

THREE DAYS AT THE FAIR (3DATF) 2013 Reflections from a First Time "Multi-Dayer": Clifford Lange May 20, 2013

You Do Not Have to be an Elite Athlete To Have an Elite Experience at 3DATF

Summary of Top 10 Top 10s

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- 3-Top 10 Coaching Pointers Obtained for my First Multi-Day Ultramarathon (MDU)
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Top 10 Things About 3DATF

- 1-Rick and Jenn McNulty race directors (and their children) for their passion, engagement and commitment
- 2-The family atmosphere culture of 3 DATF
- 3-Simplicity of the conversion chart this year; one lap=one mile
- 4-The awesome kitchen staff and volunteers
- 5-The fairgrounds set-up in beautiful country NJ farmland
- 6-The amazing food and drink options and service
- 7-The cumulative lifetime miles medal incentives (100, 250, 500...) for frequent runners of 3DATF
- 8-The leader board and hourly updates
- 9-The 3DATF Website and content
- 10-Individual time splits and mileage totals to every runner every mile

Top 20 (10 plus 10 more!) Things to Manage for Optimal Individual Performance at 3DATF

- 1-Calendar planning-making the time needed in May at the 3DATF a priority
- 2-Before the starting line-the physical and mental training to prepare
- 3-Energy management (e.g. pacing strategy)
- 4-Sleep strategy (e.g. first sleep after 40 miles or after midnight or LTYB (listen to your body, when the road looks like you could lay down on it and fall asleep in less than a minute, it is time to sleep regardless of miles or time)
- 5-Break management-find your sweet spot-too infrequent and you risk "crashing", too frequent and you let medals slip away (the often quoted "beware the chair")

- 6-Goal setting and adjustment strategy (e.g. 100 miles , 120 miles, and 140 miles for minimum, stretch and dream goals; subtract 20 miles if weather is unfavorable)
- 7-Attitude management (e.g declare a 72 hour "worry-free zone and no negative thinking zone")
- 8-Clothing management (e.g. numbers of pairs of footwear, shirts, hats, socks, etc.)
- 9-Foot care management (e.g. tape, vaseline, body glide, ...)
- 10-Support/supplies management (e.g. whether to bring a crew, how to set up your car trunk, tent or camper for optimal use of supplies)
- 11-Data/Outside the race course management (are you "off the grid" for 3 days? Do you allow only one way communication out to a selected few or do you stay fully connected?)
- 12-Fluid management (amounts, timing, variety, your drinks versus event provided)
- 13-Food management (e.g. race event provided versus your own versus local take-out treat?)
- 14-Weather response management (e.g do you wait out a downpour and stay dry for 30 minutes, or plow through?)
- 15-Documentation management (do you capture insights for your journal reflections while fresh during the event or after and risk losing the clarity)
- 16-DNS/DNF Strategy-Are you willing to wisely put your health before the race and be a "Did Not Start" or "Did Not Finish" for long term health and strength and the ability to compete healthy another day?
- 17-Social interaction strategy-Are you willing to invest in getting to know fellow 3DATFers during the event? You just might make a new friend or even a lifetime friend if you are willing to trade off 1 to 5 miles. Isn't it worth it?
- 18-Boundary management (e.g. how to respond to unsolicited advice)
- 19-Privacy management (e.g. how to respond regarding your answers to questions regarding things that you only share with your inner circle)
- 20-Recovery strategy (e.g diet, rest, massage, walk)

Top 10 Coaching Pointers Obtained for my first MDU (Multi-Day Ultra)

- 1-Take breaks every 5 to 10 miles, not every 1 to 3 miles (thanks Steve)
- 2-You are not going to get a 100 mile medal sitting on your butt (thanks Rick)
- 3-Don't forget to put sunscreen on the backs of your legs too (thanks Bill)
- 4-This is not the time to go on a diet, you need some "real food" (thanks again Rick)
- 5-Deal with any foot "hot spots" early, or you will pay later (thanks Anton)
- 6-Sleep in the tent during the hottest time of day, and log in more miles in the cooler late afternoons and evenings
- 7-"Shoot for the stars" and even if you miss, you will "hit the moon" (thanks Paul)
- 8-Elevate your sleeping bag on the end that has your feet when you sleep
- 9-Left, right, repeat (thanks Kevin)
- 10-Take all experts' and elite runners' advice, which is sometimes contradictory, and adjust it for your individual style and personality, since you know yourself better than any of the experts or elite runners (thanks Paul)

