

Omer Leibovich

Daytona 100... Not sure what I was thinking! I've never been so worried and excited about a race. This was obviously way out of my comfort zone... In the months leading up to the race, I was questioning my decision to sign up for this challenge and at the same time, did everything I can to strengthen physically and mentally. Talking to a lot of other 100 mile finishers prior, I knew one thing, at some point, it's all in your head!! It's going to hurt... So why am I doing this???

Race day started with all anxious smiles. I was able to sleep only 4 hours the night before, but I was ready to go! Right off the start, I've settled into pace with 2 great runners, Carla and Julie. We all had the same goal of completing out first 100! We ran 8/2 through AS1 and onto the beach...

Along the way, we made a new friend that tagged along with us, Tara. She was also going for her first 100. We all moved as a group at the same pace, still 8/2, feeling really solid and comfortable, till someone forgot it's November!!! Somewhere on the beach, temps start nearing 90's and we all felt it. This is not what I've signed for, I was planning on a lovely and chill beach run! I needed to cool off quick!

Time to introduce my crew... I knew I'll need help through this race, and wasn't going to even try running it uncrewed. Carol and Ana were my first choice since they've crewed me on my 100k. However, since it was much longer race, I've asked Eric to join us on this track as well. We ran many miles together, and he knew what I'm comfortable with... All 3 excepted and agreed to join me. I knew I'll be taken care of.

So mile 16 was the first time I saw my crew. Quick sock change, ice bandana and off we go... Still the 4 of us run/ walk together at the same pace. The long, hot beach section took its toll on all of us. We dropped to 7/2 and try to keep cool. I did a pretty good job on hydration and nutrition and never felt signs of

dehydration. Somewhere on that beach we've lost Julie, who needed to take care of her feet.

Now 3 of us, we got off the beach at mile 31, and kept going in the blistering sun. Not a drop of shade, but still spirits are high! Clicking off the miles through Saint Augustine into Butler Beach, I started feeling my feet getting blistered. Running with ice bandana for hours helps keep you cool, but all the ice melts and go down to your feet. I've changed socks and shoes again hoping to keep my feet dry...

Somewhere along Crest Beach, Tara had to slow down, due to some stomach issues, so now it was me and Carla moving forward with our fresh pacers Eric for me, and [Chris](#) for Carla. Spirits still high but we both had some issues that slowed us down...

We hit mile 50 in 11:49, 11 minutes faster then my plan! We had a little party, and quickly moved forward, after all, we were only half way there...

We've reached AS5 at mile 52, and was greeted by an all star crew!!! Many thanks to [Run Alex Run](#) who took care of my feet, [Barry Brendan](#) that saved me the last Guinness he had, it was the best Guinness ever! And of course the legendary Bob Becker! From here on, our little team got separated since I had really hard time with my feet and moving slowly. I saw Carla couple more times, but she pretty much took off...

The next 30 miles were bad! EVERY step hurt, trying to change socks, shoes, wrap and unwrap my feet, but couldn't get relief. My crew was shining and just keeping me positive and forward moving. I couldn't complain much, as I was passing experienced runners who were stragging with various issues... The heat and millage took its toll on everybody!

AS8 at mile 82 was my breaking point. I really didn't want to move forward any more. I was in pain and so tired I kept falling asleep while run/ walking. By mile 84 I couldn't take it anymore, and needed a nap!

Carol and Ana set up couple of towels on the pavement in the middle of a parking lot, and let me pass out for a whole 10 minutes!!! Best nap ever!!!

Getting up and moving forward. I was actually even running a bit, able to tolerate the pain, I could almost feel the end... Getting back on the beach at mile 88 with a beautiful sunrise, changed my mood a bit and made me move a little better. Couple miles down the beach we heard cheering from one of the hotels along the beach, looking up, it was non other then [Kimberly](#) and her husband Pete, who drove down from Georgia, after Kim completed her first marathon, the Soldier marathon. Huge boost to keep going... 8 miles to go.

At mile 93, AS9, we got hugs and BACON from [Kristen](#) and quickly continue for the last stretch. 5 miles on the road around Ponce De Leon lighthouse and back on the beach for the last 2 miles! Eric was using everything he got to move me forward, it wasn't easy! As I entered the beach Kim was waiting right there and only at that point, I knew I'm going to finish this thing! Got the biggest hug and congrats, and as we were moving towards the finish line, we were joined by the rest of my very tired and amazing crew! I couldn't thank them enough! We all ran together to the finish line! What an awesome feeling to cross the line after 100 miles...

This ultra community is just amazing. Runners that cross the line 5 hours earlier were still there cheering runners as they slowly came through. Huge sense of accomplishment mixed in tremendous pain and extreme tiredness, I did it! First 100 miler done!!!

So thinking about it for the last 3 days, why to do it? Does it worth the pain, the time you put into training? Not sure yet, but I'm signing up for my next 100 soon!

I wanted to thank the RD [Dave Krupski](#) for a great race, all the volunteers, you all did amazing job!

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