



Cradle Mountain Run 2025

Video and Reflections



February 14, 2025 by [Joe](#)

Cradle Mountain Run 2025 was a hot one, both in temperature and competition. The track was incredibly dry and runnable but the sun was out blazing. Those who could survive the heat ran amazing times whilst many suffered and ran slower than usual. I went into this years race determined to smash my long standing time goal. Pushing hard I went close but didn't quite make it. I captured the journey on camera, piecing together a video that offers a glimpse into what it's like to run the Overland Track in just over 9 hours. To complement the footage, I've written a detailed blog post packed with insights and tips for those eager to learn more.



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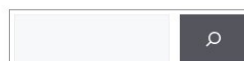
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The Stats

Date	1 Feb 2024
Dist	78km
Elevation	2148m
Total Time	9:06
Strava	Strava Activity

Goals and Aspirations

In the lead up to the run I participated in a Utas study hoping to determine predictors of ultramarathon performance. As part of the study, physiological testing was undertaken to determine my V_{O2} Max and lactate thresholds amongst other things. There is a section at the end



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determine my VO2 max and lactate thresholds amongst other things. There is a section at the end that elaborates on the testing and results. The main takeaway for me was that I am quite a lot fitter than I thought. This boosted my confidence, encouraging me to trust myself fully. It fuelled my determination to give my all in this year's event and truly test my limits.

I have a long standing goal to finish in under 9 hours. I am yet to achieve this it after multiple attempts. This was my main outcome goal for the event and in the lead up I was visualising, scheming and hoping to manifest the ultimate outcome. Additionally I had a single process goal which was to stay on top of hydration. I am convinced that many of my ultra-running shortcomings are as a result of dehydration.

Outcome Goal: Finish in under 9 hours

Process Goal: Maintain adequate hydration throughout

🏁 Race Day

The forecast was for a hot one. The morning started off cool and clear but we were all bracing ourselves for the heat. The track and most of Tasmania had been extremely dry in the lead up. Overland guide friends had told me that the track was super dry, good for fast running.

I break the Overland track up into three sections, through to Pelion, then to Narcissus and finally the lake section. I know the times I need to pass through these points to stay on schedule. So my day essentially became three races against the clock to each point.

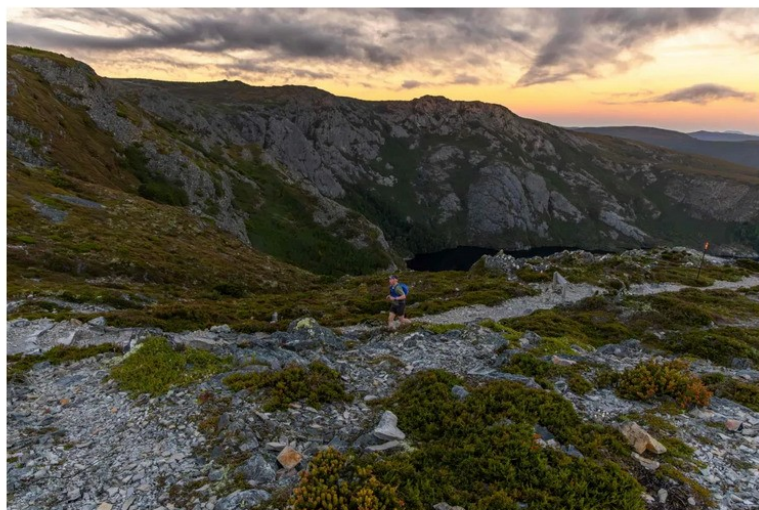
Waldheim to Pelion

There was a lot of fast runners toeing the line, so I put myself a little way back at the start. From Waldheim along the board walk I was the 6th runner out of the gate. There was mist sitting in the valley and the imminent sunrise was glowing on the horizon. I was excited to be out running and doing a race I love so much. The start is fast but the pace quickly halted when the climb begins. First past Crater Lake then onwards up to Marion's lookout. I could already see the front runners a long way ahead. Knowing the field I was expecting some fast times to drop.



