



Easingwold Running Club – Advertiser article July 2023

Battling in Barcelona

Back in October, a friend Julian asked if I wanted to do the Barcelona Half-marathon with him. I had been promising to visit him for ages, but had never found the time. I thought if I signed up, it would be a great opportunity to experience a race in another country. I was also looking for a new PB, anything under 1hr 45 minutes.

At the time I was running well. I had just run the London Marathon in under four hours. I'd lost a bit of weight and was feeling fit. I had also been trying hypnotherapy for additional focus, motivation and self-confidence with a lovely lady, [Amanda Graham Hypnotherapy](#) in Topcliffe. What could go wrong?

It was tricky to keep my motivation going after a summer of getting up early to train for London. I was finding it hard to keep my speed, dark nights had drawn in and the weather was grim. After Christmas I came down with the dreaded flu for two weeks.

I went back running too quickly, to try and get back up to speed, but it set me back. I thought I may have to cancel the trip. Luckily one week before, I was feeling vaguely normal so I figured I'd just go for a long weekend watch the race.

Five days before, it was our regular club activity – Tuesday Tapas. This is where runners from the faster groups do a series of tempo exercise around Easingwold. It really keeps you fit running with other runners at a faster pace and you'd never run that fast when running alone. Despite not having run for a month, I felt OK...ish and started thinking I could do this!

The night before, there was a weather warning for win. My flight was from Leeds-Bradford Airport, a notoriously windy runway!

Sadly my worst fears were realised. My 6:30am flight was delayed and it kept getting delayed more every hour. I was starting to think it would be cancelled and the whole trip would be off.

Luckily about 2:00pm we eventually took off. It was no less windy and very bumpy, but obviously the pilot thought it was safe!

A few hours behind schedule, I set off out for a quick run just to get a few miles in the legs. I ran along the promenade and it was nice and sunny. Although I took a wrong turn and a five mile trot turned into an eight mile one. A little more than I was planning about 36 hours before the race!

It was a shame we couldn't go overboard with the nightlife. I went out with Julian and friends for a meal with strictly one beer. On Saturday I picked up my number trying not to walk around too much to save the legs and ate my body weight in pasta.

A 6:00am alarm and trying to force down some breakfast. A few coffees helped wake up. It was still dark and cold at the race start – February in Barcelona is warmer than North Yorkshire, but still chilly. My plan was to try to stick with the 7:45 minute pacer for as long as possible.

It went pretty well. I was ahead of the 1hr 40m pacer, but aware at some point the lack of training would catch up with me. Luckily I managed to keep it up for about 11 miles when he went flying past. The sun was up, it was getting hot – about 18 degrees and it was starting to unravel a bit – there's usually a point in any long race where it does!

Anyway, despite a sluggish last two miles and the pacer disappearing into the distance, the crowds kept me going and I crossed the line in just under 1hr 41, five minutes quicker than my PB. I am not really sure how that happened. Maybe resting the legs was a game changer? Julian also got his target which was a sub two hour run.

The plan was to make the most of the nightlife on Sunday, but after all that it was a low key tapas meal and an early night!

Since then, I lost my running mojo a bit. But I'm seriously thinking about doing it again with some friends. 11 February 2024. I'm saving the date and recommend it to anyone! It was an up and down journey, but one I am pleased that I managed.

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