Top Ten Personal Memories from 3DATF

- 1-Getting to the 100 mile mark in the first event for me over 24 hours (late upgrade from the 48

hour to the 72 hour to improve the odds)

2-Walking with Tom for his 100th mile and him walking with me for my 96th through 100th miles (thanks Tom for that and for helping John set up the tent)

3-Watching the thrill of Marylou's Canadian record of 253 miles for 72 hours and John doing a new PR and 3 marathons in three days (79 miles)

4-Much laughter with Larry and later with Steve

5-Kevin and I realizing we'll be together again later this week at a graduation in Worcester, MA

6-Everyone from humble world class runners to "back of the packers" like me taking the time to share their wisdom and stories

7-Amazing and inspiring personal stories of recovery, healing and overcoming adversity

8-Jim's Dad from Syracuse asking me if he can get anything from my car for me, unsolicited (he got my sweatshirt and phone)

9-The community fun, laughter, camaraderie and family atmosphere near the start/finish line and in the kitchen area

10-Special reflection/walk time under the stars and at sunrise and sunsets

Top 10 3DATF Energy Enhancing Foods in the Kitchen

1-Black bean cheeseburgers with spicy sauce

2-Grilled cheese sandwiches on whole wheat bread

3-Scrambled eggs and bacon

4-Chicken broth and rice

5-Pre-peeled hard boiled eggs

6-Pepperoni pizza

7-Girl Scout cookies (assorted)

8-Pancakes

9-Fried zucchini

10-Bananas

Top 10 Motivational Affirmations Used (in silence) in Cadence with Steps (a modification of Bernd Heinrich's (1981 US 100K Champion) "synchronicity" principle about breathing and footfalls)

1-I can do this

2-Living the dream

3-I feel so good

4-Each step a PR (after breaking previous personal record)

5-You live for this

6-Isn't this fun? (in memory of Eric Fossum, who used to ask me this on Mt. Washington trails)

7-Perfect balance

8-In the moment

9-Always have hope (I heard once (author unknown) that man (or woman) can only live for 40 days without food, 4 days without water, 4 minutes without oxygen and only 4 seconds without hope)

10-Almost done now

Top 10 Energy Enhancers at my first 100 miler in the 72 hour version of the 3DATF

- 1-Pre-declaring a 72 hour "worry-free zone" and "no negative thoughts zone" for 9am Thursday May 16 to 9am Sunday May 19, 2013 for the 3 DATF (first thought of this technique and used it on November 21, 1981 in the JFK 50 miler, my first ultra (10:13:22))
- 2-Communications and bonding with other participants during the event (real conversations with fascinating people)
- 3-The restorative power of sleep, even if taken only from 10am to 2pm
- 4-Visualizing the 100 mile medal as already mine at mile 75 and then viewing the last 25 miles as a celebration of that success before it happened
- 5-Observing the focus, concentration, passion, dedication, style, effort and results of the "rock stars" and "superstars" that broke 200 miles in the 72 hours (or even in the 48 hours in one case!)
- 6-Counting my blessings to develop an attitude of gratitude
- 7-Reflecting on how some early life adversity actually contributed toward my endurance threshold even today
- 8-Memorial reflections of the legacies of my sister-in-law Victoria and 4 grandparents
- 9-Taking "72 second vacations" during the 72 hour event (each one only costs 1/3,600th against performance) to savor (in stillness and solitude) the stars at night, the community horseshow in progress, the poultry show or to listen to the auctioneer at the Beefsteak Dinner or night songs at the wedding reception)
- 10-Hitting the 71st mile (new personal record) , the 87th mile (only just under 1/2 marathon to go to 100 miles)