Mist in the valley just before the start

The sunrise as I reached Marion's lookout was magnificent. It is such an inspiring way to start a long day of running. This is a run where all of the epic terrain is up front and it gradually turns into rooty, rough, foresty trails. I am loving it and stopping to take photos and film while still trying to move quickly. Just past Marion's lookout I overtake a runner ahead moving myself into 5th place. I take off and look back not long after and cannot even see the runner I just overtook.



Approaching Marion's lookout (Credit: Kristy Wallis)

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At Marion's lookout (Credit: Kristy Wallis)

My plan is to go out hard and hold on. Try to get to Pelion in under 3.5 hours and see what happens from then on. To execute this plan I hope to stick to a rigorous nutrition and hydration plan. Drinking a minimum of 1000ml of water an hour and taking in over 100g of carbs. This is an ambitious plan and as always happens I will go on to struggle with it.

Once I am warmed up and settle in, the running is a dream. The trails are fun, runnable and the scenery is inspirational. I ride the wave of the runners high for the first few hours ticking off landmarks. I am certain I am running ahead of schedule. When I know the day is going to heat up I like to cover as much ground as possible before the temperature rises.



Me and Barny

As I emerge from Fanghorn Forest I hear the footsteps of another runner behind me. Ryder, my Waldheim roommate has caught me. We both get excited and pick up the pace rapidly. I am feeling euphoric, a great feeling but such elation often precedes a downfall.

At Frog Flats, Ryder stops to grab water and I continue onwards. This was the last I saw of him till the end. It was the last I saw of any other runner for the rest of the day. This run can be a lonely escapade. I charge onwards running the whole usually gruelling climb out from the Flats with ease. Arriving into the Pelion check point in 3:20, 10 minutes ahead of schedule.

Piotr was working on the Overland Track and waiting ready to help. With his help filling flasks, I managed to keep the pit stop quick and efficient. He doesn't allow any mucking around. In less than 2 minutes I am thrust back out onto the trail to begin the next stage of the race.



Coming into Pelion (Credit: John Wilson)

Support crew in action (Credit: John Wilson)

Pelion to Narcissus

I've always dreaded this section, the start of the endless rooty trails and a long, grueling climb after a fast beginning. But this time, I feel stronger than ever. I push steadily on the climb, focusing intensely on hydration, which seems to be keeping me in good shape.

Before I know it, I'm at Pelion Gap within 4 hours from starting. What's usually a brutal climb passed without much drama. Still, cracks are starting to show. By 10 a.m., I'm overheating, sweating heavily, and despite drinking constantly, I feel myself slipping into a low.

The downhill duckboard offers some relief, but I keep the pressure on, maintaining a solid pace. I'm only halfway through, and the hardest part of the day lies ahead—the tail end of this race is where the real battle begins. I worry about the consequences of my fast start and how far I might fade.

At Kia Ora, I take a decent pit stop, loading up on as much water as I can before tackling Du Cane Gap. Last year, Du Cane destroyed me. I started with hope and finished defeated. This year, I'm determined to redeem myself, though the fear of history repeating lingers. After a quick chat with a TWC guide and restocking, I head out feeling slightly refreshed.

My struggles are growing concerning. My nutrition plan is faltering. Drinking anything makes me nauseous, followed by burping. I know I need to drink more, but it's a battle. I force myself to sip water diligently, though my homemade energy mix is hard to stomach, so I cut the dose in half until I feel better.

Cheering hikers give me brief energy boosts. One group tells me I'm 34 minutes behind the leader. Slower hiking uphill makes drinking easier, so I take advantage, hydrating as much as possible. The more I drink, the better I feel. By the top of Du Cane Gap, I feel somewhat revived, refocusing on my time goals. Realising they're still within reach, I push harder on the downhills, staying consistent until I reach Bert Nichols Hut.

