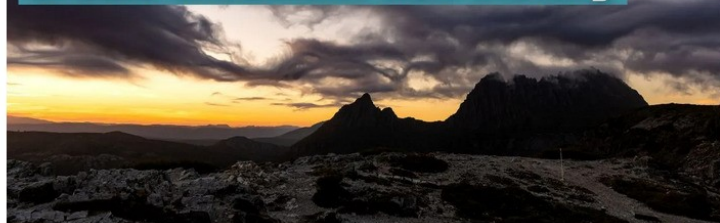




Angus Tolson's Impressive Cradle Mountain Run Victory



February 23, 2025 by [Angus Tolson](#)

Guest Post: I'm excited to share a guest post from Angus Tolson recounting his incredible performance at this year's Cradle Mountain Run. His result was a surprise to everyone, including himself! There's nothing quite like an underdog story, and Angus's run is one for the history books. He ran a super fast time to get the win in an incredibly competitive field. I hope you enjoy this insight into his epic day on the Overland Track.

I think all of the 60 runners Cradle stories are worth telling, everyone had different goals and reasons for doing it. When Joseph asked me to write a report I was unsure at first, I'd never done anything like it before. I agreed and once I started I enjoyed doing it.

With my technology and organisational skills it was a miracle I got a spot amongst the first 60 runners. And a week later it was confirmed, then the excitement started to build. Over the next few months I spent a fair bit of time running on the track and also in the Walls of Jerusalem where the tracks are very similar. I had no idea of a time goal, I looked through old results and decided between 8.45 and 9hrs. I wrote the rough splits I needed on the back of an old [bitumen2bush](#) voucher.



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The Stats

Date	1 Feb 2024
Dist	78km
Elevation	2148m
Total Time	7:44

Race Day

After the briefing the afternoon before, and a night at Waldheim, the morning of the run was finally here. I met Mum and Dad in the Waldheim car park and collected the all important race fuel, roast lamb sandwiches with tomato sauce. Dad had his runners and joined me for a warm up. By this stage there were head torches everywhere as everyone was doing their last

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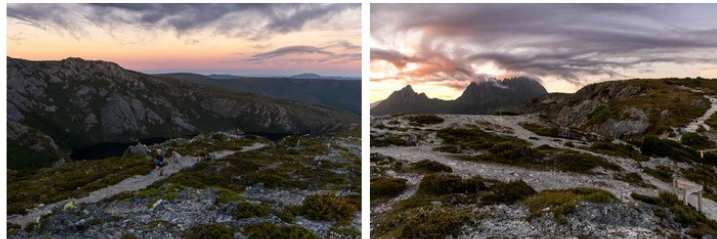
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warm up, by this stage there were head torches everywhere as everyone was doing their last preparations.

Start to Pelion

We gathered around the start and I began to get very nervous. Keith did the roll call. All 60 runners were there and a few minutes later we were away. I started off in 4th, Mum and Dad were out the track a little way and wished us all good luck. The morning was cold and the sky was clear, perfect conditions. The pace was quick from the start but slowed by the climb up Marions lookout. The sunrise was an absolute treat and not a breath of wind. I could see Matt Crehan had already opened up a decent lead with Ben Burgess and Andrew Gaskell not far in front of me.



I caught up to Andrew through the rocky section around Cradle and followed him into Waterfall Valley. His goal time was 8 hours, much quicker than mine. I was expecting to spend a fair bit of time on the [Nunn 9 hour train](#) but I'd actually boarded the Gaskell express.

After Waterfall Valley Andrew left me behind on a fast section of boardwalk. Part of me wanted to go with him but I don't think I could have, and I was already worried I had gone out too hard. I was drinking plenty of water preparing for a hot day, the track was dry and there wasn't much water about. I had a full refill at the Windermere hut.

Across Pine Forest Moor I forced down a gel. It's my least favourite part of ultra running but a lamb sandwich straight after cleared the taste I was going to try and have one between every hut. It's sad to think now a fire has been through this part of the track and even burnt one of the private huts. The descent into Frog Flats is long and pretty technical. I really enjoyed this section and started to push. At Frog Flats I caught Ben. We chatted for a bit, I considered going past but he had a good pace up the hill so I got the tow into Pelion. We were there in 3h 7m, 23 minutes ahead of schedule.



Pelion to Narcissus

Ben went straight through the checkpoint which was also my plan, but 2 people were there willing to help fill bottles, one of them was [Piotr Babis](#). It was one of the highlights of the day having Piotr help fill bottles as I was dropping the lids and fumbling about, but the break was short as Piotr was saying "keep moving keep moving keep moving". Another highlight came shortly after when I passed a Park Ranger and he couldn't stop me, generally trail runners and rangers don't see eye to eye.

It didn't take me long to catch up to Ben. This time I went straight past and we wished each other good luck. I was pushing a lot harder than I had planned on the climb but I felt good and didn't want Ben to catch me. The views at Pelion Gap were awesome, the section to Kia Ora from here is one of my favourites, a bit of boardwalk and a rocky downhill. I felt quick and I was having a lot of fun. I had another full refill at Kia Ora Creek.

