

The Marathon of Marathons

A challenge, an adventure, a set of events to test stamina, endurance and determination: welcome to the story of Nick Twomey's Marathon Adventures.

What?

To run 12 marathons in under 9 months on all 7 continents of the world, and try to break the Guinness World Record to become the youngest person to run a marathon on all 7 continents and also break the Guinness World Record for the fastest time to complete a marathon on all 7 continents.

Where?

Berlin, Paris (Europe), Chicago, Niagara Falls, Seattle, Honolulu (North America), Easter Island (South America), Marrakech (Africa), Hong Kong, Great Wall of China (Asia), Hobart (Australasia), King George Island (Antarctica).



Why?

Because I can.

To avoid actually entering the real world for just one more year.

To raise money for Survivors Fund (aiding the survivors of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994) and Watoto Child Care Ministries (to equip a babies home in Uganda).

How long is a marathon?

A marathon is 26.2 miles or 42.195 kilometres, or in more concise terms, long.

So the story begins with an injury which put into jeopardy the whole adventure. An ankle injury which stopped me from even walking for 4 weeks. It would be disappointing to report that I did not recover from this injury, but then there would be no adventure and no story, so the adventure continues. After 6 weeks of intensive dedication in the gym rehabilitating my ankle, I was running again and preparing for the first race: Berlin.

A personal best performance in Berlin in September 2008 set up a good vibe for the American leg of the adventure (4 races). In America a life of routine was entered into with training scheduled every morning and

sightseeing for the rest of the day afterwards. A disciplined approach enabled me to maintain my fitness and try to stay injury free.

Fast forward and I have run the North American marathons, with the familiar faces some of my friends showing some fantastic support in the Hawaiian morning rain, and arrive at Xmas 2008.

No rest for the wicked as I travelled over New Year to arrive at my next marathon in Tasmania, Australia which involved me travelling to the other side of the world and returning within 6 days. The Cadbury's Marathon in Hobart, Tasmania as you might guess, started and finished at the Cadbury's factory and before you ask, yes there was lots of chocolate afterwards.

The adventure continued with the Marrakech and Hong Kong marathons coming in quick succession. During this period I struggled for motivation while also discovering that a planned marathon in Santiago, Chile had been cancelled, and so I would later plan to finish the adventures by completing the Easter Island Marathon for the continent of South America.

My body was struggling to stay in good condition, however with regular massage treatments and injury prevention training I continued my preparation for the big one: Antarctica. More people visit Disney Land in a day than have ever visited the continent of Antarctica, that's how amazing it is to be part of this exclusive group, however even less people have run a marathon on Antarctica. My experience in Antarctica was incredible and breathtaking. The touring after the marathon made the race seem only a small part of the experience and in a way insignificant, nevertheless I finished 2nd in my age group (18-39 years old) and 7th overall in the race.

Only a week after returning from Antarctica I ran the Paris marathon (April 2009) and with the encouragement and renewed self belief from Antarctica I recorded a massive new personal best, beating my previous best time by over 16 minutes (set in Berlin back in September 2008).

My next marathon was in China on the Great Wall of China, and was the biggest challenge of my life. A marathon which involved a section of the wall with over 3,000 steps, TWICE. I have never battled for survival, nor have I had to flee from my country in fear of my life in a genocide, and I could never know what that would feel like mentally, however I feel I do now have some kind of understanding of the physical drains it has on the body.

With all but one of the 12 marathons now complete, there was only one more to go: Easter Island, the remotest inhabited island in the world, home to the Moai faces that have featured in films such as Night in the Museum. This race had a strange feeling for me as I knew after finishing I would no longer be the Marathon Man, and would just in fact be an average Joe again. As I crossed the finish line, I celebrated with my sign language numbers, depicting the numbers 7 and 12. These numbers representing the number of continents I had run on and number of marathons I ran in this adventure, respectively.

What of the World Records?

Well to my disappointment the record for the youngest person was broken a few weeks before I departed to go to my last marathon in Easter Island. As for the fastest time record, I am about 30 minutes off this record and hope to break this record in the next couple of years, with an improved time in Asia.

To conclude, I would like to say that I didn't set out to change the world by running, just like Forest Gump said, "I just felt like running, and I figured as I'd come this far, I might as well just keep on going." "That's all I have to say about that."