I tap my timing chip and refill on fluids, bracing for the next section, where I suffered last year. Water is my lifeline, yet no amount feels sufficient. I push on, clock-watching, aiming for the Pine Valley turnoff, knowing it's about 5km to Narcissus. Though I'm losing time, I haven't lost hope, my relentless drinking is keeping me going.

I hit Narcissus aid station at exactly 7 hours, 10 minutes behind scheduled. Volunteers hand me Coke, watermelon, ANZAC biscuits, and plenty of water. They tell me the top three are within 5 minutes of each other, and the possibility of a Tasmanian winning reignites my motivation. My 9-hour goal seemed out of reach until a volunteer said, "You only need 2 hours for the lake, you can probably do that." With renewed urgency, I head out, determined to give it everything.



Coming into Narcissus looking worse for wear (Photo credit: Christine Brown)

Narcissus to Cynthia Bay

I press on, forcing down a dry ANZAC biscuit and gulping water relentlessly. The usually boggy trail after Narcissus is bone dry, transforming the lakeside path into a completely different experience. It's still tough, but far less slippery. I vow to lock in and give the 9-hour goal everything I've got. I'm so close, and I'll regret not pushing to the limit.

Fighting the heat and nausea, I push as hard as I can, fuelled by multiple caffeine gels. I draw on memories of past Cradle runs, using them as mental armour. The lake has always been a battleground, and I try to channel that experience now. My foggy mind struggles to calculate the pace I need, but I know there are faster sections near the end to make up time. All I can do is push as hard as possible.

At Echo Point, I have 10km left and 1 hour 10 minutes. Under normal circumstances, it'd be easy, but with 70km of fatigue, heavy legs, and a trail that refuses to cooperate, it's a monumental task.

I've made a mistake. I forgot to refill my water in the streams along the lake. Now, on the southern end, creeks are scarce, and the few I find are stagnant trickles. I've already drained 2 litres and have nothing left. In my exhaustion, I even considered drinking from Lake St Clair, but my muddled mind convinced me it was saltwater.

As the kilometers tick down, the goal feels within reach but buried deep in the pain cave. With 3km to go, the trail improves, and I know I'm in the faster section. I have 15 minutes left, doable but brutal. I decide to try. Then, suddenly, I'm flying through the air, hands outstretched, crashing to the ground. My camera starts recording the aftermath like a black box. I slide on my stomach, legs cramping violently. It takes minutes to scrape myself up and get moving again.

Disaster strikes once more, another fall, this time on my already bloodied left knee. Defeated, I rise, knowing the 9 hour goal is gone. Frustration and pain weigh heavy as I push on, no longer driven by the same fire. I just want it over.

The final stretch from Watersmeet is torture, a slightly uphill, runnable road that feels endless in my state. I cross the finish 6 minutes behind my goal. Relief mixes with regret, wondering what might have been without those falls.

When I finally gather myself, I talk to other runners and am stunned by the results. It was an insanely fast year!



Finish line good vibes

Results

In the end I didn't achieve my time goal or my other goal of staying hydrated. I am slightly disappointed but still happy with the result. I now know that 9 hours is within reach and I am certain that I can get there one year if the conditions are more favourable for me. In the end I came through in 5th, Ziggy 6th and Justin 7th.

[Official Results](#)

I ran pretty much the whole race in 5th position. Up ahead there was some amazing things happening. Matt Crehan lead the majority of the race with Andrew Gaskell close behind. Angus Tolson overtook Ben Burgess at Pelion bringing him into third position.

At Narcissus, Matt, Andrew and Angus all passed through within 5 minutes of each other. When I arrived at Narcissus they told me about this and I was excited to hear that there was such a fierce race happening. Along the Lake Angus was able to catch Andrew then reel in Matt as well. He finished first in an astounding time of 7:44, making him the third fastest person in history to run the Overland Track.