After Kia Ora the track heads into rainforest and becomes very rooty and by the Du Cane hut I had lost momentum on the tough track, I was still feeling good but I thought I was losing the time I had built up and I was coming back to my original split times. It was about 10:30am and I started passing walkers, they were giving me updates on the leaders. I was somewhere between 5 and 10 minutes behind but I felt they were pulling away, I was told they were

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together which for some reason gave me confidence. The last time I saw Matt he had a big lead but Andrew was able to catch him and stick with him. I found the Du Cane climb tough but it wasn't as steep as I remembered and I was able to run most of it.

At the top I was in two minds whether to hold off a little longer and save my legs for the notoriously tricky lake section or send it. I had a rush of blood and sent it, a bit risky still nearly 30 kms from the finish.

At Windy Ridge I got my card scanned, to save stopping again I had a full bottle refill. I checked my watch for the first time since Pelion and it was 5:06 I was now 39 minutes under my original time and I realised I was a chance at sub 8. That became the new goal!

My hands were shaking as I was putting the electrolyte and tailwind in my bottles. I left Windy Ridge with excitement that 8 hours was on the cards. It's roughly 10 km to Narcissus from here and it was one of the most enjoyable 10 km I have ever ran. Trying to get each km faster than the one before on a fast and flowy track. I saw 2 snakes but they got out of the way quickly. The sun was now pretty hot but it didn't worry me too much. I seem to be able to keep up hydration in the heat but I was still filling my cap at every creek to tip over my head.

After the bridge across the Narcissus River it wasn't long and I was at the hut and the final checkpoint in 6:03. I was surprised to see I was only 2 minutes behind Andrew and 5 behind Matt. The volunteers at Narcissus were excellent and they helped me fill my bottles. I planned this to be my last full refill.



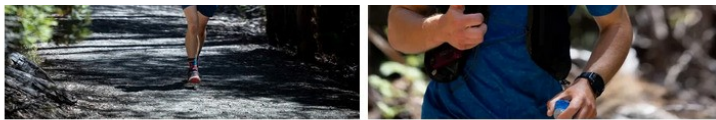
Narcissus to the Finish

I thanked the volunteers and left with a slice of watermelon. In good spirits I was ready to tackle the lake section. The track twists and turns along the lake with pinchy little climbs and heaps of roots, somehow I felt like I was on fresh legs, not 60ish km legs. I had ran this section out and back a fortnight before so I knew what to expect.

About 3 km around the lake I caught up to Andrew. He let me through and pretty quickly I couldn't see him any more. For the first time I started thinking maybe I could win. I thought I must have been getting close to Echo Point when I saw Matt for the first time in maybe 5 hours. I got a bit nervous coming up behind him, to my surprise he asked "Are you Gus" to which I replied yes. He'd been talking to David Atkinson the night before who is a work colleague of my Dads but I still don't know how he knew it was me. I asked to go past and he let me through. I told him he'd probably catch me. Shortly after I was at Echo Point and had 10km to go. I was now pinching myself that I was leading the Cradle Mountain Run.

With a few km to go I was starting to get small cramps high in my left leg luckily they never fully grabbed. It was a good feeling getting to Watersmeet but the road finish was torture. I passed Dad and my brother with a couple of hundred metres to go, Mum, my mate Daniel and his wife Hope and my sister in law Ruby were all at the finish. I can't remember much of the finish just touching the sign really. Everyone was pretty shocked by the result, most including me.





The Results

I had finished in 7:44 which I knew was quick but I didn't realise how quick. I was later informed it was one of the fastest times ever (3rd fastest). Matt Crehan finished in 7:50, Andrew Gaskell was 3rd in 8 hours. Ben Burgess did 8:15 and Joseph Nunn was close to breaking his 9 hour goal in 9:06.



Wrapping Up

I feel a bit out of place seeing my name on the list of fastest times, but I'm extremely proud I'm on it. It wouldn't be possible without the help from my family not only on weekends like this but every week. A result like this is a reflection of their hard work as much as mine.

I would like to thank the [Cradle Mountain Run Committee](#) and their volunteers, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, and all the other runners for making it such an enjoyable weekend. Also I would like to thank Joseph for asking me to be a guest on Tasmania's premier trail running blog.

Photo credits

- Cover photo by Kristy Wallis
- Narcissus photos Christine Brown
- Pelion photos John Wilson
- Finish line photos Kristy Wallis



Angus Tolson

A Tasmanian bushwalker that has caught the trail running bug.

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2 thoughts on “Angus Tolson’s Impressive Cradle Mountain Run Victory”



Justin Dyer

February 23, 2025 at 8:57 pm

Great write-up, truly inspiring run! I might have tried lamb sandwiches..

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dippedidooda

February 23, 2025 at 9:57 pm

That was a lovely read because of how big a surprise it was – chuckled at the Nunn nine-hour and Gaskell Express. Who knew the Tolson Bullet Train was also in the station? Well done on an incredible run.

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