



Evaluating Your Race...It's Not All About Your Finishing Time

By Terri Rejmbal, RRCA certified Run Coach

You spend months training and preparing for an event. You cross the finish line, hang the medal around your neck and in the days that follow, most of us will either bask in the glory of our performance, or feel disappointed with our time or placement.

Whether your performance met, exceeded or fell short of expectation, take time within the first day or two post-race, when details are still fresh, to honestly and objectively evaluate your performance and the factors affecting it, both negatively and positively.

Think of completing a Post Race Assessment (PRA) as just one step in your recovery process. If your training went well, you “planned your race and raced your plan”, or finished feeling stronger than in a similar race or conditions, make note of those key details. If mistakes were made leading into the race or during the event, learn from it so you don't repeat them.

There is much to be learned from great performance as there is a poor performance. Ask yourself: Ask yourself did I give 100%? Did I go out too fast? Did I go into the race over-trained? Undertrained? Did I underestimate the weather or the course? Did I “zone out” and lose pace as the miles wore on, or was I sharp and in control throughout?

If your performance did not meet your expectations, do take the time to acknowledge your feelings of disappointment. Just be mindful though to not dwell on those feelings for days. Give yourself a set amount of time to complain, make excuses, be angry, etc. Then put it behind you, so you can evaluate your performance objectively and move your running forward.

A PRA should be completed after each and every race, regardless of the result. Use the following thought starters to help in your analysis:

POST RACE ASSESSMENT			
Date:	Event:	Distance:	Result/Place:
RACE DAY:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well did you warm up?• Confidence level at start? Excited? Anxious? Nervous?• Race weather conditions? Were you under/over-dressed?• Did you have a plan to handle unexpected situations such as: a low patch, fluids not settling well, a cramp, blister, etc.? How well executed was your plan?• Did you run your own race or someone else's? (i.e., follow your race plan vs. trying to stay with someone)• How well did you execute your race nutrition and hydration?• What do race splits show relative to your pacing strategy?			
TRAINING:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well did your training go? Did you complete your workouts, hit your time goals?• Did you allow sufficient time to train for the race distance?• Did you lose time to injury or illness? Did you continue to train thru injury?• Did you have adequate recovery time between hard workouts?• Did you practice hydration and nutrition?• Based on your race, do you feel certain aspects of your training could be improved upon or areas lacking?			
STRESSORS:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well did you sleep leading up to race day? Did you feel rested?• Stressed due to work, family situation, or having to travel to the race?• Was training effected by above mentioned stressors?• Overly anxious or nervous leading up to race day? Sometimes called “taper anxiety”			
WISDOM			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was your overall place, gender place, age group place, and age-graded place?• Did you give a 100%?• Did you learn or see anything that you'd like to try next time?• Anything that surprised you during training or the race?• Any other insight you discovered about race or yourself?			

By investing time in a PRA, you can make the necessary adjustments in training, and become a wiser runner in the future. No matter how your race goes, every race is a learning experience.



Happy Running!

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