I think he was just as surprised as the rest of us about his performance. After racing him last year at [Freycinet](#) and having a sprint finish I was expecting that we may be running together. But he left me in his dust, actually a long way behind it. I know myself and many others are curious to hear about his day out. We are lucky enough to have him writing a guest post for the blog about his Cradle experience. Hopefully this will be published in the coming weeks so stay tuned.

Wrapping Up

Thank you for reading and watching the vlog of my run. Sorry about the video and sound quality. Turns out it's quite hard to race and record. It feels surreal to write this now, knowing that the Overland Track is currently on fire. Pine Forest Moor Hut has been lost, along with much of the duckboard, and the forest we ran through just days before the fires has been significantly burned. Like many, I'm left with mixed emotions: gratitude and privilege for being one of the last to experience the track as it was, and deep sadness for the devastation.

If you're interested in the technical details, read on. And who knows? Maybe in the next few years, I'll finally crack that elusive 9-hour mark.



Classic group photo (Credit: Phil Beeston)

⚙️ Technical Stuff

For those interested I've added this section with some of the technical details of the run. I talk about my nutrition strategy, how it went, the lab testing before hand and my gear decisions heading into the race.

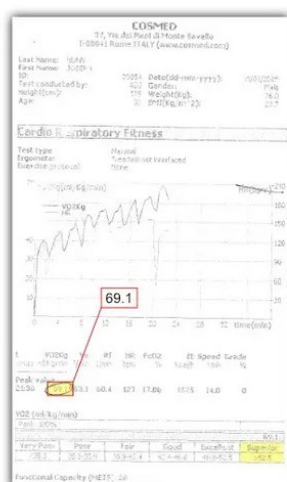
📋 Lab Testing

Hobart based trail runner and researcher Annabel Dejong is undertaking a study to look into physiological and psychological correlates of ultrarunning performance. I volunteered to take part in the study. It involved getting lab testing done shortly before the event, filling in a mood and sleep survey and filling in a pre-race survey.

The data collected in the testing included my Vo2max and lactate threshold, cognitive function, and psychological traits (e.g., mental toughness).

I was mostly interested in my Vo2max and lactate thresholds. The main test involved me running on a treadmill with a gas mask on that measured Vo2max. I would run for 2 minutes, step off and take blood lactate measurements. Then increase the speed and repeat till exhaustion. I was quite nervous about the test, I was worried about how much pain I might make myself endure. In the end I enjoyed the process and the results were super interesting.

My Vo2max measurement was **69.1 mL/kg/min**, a number surprisingly high. The only other indication I have ever had of this metric is from my Garmin which predicted 61 mL/kg/min at the time of testing. It goes to show that Garmin cannot be trusted. And that I am far fitter than I thought I was.



Vo2max

Grade	Speed	RPE	Lactate	HR
0	14	8	2.0	82
	14	11	3.0	151
	15	13	3.0	162
	16	15	3.3	167
	17	16	4.2	172
1		17	5.2	172
2		18	5.4	179
3		19	7.7	182
4		19	10.6	184
5		20	12.3	185
6				

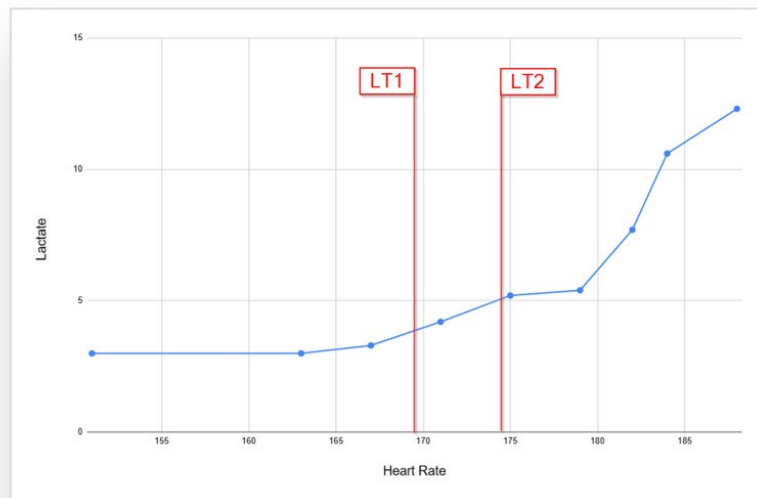
Blood Lactate

There was also the lactate measurements that Annabel used to determine my LT1 (aerobic

