but since I felt so tired not so long before, I decided to play it safe, and run only when I'm close enough to run until the end.

As always the Tai Mo Shan impressed me, and as always I was up there faster than I thought. It was funny to see people hiking or arriving to the top for another race. I didn't want to run, but my legs couldn't stop, so I ran the first turns, and then just walked a bit like in a Nordic walk way. I was already smiling, and people were greeting and encouraging me even saying my name. At the parking lot, I sent a quick message to my

boyfriend to tell him I was almost there but taking my time, and then again my legs were faster than I thought I could go, I wasn't running yet because I couldn't remember exactly where the finish was; and then I saw it, I handled the poles in only one hand and started to run, and crossed the finish line after 27 hours and 21minutes.

I wasn't the fastest at the race, but for sure I was the happiest at the finish!

I want to give huge thanks to the volunteers, who were so friendly and so energetic even during the night or early morning, and also to the race directors who made this race possible and so enjoyable. I am now waiting for the registration for next year to open!

For the quick follow-up, my friend was in pain because of her quads, but once back home discover she had a feet sprain and the doctor asked her to stay at home for five days. Me I am doing fine, just Created by vrichardwaiting for the tendonits to be fully gone so I can trail-run again.