

## **Wadi Bih 2012**

Twenty Milers took to the hills in Dibba to complete the 72 KM team relay through Wadi Bih along with about 750 other runners, one Miler, Scott Bunce, completed the whole run on his own, this was Scott's 1<sup>st</sup> ultra-marathon, and what made it even more astonishing it was only two weeks after Scott's 1<sup>st</sup> ever marathon, the Dubai marathon. Scott finished in 8 hours and 30 minutes. Maybe this will encourage more Milers to try the solo run next year.

About 10 Milers camped out on the Dibba beach the night before the run enjoying a warm night, a few beers around the campfire and good banter before the 5:30 wakeup call and it was quite astonishingly no one got lost on the Thursday night or Friday morning of the race.

Each Miler's team provided a view on the day's events.

### **The Fast & the Furious**

The fast & furious team consisting of Wadi Bih veterans Amelia, Neil & Chris and Wadi virgins Ben and Dorian. We started with no real target other than to catch the other Miler teams and have some fun in the mountains. However, after passing 3 teams on the first stage and watching Neil and Dorian really going for it on the next 2 stages we decided to target the time of 5 hours 8 minutes that Neil and Chris had ran a couple of years ago.

It was tough work racing up the hills to the summit and the whole team were really pushing it through the dust and sun, then someone mentioned that maybe we could break the 5-hour mark. It seemed to be a difficult task when we reached the summit in 2 hours 46 minutes, but we all decided to go for it on the way back down - if only the car could keep up?

We had a couple of stages through the Wadi of playing cat and mouse with the Milers Chariots of Dire team which was good fun, until we showed our class and left them chewing more of our dust. From then on in it was just a matter of pushing all the way to the finish giving us an impressive finishing time of 4 hours 57 minutes and 3<sup>rd</sup> place team. A great day had by the Whole Team.

## **The Chariots of Fire**

The team consisted of: Malcolm Gatenby, Jim Varley (Late transfer with Amelia), Neil Munro, Ross Miotti & Elaine Maguire

The post-race plan was to enjoy the day, go for a good time, no pressure & sing along to Malcolm's famous 80's Disco tunes. Whilst queuing up for the Start, Mr McCann threw down the 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 gauntlets, stating that his team would overtake us before we reached the top. Plan A was out the window, plan B (or pride) took over. Every one of the team ran their hearts out and we got to the turnaround point without being overtaken by the Fast & Furious in just under 3 hours. From this point it was cat & mouse with the Mirdif elite team.

Due to the congestion at the top of the narrow hill Neil ran nearly 3 stages (including the horrible downhill) before our car caught him up, still no sign of the elite team, Elaine running the final 2 k of the 7<sup>th</sup> stage in a very fast time, handing the baton onto Malcolm.

Gauntlet No 2 from Chris. Chris predicted that Neil Smith (in his 40's) was going to overtake Malcolm (in his 50's) over the next & longest leg 4.2K stage 8. Malcolm took the baton about 200 metres ahead of Neil, he then set his training shoes to turbo charge and ran the fastest 4.2 KM of his life beating the younger, fitter Neil to the hand over point. Ross ran off being chased by Dorian, who just managed to overtake Ross on Leg 9 (out of 13) the 1<sup>st</sup> time the Fast & furious had overtaken us.

However, the next stage number 10 the pendulum had swung back to the Chariots of Fire, when Husband and wife Jim & Amelia were racing against each other. Amelia in the lead after a great leg from Dorian, but Jim upped his pace, and with a final thrust took Amelia from behind to win leg 10. With only 3 legs to go, we could not keep up with the elite team and finished in a good time of 5 hours and 27 minutes finishing 12th team and very pleased with our morning's work. Next year it will be enjoy the day, no pressure.....Oh and we still did sing along to the tunes.

## **Mirdif Milers Greased Lighting**

Some wag from the Mirdif Milers threw some names together and called the team “Greased Lightning”. Our team consisted of Nico Kruger, Stefan Schell, Hedley Calvert, Andrew Gregory & John Kett .

With two 50+ aged runners we were presumably suitably handicapped and did not require the presence of a female runner. The handicap however got a lot worse when Hedley Calvert spent all of Thursday in bed with a bout of gastroenteritis. Well, he was not only in bed but out of politeness we did not ask. He also decided that there was no way that he was capable of running.

These Australians are a tough breed though and he eventually capitulated and agreed to join us. The group arrived at the Golden Tulip on Thursday evening, pitched tents, rolled out sleeping bags, made a fire, barbecued some meat and drank beer: Guy Heaven.

On to the race the following day at 7 AM. Stefan, Andrew and I had participated in the Wadi previously and knew what to expect but Hedley and John were novices to the event. In view of Hedley’s discomfort, we agreed to give him some shorter runs and kept his runs (no pun) for later in the day. All went really well and every member gave his everything during his allotted stage. John Kett turned out to be the ace as he reeled off a couple of sub 4 minute per kilometre sections. We were even starting to dream of an easy sub 6 hour finishing time.

Reality struck at exactly 30.7 km when I started ascending the second last stage up to the halfway mark. Seasoned Wadi Bih runners know exactly what this section is all about and our naïve expectations came crashing down. The halfway mark finally came at 3 hours and 18 minutes. However, the team responded with a strong rally and made good use of the downhill running.

We finally finished in 6 hours and 3 minutes, tired but pleased and we were already planning an onslaught for next year and ways to break that elusive 6 hour mark

## **Four Teachers and a Banker**

The Mirdif Milers Team, 4 teachers (Elaine & Dave Forsythe) and a banker (Paul Haywood) (yes that's banker) headed off to Dibba via the slightly unconventional RAK Airport route but despite the detour made it to the start line eager to go. After some cheeky banter from the ebullient Adrian Hayes the team set off at a relaxed pace with thoughts turning quickly to how soon could we break out the food. Had there been a prize for eating and loo breaks this would have been a one horse race. Once again Elaine led the team with aplomb sticking with the tradition of allowing the newbie the dubious honour of tackling the gradual incline of section 11 (sorry about that Viv).

All in all it was another great day with some solid performances and in keeping with previous years the team displayed great spirit and an excellent sense of humour finishing in a respectable 6 hours and 30 minutes - see you next year.

## **Post-Race Controversy**

As Club Secretary, I am dismayed to hear that despite the upstanding reputations of the runners in Dubai, who are born with an inbuilt spirit of fair play and a mutual respect of the running community and deference to the teams that turn out there have been some accusations of poaching. A certain runner who proudly adorned the yellow vest, despite saying the material was a little abrasive, has suffered an accusation of turning against his adopted club. Even worse, there are also accusations that Wadi Bih was a medium to promote a certain vehicle leasing company.

I do not know how anyone who knows the Milers could believe that they would give up the sponsorship of a well-known local beverage, even for the glory of a team prize. As a club we work very hard for our sponsors, we are often seen using their products and frequenting their establishments, some of us even make it their life's work. The photo attached that has reached me is currently being looked at by our legal team.



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