threshold) and LT2 (anaerobic threshold). She used the log-log method to determine LT1 and the Dmax method to determine LT2. I found a cool online calculator that can perform these calculations, [ExPhysLab Lactate Calculator](#).

These are my numbers and a slightly smoothed graph I plotted in excel:

LT1 = 168bpm
LT2 = 174bpm



I was surprised to see my LT1 so high! My LT2 was exactly where I thought it was so no surprises there. In theory when I am below LT1 I am in the aerobic zone and should be able to cruise 'all day' at this intensity. It made me think that maybe I am not pushing myself hard enough in ultras. I asked Annabel her opinion and she said theoretically I could push harder and possibly succeed but "fuck around and find out". With this newfound data and along with it confidence I decided I might as well fuck around and see what happens.

For any Tassie based ultrarunners interested in participating here is the link. You must be running an ultramarathon in the next few months to qualify. At the moment the study is running till May but it might get extended.

[Link to Apply](#)

🍴 Nutrition and Hydration Scorecard

My primary nutrition plan was an ambitious one. I was targeting 107g/hr of carb intake by drinking 500ml of my energy mix and an energy gel per hour.

- 500ml [energy mix](#) – 80g of carb
- Energy gel – 27g of carb
- Total carb intake = 107 g/hr

I carried with me some extra alternative nutrition too, it is important to have some back up options if the main plan falls apart. Salty and savoury foods are important to balance out inevitable palette fatigue. These are the extra options that I carried:

- Pizza shapes (100g in a ziplock)
- 2 x small white bread rolls with vegemite
- Clif BLOK chews
- Crampfix bottle

My hydration strategy was to drink at least 1000ml of fluids and hour as a minimum. My minimum sweat rate is around 1-1.1 l/hr when I am running at a moderate pace. Then the fluid intake needs to be adjusted upwards as they day heats up.

My day started off on track and I was able to stick with the plan all the way through till the 5 hour mark. Then the nausea kicked in and the wheels fell off. I focused on gels more than drink mix and didn't use anymore drink mix for the rest of the run. I still managed to get in a decent amount of carbs and what looks like a huge amount of fluids. But I was still incredibly dehydrated by the end. Despite drinking enormous amounts I think I still didn't drink enough. I think I need to reduce my carb intake in hot conditions to a more sensible level.

Despite my struggles I was still able to keep pushing. There was no catastrophic bonk, just a roller coaster of ups and downs. Getting this stuff right is one of the greatest challenges in these events.

Post Run Scorecard	
Duration	9:10 hrs (mins / 60)
Total fluid intake	10300 ml
Total Consumed	

Item	Qty	kcal	Carb (g)	Protein (g)	Sodium (mg)
Drink mix (80g carb)	5	1671	402.5	0	2250
Koda caffeine gel	4	468	119.2	0	144
PURE Gel Raspberry	3	306	74.7	0.3	90
Sandwich (vegemite)	0.5	112.5	20.055	3.745	233.5
ANZAC Biscuit	1	117.0	15	1	0
Snakes x 2 (lollies)	1	57	13	1	0
Clif BLOKS (3 pieces)	1	100	24	0	50
Coke (200ml cup)	1	86	21	0	20
Totals		2917.5	689.455	6.045	2787.5

Summary	Actual	Targets	Achieved
Energy intake	320.60 kcal/hr		
Carb intake	75.76 g/hr	107 g/hr	70.81%
Protein intake	0.66 g/hr		
Sodium intake	306.32 mg/hr		
Fluid consumption	1131.87 ml/hr	1000 ml/hr	113.19%
Sodium concentration	270.63 mg/l		