Top 10 Most Challenging Items regarding the 3DATF

- 1-Having to redo my taping on one foot at the 5 mile mark due to an uncomfortable "hot spot" that was quickly heading toward "blister land" if not addressed early
- 2-Trying to drive directly home 4 1/2 hours to Massachusetts after being up all night walking (took a 90 minute nap in the Peekskill, NY Subway parking lot)
- 3-Soreness in feet for the first two minutes of walking right after breaks in the late miles
- 4-Resisting the temptation to check i-phone/i-pad for 72 hours
- 5-Having to drain a "nickel sized" blister at mile 48 (new tape and socks and a change of shoes made it not a problem for miles 48 to 100)
- 6-Dealing with the non-linear exhaustion curve factor (the same way that one half of the marathon mental toughness effort happens from miles 20 to 26.2, one half the 100 mile mental toughness effort happens from miles 75 to 100)
- 7-Having a "rough patch" from miles 55 to 70 when I was not yet at my old PR of 70.63 miles
- 8-Trying to avoid "I'll be happy when I break my personal record syndrome" and trying to savor every moment even before entering new "PR-land"
- 9-Asking myself if I was spending too much time journaling and not enough time running/walking as I took about a full one hour of the 72 hours to capture key insights in my journal
- 10-Turning down several requests to go for 105 miles to make it 4 marathons, and turning down

requests to do a 101st mile together

Top 10 Personal Motivational Techniques I Used to Increase Endurance in my First 100 Miler
1-I imagined that I was in a Six Day Race and if I did well, I would be able to stop after only 3 days

2-I imagined a personal cheering section with my previously deceased loved ones and relatives watching over me

3-Utilized favorite quotes from world class runners (e.g. Stu Mittleman's (576 mile 6 Day) "relentless forward progress"; Herb G.'s (2:03:59 marathon) "I feel like a spring-loaded bundle of anticipation and energy"; Yiannis Kouros's (188.59 miles

World Record for 24 hours) "I get inspiration, strength and passion from the difficult times of my life that I have overcome" and Walt Stack's (did 50 milers past age 60) "start slowly, then taper off" for inspiration and motivation

4-Take different miles and think of everything you can about that number (e.g. in mile 79 I thought of my '79 UConn college Graduation, that 79 was just over 3 standard marathons and that mapquest shows that it is about 79 miles from my home to my 1970s college dormitory at UConn)

5-Reflect on the best compliments you have ever gotten in your life and turn them into motivational affirmations

6-Embrace the feeling of tiredness (a modification of Scott Jurek's "embrace agony") as proof of your effort, by telling yourself that you better enjoy it now, because in a week you won't even feel sore anymore and will wonder whether you really tried hard

7-Tell yourself " I better enjoy every second, because there are only 71 hours and 30 minutes left, at the 30 minute mark of the race, and repeat similarly frequently.

8-Take numerous checkpoints on the ratio of the amount left to do to get to your goal (to do) divided into the amount already completed (done). (e.g. the 50 mile mark of a 100 mile goal the ratio of "done" to "to do" is 1, at the 66.7 mile mark it is 2, at the 75 mile mark it is 3, at the 80 mile mark it is 4, at the 83.3 mile mark it is 5, etc. to a ratio of 99 at 99 miles and infinity at the finish)

9-I reflected on the personal life stories that some participants shared with me "live and in concert" in the 3DATF and the energy associated with thinking about their stories of overcoming and healing regarding the loss of a parent, spouse or their battle with a disease or addiction. I thought "if they went through this tough thing, the least I can do is go through a much easier 100 miler"

10-I focused on the race clock time (all based off 9 am starts), not the real life time of day, so at race clock times of 18 hours, 42 hours and 66 hours, I tried not to reflect on the fact that it was 3am in real life time of day. It kept me fresh through all three nights of movement.

Top 10 Improvement Opportunities for my next Multi-Day Ultra

1-Bring more friends. It was great to have John Liu there.

2-Lose weight. There appeared to be about a 90% correlation coefficient between people's BMI and their race time for a given distance, all other variables held constant.

3-Train more

- 4-Take less breaks
- 5-Save the journaling until after the event
- 6-Have tiered goals (minimum,. stretch, super stretch and dream goals and modify each for varying conditions)
- 7-Get a vendor tent for more shade on breaks
- 8-Get ankle gators to avoid gravel road section pebbles from getting in my shoes (I made multiple stops to remove pebbles from my shoes before they caused real damage)
- 9-Get calf compression sleeves (about 60%-70% of the 72 hour folks had them, so it is worth a try)
- 10-Eat and drink "on the move" more instead of sitting for nourishment breaks

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