



## Race Review - Race 3 Silvan, 25 August 2013

### TODD KEATING | BITUMEN IS BORING RACE 3 AMBASSADOR

Having a little local knowledge can give you comfort in the familiarity of the terrain and heaps of confidence. You can also start seeing things a little out of perspective, you know, hills are not as steep or long, trails are a bit flatter, your legs are so much stronger, you are just ripping up and down those trails.....

Up at 6.15am (awake at 5am), get my gear on, check my pack- 1ltr Endura, 2 gels & a spare, rouse the support crew, pack breakfast for them and eat some for me now and head off to Silvan. The weather forecast has actually been accurate with rain leading up to the event and clear on Sunday. Perfect for a trail run.

After arriving I caught up with Adele of Rapid Ascent, gave a few trail tips over the mic, got tricked into saying Michelle Bridges is my preferred dinner partner over my wife, totally not true, really... a bit of a chat with some runners and it was soon time to line up.

I was surprised to see some runners wearing earphones. Ok, there was a couple with only one earphone in so could probably hear, there we others with two in? Risky.

My race start strategy had been to start off at the back of the first wave figuring I could work my way through as the crowd thinned and I settled in. Looking at the large group of runners I thought just get in mid pack, trust your own ability and that of the trail runners around. Crowds aren't my strong point, to many moving objects to track but in trail running we're all going forward, all carefully planned steps. And looking down, these **Salomon Speedcross3's** are going to do magic today, there'll be no tripping, no rolled ankles, I will only take the right steps. We're off!

The trickiest part of this course for me was the first 3km of single track with some logs and steps to navigate at pace with runners pushing behind and obstacles to navigate. I was concerned but focused, a trip and injury this early would ruin a great run. Bigger, realise the Garmin didn't start but will have to wait until Pipeline track now.

So we're running single file, behind me I had the sound of a steam train, I hope he finished the race, in front was a female runner whose style looked vaguely familiar. Fast cadence, not slowing over any logs, ripped down the steps, around the bends, over the log, up the steps, down the single track again. Great pace and like an extra set of eyeballs for me. Andrea Valvo had made it to race!

As I ran towards Mt Evelyn and the first drink station at about 9km runners went past and I passed others. The trail was wide, some rocks but a good surface, broken by a couple of short sharp climbs on single track to remind you this wasn't going to be easy. Over the next few km's there were familiar faces doing a similar pace.

I had planned not to stop at the drink stations as I had my own fluids and prefer to sip as I go, never waiting until I am really thirsty. I continued through heading on up the hill sucking a gel and fluid as I went.

Anyone who ran this course would now know that this hill wasn't THE HILL, THE HILL was over the top of this hill. It was a killer. I ran, I was passed and I walked but thanks to my **Salomon Speedcross3's** I didn't slip. It wasn't long before I was up and over enjoying the down hill and undulating track and of course some more minor hilly sections.

Now heading down towards the long course turn off, I was feeling pretty good and ripped down, good grip, feeling great. Downhill descents usually bring flashes of caution to me as a fall has proven to come with a slide, ankle roll, blood. But now I'm feeling pretty confident. I'm actually passing on the down hill!

As we follow the red arrow and head off on the long course loop I see some familiar runners and new ones. The climb up Georges track was nothing compared to the single track climb that would come after so I pushed on slowly working my way up.

A short decent then into the single track again, another highlight section of the course. Fantastic! And then we were winding our way up again. This course was a killer, it was great, it was fun and I was just making sure I kept in touch with the group. If I dropped off now I was sure to slow down. We passed a few walkers who gave us right of way and cheered us on. Fantastic to do a run where you cross paths with people and there's no agro on the trail. Soon we were at the top and the track opened onto a wider trail road, about 16km done.

Down hill now and keep moving sucking a second gel and sipping some fluids. The next thing I'm on my knees and hands sliding. DOH! Let my concentration down, skimmed my foot over a water gully run off and the Salomons dug in. Thank-you to the runner ahead who looked back asking if I was ok, I was and he continued on. Best I keep moving before the knees start to seize up. Some blood but nothing is broken and about 4.5km to go.

Another small hill and down more slowly with caution now, only a couple of km's to go and don't want to blow it now. Love that last single track off the road and to the finish. Then my two future running partners Indigo and Sari, and Janita, are waiting there with words of support "run as hard as you can dad" "go harder" "sprint", who'd they learn that off?

I had wanted to do an average pace of around 6.30 per km and did 6.15 so was really happy with my time of **2:11:26**.



Hills, single track, hills, winding single track, mud, logs, hills....What a fantastic event!

Thank you Rapid Ascent, Salomon and the many volunteers for providing another great trail running event. And thanks to all the trail runners who gave it a go, a great crowd to run with.

"Well that was fun!"

*Me doing some quality assurance testing of the medical support.*