My [nutrition scorecard](#) from the run

Gear List

The only things that changed this year from last years gear lists are:

- New rain jacket, Mont Lightspeed ([read my review](#))
- Reduced sized emergency bivy bag, less weight to carry
- Carried an extra 1.5l water bladder for extra capacity

CMR 2025 Gear List



Category	Weight
Mandatory Gear	1547 g
Additional Gear	681 g
Worn Gear	718 g
Total	2946 g
Worn	718 g
Base Weight	2228 g

Mandatory Gear

		Weight	qty
Long sleeve thermal	Icebreaker 200	236 g	1
Long sleeve thermal	Kathmandu Polyprop	200 g	1
Rain Jacket	Mont Lightspeed	177 g	1
Waterproof pants	Salomon Bonatti Pants	175 g	1
Gloves	Black Diamond Mont Gloves	64 g	1
Long Johns	Polyprop Kathmandu	147 g	1
Emergency Bivy	Coghlan's Emergency Bag	74 g	1
Snake Bandage	Supplied by race organisers	54 g	1
Compass	Suunto Compass	20 g	1
First Aid Supplies	Antihistamines, Fixamul, Paracetamol, Bodyglide	50 g	1
800kCal Emergency Food	110g macadamias	110 g	1
Map	Supplied by race organisers	2 g	1
Beanie	Icebreaker Beanie	50 g	1
Phone	Pixel 8a	188 g	1
		1547 g	14

Additional Gear

		Weight	qty
Pack	Salomon ADV Skin 12	293 g	1
Salomon Flasks	500ml soft flasks	76 g	3
Salomon Bladder	1500ml bladder	120 g	1
Camera	Insta360 Go3s Camera Only	40 g	1
		681 g	6

Worn Gear

		Weight	qty
Shirt	On Cloud Shirt	90 g	1
Shorts	Decathlon Shorts	120 g	1
Hat	Fractal Hat	59 g	1
Sunglasses	Goodr	27 g	1
Headband	Find Your Feet Headband	10 g	1
Shoes	Saucony Peregrine 13	271 g	1
Socks	Injinji Ultra	76 g	1
Running Belt	Naked Running Band	65 g	1
		718 g	8

Race Splits

For those interested in ever chasing that 9 hour goal I have included my actual splits below. There is only two goal splits that I can ever remember and that is the time to Pelion and to Narcissus. I determined these times from looking at past years results and from my own past experiences too.

- 3:30 to Pelion
- 6:50 to Narcissus
- This allows 2:10 to run along the lake

On race day I made it to Pelion in 3:20, I was 10 minutes ahead of my schedule. Then I arrived at Narcissus in 7 hours, 10 minutes behind my schedule. This gave me 2 hours to run the lake. I genuinely think that my times all the way through kept the 9 hour goal within reach. If I pushed a little harder in the end and didn't have 2x falls then the 9 hours could have been possible.

[Strava Activity](#)

Location	Cumulative Time
Waldheim – Start	0:00
Kitchen Hut	0:36
Waterfall Valley	1:10
Windermere Hut	1:48
Frog Flats	2:56
New Pelion Hut	3:20
Pelion Gap	4:00
Kia Ora	4:23
Du Cane Hut	4:48
Du Cane Gap	5:34
Bert Nichols Hut	5:49
Narcissus Hut	6:58
Cynthia Bay – Finish	9:06

Photo Credits

- Cover photo – Kristy Wallis
- All other photos credited in the captions
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Joseph Nunn: An avid trail runner based in Hobart, Tasmania. He loves getting out for big days on the trails with mates or racing against them

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1 thought on "Cradle Mountain Run 2025: Video and Reflections"



dippedidooda

February 15, 2025 at 6:56 pm

The "Ouchy wouchy" after a stack at 70km 😊

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