

## My “SMART” Goal

Last year my “SMART” Goal was “I shall finish the Half-Marathon (21-km) run within 3 hours”. I could not achieve it as my running time turned out to be 3 hours 13 minutes. So for this year’s Half-Marathon run, I set the same “SMART” Goal, i.e. “I shall finish the Half-Marathon (21-km) run within 3 hours”.

20 February 2011 (Sunday) was the Marathon Day. The weather was a bit cold and humid. This year the run I joined was the last event of the Day and started at 9:15 a.m. at Tsim Sha Tsui. After the start, I kept a constant running speed along with the majority of the runners. When I reached the 8 km-sign, it was just one hour as what I have expected. By that time I still felt good and I was quite confident that I could achieve my “SMART” Goal this year. I thought if I could keep my speed for the rest of the run, I should be successful. A simple arithmetic appeared once again in my mind instantly, 8 kms per hour, then 8 kms times 3, the total would be 24 kms. Then it would only take me 2 hours and 38 minutes to reach the destination. How wonderful it would be!

Shortly passing the 9 km sign, suddenly I found that the muscles of my two legs were tense and there were symptoms of spasm. Then I slowed down my running hoping that my legs could be better. But the symptoms became more intense; at last I could not continue and was forced to walk. At that time I was quite distressed because I was concerned that I could not finish the run this year because there were still 12 kms ahead. Anyway I had no intention to give up at that moment and I would try my very best to finish the run. After walking for a while, I found my legs seemed better and I decided to carry on running. I ran cautiously in order not to make my legs worse. Once the symptoms of spasm appeared, I stopped running immediately and walked for a while. Then I picked up running again after the short walk.

After running and walking for another 5 kms where the Kowloon entrance of the West Cross-Harbour Tunnel was, I got some medical oil from the helpers and rubbed it against my leg muscles to ease the tension. It seemed better and I could run quite well through the Tunnel. Once exiting the Tunnel where the up-sloping road began, the symptoms of spasm re-appeared. I had no choice but to walk for a short distance. Then I picked up running again after the short walk. I repeated these several times when I went through the flyover and tunnel in the Central District. After passing the distance signs one by one, finally I saw the last km sign at Wanchai. I was happy and excited because I knew that I was near the destination. I ran incessantly through the Causeway Bay shopping area to the Victoria Park. The finishing point was just in front of me and I ran through it with my hands holding high. At last I made it. The official finishing time was 2 hours 48 minutes. (My name and result could be found in the Marathon official web-site.) My average speed was 7.5 kms per hour, which was not too bad.

I could achieve my “SMART” Goal this year not because of luck. In fact before the Marathon Day, I practiced running regularly throughout the year. Every time I pitched my running speed at 8 kms per hour. In the recent month, I practiced two 11-km runs at a speed of 8 kms per hour each week. That was why I had no difficulties in completing the first 8 kms in the first hour on the Marathon Day. However, I have not expected my legs to cramp starting at around the 9 km-sign on the Marathon Day. Nevertheless, I am very happy and satisfied because I have achieved my Goal successfully. This has given me more confidence to challenge myself in the next year’s Marathon. I will set up a new “SMART” Goal for the Marathon 2012.