

Bouddi Coastal Run 2019

By Glenn Horrocks – 7th Overall 21km Course

The Bouddi Coastal Run is a tough run. The beautiful views, beaches and forests make it a rewarding run, but don't underestimate it. While the 21km event is one of the shorter trail runs in the Max Adventure calendar the rough track makes it a tough day out.

It starts with the length of Kilcare/Putty Beach which is fast and easy at low tide but a slog if it is high tide. You then have a slow, technical track over many small headlands and gullies to get to Maitland Bay. There are lots of stairs to go up and down in this section so watch your footing as you catch the views to the horizon. Maitland Bay Beach is a brief respite along a secluded beach before it is up more stairs and back into the headlands and valleys.

The first big climb starts after a tricky descent and creek crossing around 5.7km in. You climb up more stairs (of course) and then a steep fire trail up to the first drink station. After topping up the fluids and energy at the aid station it is a fast, easy descent down Third Point Fire trail to the end just before the cliffs before turning around and climbing back up again.

The descent to the Little Beach Trail is a highlight for me as the trail is fast and flowing and descends through lots of different environments, from dry sandy Hakea country on top of the ridge, through Xanthorea forests to moist rainforest at the bottom. The climb back to the aid station on the Old Quarry Trail is done in a number of short, steep steps with flatter sections between them. You pass the 10km mark about halfway up this climb.

At the aid station on top of the hill the top runners will be seeing the middle of the pack runners coming up the hill. The top runners come down the hill very fast, so everybody keep left. The narrow trail at the bottom of this hill can get crowded with top runners passing the back of the pack runners starting the first big climb, so be patient and polite and everybody will have a good day.

Before Maitland Bay you turn right and head up the Mount Bouddi. This is the biggest climb in the race and is also a climb with a few steep segments separated by flatter sections. The top runners will be passing middle of the pack runners in the shorter 14km event here, but as this track is up a steep hill that slows them down a lot (OK, it only slows them down a bit).

Mt Bouddi Road and Stroms Firetrail undulate up and down and as the Mount Bouddi climb probably took the edge off your strength it will be hard to set a good pace. At the Ranger Station you turn down the hill on a paved path with lots of stairs, so don't expect to descend quickly as it is hard to get your stride going. At 17km you return to the track you headed out on and have the tough narrow track with lots of stairs over many small headlands to get back to the beach.

Down the stairs to Putty Beach (the last stairs!) and you have 1.4km on the beach to the finish. Can you catch the person in front of you? Will the person behind you catch you? Do you run it barefoot or keep your shoes on, despite them being filled with sand? Do you prefer the wet sand near the breakers or the dry sand up high? Do you have a sprint finish or just cruise along and watch the surf rolling? Everybody will have their own answers to these questions. Whatever your answer, I bet this will be one of the slowest half-marathon races you have ever done - but I am guessing you don't care, because in this race you ran 3 beaches, climbed thousands of stairs, saw views for miles in a pristine Australian National Park. Everything a trail runner could ask for.

See you there!