

Mansfield Tri Club – Race Report
Shakespeare Marathon – 29th April 07

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| Name | Stuart Pinches |
| Email | stuart.pinches@tesco.net |
| Race Name | Shakespeare Marathon |
| Date | 29 th April 07 |
| Type | Run |
| Distance | 26.2 |
| Venue | Town/rural |
| Course | Undulating |
| Weather | Overcast |
| Race Contacts | http://www.shakespearemarathon.org.uk/ |
| Competitors | National |
| Overall Result | 196 |
| Other Result | |
| Club Results | I was the one and only |
| Winner Info | Colin Deasley 2.39.49 |
| Race Report | Not a tri report - but a major target for me in 2007 and part of the build up to an Ironman in 2008 |

At the beginning of the year I set my running targets of

- 1) Completing my first marathon
- 2) Completing in Sub 3:30

Goal 2 went out of the window when 12 weeks into a 16 week training plan I had a stress fracture of the right foot. Consequently I haven't run for nearly 5 weeks. It was touch and go as to whether I would do it. In the end my foot felt sort-of Ok so I said I'd give it a go. I was prepared to drop out if things got bad.

On the 29th April I lined up in the historic town of Stratford-upon-Avon with another 3499 competitors for the full and half marathons. The starter announced that there would be 1100 people running the full marathon.

The course was a circle of the town centre (1 mile) and then out into rural Warwickshire for 2 loops. It was mostly flat except for 2 hills and the return on each loop was along a former railway line converted to a cycle path.

The claxon sounded and I ran my first steps for 5 weeks. Things felt Ok. My idea was to pace at 8 min miles and be prepared to slow up if necessary. As is normal the scale of the event took over and I ran the first 3 miles in 7:13 average. With the first loop being a mile I actually overtook some of the slower starters before heading off into the countryside.

I was surprised by the sheer number of spectators that lined the route. Every village we passed through had lines of people applauding. There were drinks and sponge stations every 3 miles. A very well organised event. It was surreal to hit the cycle path because the apart from at water stations there was nobody. All you could hear was the pounding of feet and all you could see was dust clouds rising from peoples feet.

At the end of lap one there was a split - half marathon went on to the finish - full went on for another slightly longer 2nd loop. The roads were noticeably more empty for the second loop. I went through the half in a time of 1:39 - 5 mins inside where I should have been. I felt great. All this was to change at the end of mile 16 as my bad foot started to give me some grief. I then went through the psychological barrier of 18 miles - the furthest I had trained to until my stress fracture. My pace was now beginning to suffer my time were creeping up from 8 to 8:30 to knocking on the door of 9 min miles.

A colleague told me that the last 6 miles is harder than the first 20. At 20 miles I was at the furthest point and turned back on the cycle path to Stratford. It couldn't be that bad. It was. each mile was purgatory and was getting slower. By 23 miles I had kissed good-bye to 9 mins and was up to 9.30. I walked through the drinks station at 24 miles meaning that my time for that mile was 10:16 - officially the slowest mile I have ever run. I hung on in and finally came on to the recreation

ground by the the Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre. I crossed the line timed by me at 3.37.25 - Good enough for 196th place overall.

Today I am in pain to say the least. My bad foot has swollen up - so that's not good. However I am really pleased to have achieve target 1) for the year. The time was almost irrelevant after my foot started to pack in but I am chuffed to have kept to 8:16 min miles.

The event was well organised with superb crowd support. In addition there were more than enough drinks stations (including isotonic drinks on lap 2) and toilets all along the route.