

Lesson 11 Supplemental

The Marathon Revisited.

A brief outline of the sections in the Lesson 11 PowerPoint presentation:

- Understanding maximum sustainable exertion in the racing context.
- Two marathon pacing case studies: crashing and cruising at the finish.
- Putting pace performance in great-race versus bad-race perspective.

Suppose a five-hour marathoner tries to run a 4:30 marathon. If, in fact, the athlete is actually a five-hour marathoner, meaning his or her fastest possible marathon is five hours, even with perfect weather and hot competition, is a 4:30 marathon possible?

- **And, if it were possible**, wouldn't the faster time at least demand a higher level of exertion? I'm interested in the effect that that higher-than-sustainable exertion level would have on the athlete's marathon performance.
- **Would he run faster, slower, or the same** as five hours? And which of our newly garnered ideas can we marshal to make a case for answering that question one way or another? This is the subject of Lesson 11.
- **In my personal and coaching experience**, an athlete who attempts a faster-than-ability performance will always run slower than a best possible average pace performance. Thus, a 5-hour athlete who tries for 4:30 is doomed.

There is so much to learn from an athlete's marathon experience. I'm interested in how one habitually paces the final race segment, say, from 30K to 42K.

- **There are five mathematical possibilities** using your final-segment pace as a percent of your average marathon pace. Those possibilities include: flying, cruising, hanging, slowing, and crashing.
- **Crashing occupies the 4-percent range**, beginning at 10-percent slower than average race pace. Cruising means doing the last segment within 2% of average pace for the race as a whole.
- **Average pace on the last race segment** is a more telling indicator of success than one's overall average race pace. Or the wishful-thinking finish time you were "on track" to do for the race at 30K, when the wheels fell off.

In order to perform as well as possible in a race, you have to pace yourself in relation to your energy, not your competitor's pace.

- It takes a lot of skill and discipline to perform your best during a race.
- If you have a mile by mile pacing plan, a GPS monitor could help with pacing, assuming your goal pace matches your ability.
- But correct pacing could also depend on your ability to monitor your sensations of effort and energy.