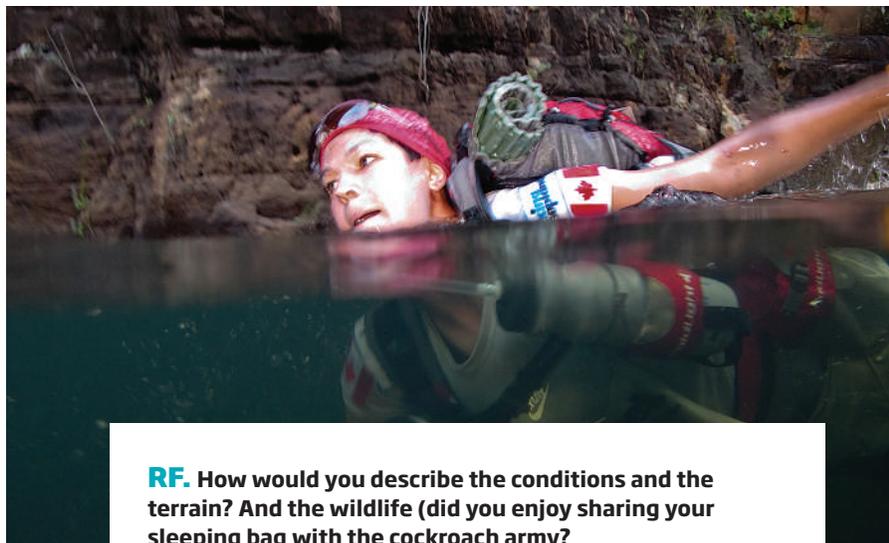


82 ENDURANCE

Profile



RF. How would you describe the conditions and the terrain? And the wildlife (did you enjoy sharing your sleeping bag with the cockroach army?)

SC. The conditions in the Outback were a far cry from those I had experienced during training in the UK, I must say! The slightest movement caused us to immediately break out in a sweat. No matter how much water I drank, I simply couldn't quench my thirst. My legs were moving so slowly I felt like I was running underwater. Sweat poured down my forehead, over my sunglasses, and splashed on the rocks and soil below. At times I even managed to find my route by the sweat drops left behind by competitors in front. The sun was unrelenting. On the 100k stage (Day 5), the temperature did not start to drop until 4:30pm, almost eleven hours after we started running. I drank 25L that day and was thirsty for more! I definitely preferred the wildlife I saw out on the course to the wildlife I saw in camp: everything from ticks to cockroaches to ants shared our tents. It was so hot even at night that you could not really escape them by covering yourself with a sleeping bag, but luckily we were all so tired we just didn't care! Out on the course, I was lucky enough to see some kangaroos, snakes, and even a few crocodiles. I think seeing the crocs helped me run a bit faster.

RF. Did you have any expectations about what the race would be like? Were you right or was it harder than you imagined?

SC. Only three things are certain in these types of races: (1) I will experience a really low moment at some point, which will make me seriously question why I didn't take up golf instead of ultrarunning; (2) I will have some incredible runners highs, which will cause me to forget any of the low points and swear off golf forever; and (3) I am guaranteed to make some really good friends. Everything else is up to the running gods! It is dangerous to come into a race with any other expectations.

RF. What was the worst bit of the race for you personally? And the best?

SC. I hit a really low moment on the first day, which was a 42 km stage. I was emotionally hungover from my journey and dehydrated from the days of travelling. Like many of the other competitors, the heat really affected me and after a few hours in the sun I started to shut down. The last couple of kilometres were on a long, dusty road without any shade and I had to talk myself through every 100m for about 4k! Knowing that I still had another tough five stages ahead of me, I really questioned my ability to make it through. Little did I know that everyone behind me that day was suffering even more than I was and the fact that I avoided being hooked up to IV fluids was a success in itself!

The best moment was definitely at the end of the 100k stage on Day 5. I tend to perform better on the longer distances, so I knew it would be a good stage for me. When I reached the 80k mark, the temperature had really cooled down and I felt like I was getting into my zone. I was running on my own and it was completely silent, except for



some nighttime wildlife sounds. The moon was so bright that I barely needed to use my head torch to find my way. I took an espresso gel, popped in some tunes, and sang completely out of key at the top of my lungs all the way to the finish! That was one of the best runner's highs I have had in a while!

