12 Hour Running Challenge for Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People

I've long been into endurance sports & adventure and along the way have raised many thousands of pounds for various good causes. However, like many other well-meaning people, I struggle to find the time to take my sponsor form around my friends, family and work colleagues to gain the necessary pledges to make it all worthwhile and to be honest I'm getting increasingly shy about asking for money, so I put my thinking cap on to identify an event whereby the good people of our community would come to me and willingly give a donation. The event that I eventually settled upon was an ultra-distance run in the city centre of my home town Derby, in the Market Place on a busy Saturday to be precise, how is this possible you may be wondering, well by doing it on a treadmill, so the whole event can take place in a space no bigger than that which you would park a car. To give the event some context I identified an objective of running greater than 81 miles in 12 hours which would break the current Guinness World Record.

Being a Manufacturing Engineer at Rolls-Royce I'm used to rules and regulations, but nothing had prepared me for the protocol that was required by Guinness, some 40 pages listing the required evidence; it soon became apparent that the logistic challenge was equal to the physical challenge! Thus a team of a dozen independent witnesses, timekeepers, calibrators and supporters were gathered to make the event happen. The NHS supplied the required image capture systems, Derby College a professional standard treadmill (my own was on standby in case of malfunction), Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People provided the gazebos, banners, fund raising buckets, etc, The Book Café provided a venue in the busiest part of town, including a power socket and toilet (very important), Rolls-Royce Harriers Running Club the timing equipment and expert support and Rolls-Royce PCF provided a huge van to move everything into place.

So everyone and everything was assembled in Derby Market Place at 7:00am on a perfectly cool and dry Saturday 22nd February, by the time we'd agreed the running plan and schedule it was already 8:40am so it was time to get going, after all I didn't want to still be running when the crowds are vacating the pubs on Saturday night! When it comes to ultra-running some people prefer to run hard and have periodic rests but I'm a slow and steady sort of a guy, we therefore set the treadmill belt running just fast enough to give me a 3 minute margin every hour to attend to personal needs. I was then required to go into cyborg mode where I don't get bored and feel no pain! This was a worry as I didn't think it was going to be possible, however within the 1st minute of setting off a passer-by stopped, asked what was going on and donated gladly to the cause. This was very uplifting, I soon realised just how generous the good folk of Derby are, the buckets were clunking with money on a very regular basis, my friends also did an excellent job on the PA system of announcing that a World Record Attempt was in progress (no pressure then). The Rainbows Volunteers arrived early on and set up a stall under an adjacent gazebo and this added further interest to the event and attracted still more passers-by.

So I was kept busy talking to all sorts of interested people and this kept my focus away from the pain that was gradually building up in my legs. The miles achieved were registered on a cricket-style score board and as this increased to a respectable number I became less worried about making a fool of myself which was always in the back of my mind (would I trip over, get cramp, just be on a bad day, etc?). I had mentioned the event to numerous friends and family members who expressed a keen interest to come down and encourage me, so these visits broke the run into manageable increments

and the soon time passed by. So I was busy and so were the team, they did an amazing job; duties involved calibrating the machine speed and gradient in real-time, recording the whole thing on still images, video and log books and of course conversing with the public.

As night closed in, I reached my 3rd marathon on schedule and I could then start to feel that the end was in sight. Only a short distance to go, I felt myself drifting closer to the back of the travel belt as my legs became increasingly heavier, my time keepers mercifully gave me permission to tweak the speed down slightly to reduce the risk of me ending up in a big messy heap. A large crowd started to gather as I reached 80 miles, the countdown had begun, it's amazing what a lift this gave me as I cranked up the speed and sprinted over the line, and then in the dying minutes extended the existing record by over a mile.

Wow, I couldn't believe it was over, out of the 12 hours less than 30 minutes was taken as down town the rest of it was on the treadmill, so sitting down and taking the weight off my legs was heavenly!

From the kind donations we had raised nearly £3000! I'd like to thank everyone who helped supply equipment or gave their services and everyone who donated; it was a great experience which I'll never forget!

Jonathan Kinder