

## Day 1

Woke up early for 1.5 bus ride to start of race. Altitude at start was about 6,500'. Start was in a town that was lined with children singing to cheer us on. Race director said first 3 km was on paved roads and then cobblestones. I ran about 500 yards, turned left and saw this hill that I thought I would never make it up. I actually started walking as I knew I would not be able to run it. That started a very long day. It was 24 miles of cobblestones mostly uphill. The up hills were brutal. Similar to that hill in Yosemite we had so much trouble climbing. There was very little opportunity to run as the course was not dirt or paved. Did not want to risk any injury. Walked with Fred and a girl from Arizona. Fred stopped at mile 14 which was more than he had expected. The last 10 miles were pure hell. The hills got worse and so did the weather. It was foggy until about the last 1.5 hours when the temperature dropped to about 35 degrees and the skies opened up with rain. One of the race volunteers actually gave me an umbrella to use but it did not matter. The last hill I needed every ounce of mental energy I could put together. After crossing the finish line, I could not stop shivering. I had come down with hyperthermia and it was just terrible. Thank G-d Fred was there. He wrapped me in my sleeping bag and put a wool hat on my head. He had to feed me as my hands were trembling terribly. I had no appetite and it took almost 3 hours to regulate my temperature. Both the medical doctor and Fred told me not to race the following day. It had taken me almost 9 hours to complete the stage and all I could think of was getting warm. Terrible feeling. Anyway, made it to sleep without eating. We finished at almost 13,000'.

## Day 2

Woke up early to find similar weather conditions as previous night. Mid 30's with rain. I knew I was in no condition to race and decided to sit it out. It was a 20 mile stage which ended at start point so we did not need to be transported to another location. It gave me a day of recovery. I was weak from being sick and very hungry. Fred kept saying I needed hot food but I could not get any. We had a group meeting in afternoon to prepare us for the following day. I just was not feeling well with headache and just was not myself. I went to the medical doctor to tell him I was not feeling well and he told me not to race. I told Fred I needed to lay day as I had no appetite but he forced me to dinner to eat. That was what I needed, hot food. I felt much better and even had a good night sleep.

### Day 3

Weather was supposed to be like day 2 with rain and fog but by race time 6:30, the sky was just beautiful. You could see the 3rd largest summit in the background. We saw Everest during a good portion of the morning. The first 14 miles were straight uphill on the brutal cobblestones. We were told the last 8 miles were straight downhill but it was trekking and not running. All and all, Fred and I completed the marathon day in almost 11 hours. It was completely dark at finish. Never once did we sit down or take a break. The terrain takes it toll on your body. After I warm shower and dinner, off to bed.

### Day 4

Fred decided to take the day off and convinced me the same. Only at the last moment did I decide to walk a couple of miles to try and stretch. There was nothing else to do in town except hang out at the hotel. I told Fred that we should at least walk for awhile and he agreed. We got to the start line and we were told the walkers had started an hour earlier and we would have to run the course. It was 5 minutes to start time and we needed to make a decision promptly. Fred opted out but I decided to try. My legs were tired but not stiff. The race was actually on pavement and not cobblestones. It was a 13 mile stage with first 8 miles downhill and the last 5 straight up. I do not know how but I finished in 2:20 sticking with my plan on running downhills and walking up hills. Stiff after race but still has some gas in the tank.

### Day 5

About a 1.5 bus ride to start. On bus at 6 so not too much time to rest. Last stage was 17 miles. The first 10km straight up a killer of a hill. The last 9 or so miles was supposedly downhill but there were some up hills thrown in. I ran with this girl from Arizona and we used each other's energy to push each other. Again, we stuck to walking up hills and running on downhills. The course was again paved which made it much easier. Their paved roads are what you expect from a 3rd world country. There are streams that you need to stop and walk around which adds to the challenge. Anyway, stage 5 took us 3:37 minutes. Another long bus ride back to hotel from stage 1. Award ceremony and dinner and sleep.

Recap:

I did not even know I would run the marathon on day 3. I certainly had no intention of running on day 4. Somehow, I was able to get it together and run (and a lot of walking).

When I look back, I finished 4 of the 5 stages of what is considered one of the most brutal extreme races in the world. 80 miles out pure torture. Very proud and happy no injuries.

A special thanks to you as always. I could have never done you without your love and support. I am so blessed to have you in my life. Can't wait to see you and hold you.

Enjoy weekend. Picture looked beautiful.

In Darjeeling until tomorrow then back to Delhi. Plans are to go to Agra Monday/Tuesday.

Sent from my iPhone

**The course traversed vast tea gardens, isolated jungles and small villages. Participants also got opportunity to have the spectacular view of Mt. Everest, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse and Makalu (four out of five highest peaks in the world). According to the runners, the race trail is most beautiful and exciting. It also offers a rare and once in a lifetime opportunity to enjoy the cold breezes that hover around the rhododendron forests which holds more than four thousand types of flowering plants and three hundred varieties of rare ferns.**