

***Jackpot 100: Las Vegas***  
***February 15-16***  
*no room for luck, all hard work.*

*by Elena Makovskaya*

I must say, it is my first time writing any sort of race report, but in this case I decided to share my experience, as it was very special.

The Jackpot 100 in Las Vegas on Feb 15-16, 2014 was my



***The Showgirls***

second 100 miler and it was one of those perfect races that don't come too often: I ran 100 miles in 17:33:27 (which is a 100 mile PR for me by almost 9hrs!), took 2nd place female (1st woman was 5 minutes away), placed 4th overall and never ran into any trouble. This last part is pretty rare in any ultra, especially 100 miles long... many people say "good luck" before a race, which is nice, but it always makes me feel a bit odd, because there is no such thing is "luck" on race day. You get the results that reflect

how hard you have worked for many months leading up to your goal race. As my coach Howard Nippert said to me before the race: "I don't believe in luck on race day. It is superior preparation and race day execution". And then he added: "Get it done." These exact words were in my head for the entire 17+ hours, and now I can share what exactly went into the "preparation" and "execution" parts, the combination of which produced such a perfect result.

**PART 1: PREPARATION**

I picked this race for several reasons: chances of good running weather in Vegas in Feb are very high; very fast and runnable course; short loop setup (so you have constant access to your own stuff and aid station food), and a finish buckle in the form of a HUGE casino chip!! How could I



***The Bling***

possibly resist that? This is what originally caught my attention!

Howard and I started training for this race specifically, in mid-November 2013. I had exactly 3 months to prepare. I followed the running plan he was preparing for me 100% and reporting back how I was feeling and doing on a regular basis.

My usual running plan included: running 7 days a week

(for the total of 55-70 miles a week), some interval sessions, some longer tempo runs, few easy recovery runs and long runs on weekends. Six days out of seven I would run my workouts alone around where I live (Hackensack, NJ), but for the long runs I was coming out to Rockefeller Park to run with my very good friend and running partner Tony Portera (he is a true ultra running machine, having completed 25+ races of 100 miles and longer and also 5 Badwater Ultramarathons).

Tony was sold on this race as soon as I mentioned "Vegas"; signed up for it immediately, so we were training for the same 100 and it made sense to coordinate our long runs. Not to mention, he is a great guy and a very funny person. My VCTC teammate, David Isaac, also joined us for some fun long runs in the Rockies and I think from hanging out around us he got the ultra bug as well.

Most of my long runs were 3-4 hrs. Once I did a back-to-back (4 hrs followed by 2 hrs next day) at a controlled 100-mile race pace. There was also one 50-mile long "training run", which I did in a race environment in Louisiana 6 weeks before the 100, also at a very controlled 100-mile pace. And one other 31 mile (5.5 hrs) run in really frigid conditions in New York: snow, wind, sub freezing temps, frozen water, body parts, you name it...

Those kinds of real hard long runs, when you also have the "weather" factor, definitely build up your strength and the ability to never give up and never quit, which one desperately needs in a 100 mile race.

So, after 3 months of doing this kind of race specific training, I felt extremely ready to run well. How well? My only other 100 before this was VT100 from 2013 and that was 26:09. I had some major chafing and nutrition issues which I failed to recognize early on in that race, and those cost me many hours at the end! So, having learned from that experience, I knew I could do much better than that. I thought that I could shoot for a sub-20 finish realistically, which would be very-very cool and respectable. But, in the back of my mind I also had 17-18 hrs numbers... I must clarify something here: in September of 2014, I am signed up for a 24 hr race where I will try to hit qualification mark to be in the 24 hr World Championship in 2015. That minimum is 120 miles.

So, I did my homework studying splits from different 24 hr races and saw that anyone who ran 120-130 miles in 24 hr races, usually went through 100 miles around 17-18 hrs. That is why I had these numbers in my head and wanted to see how close I could come to that. So, 17-18 was my A++++ goal, but

seriously I did not think I could get there on my first try.

### **PART 2: EXECUTION**

Thanks to a snow storm, Tony and I got to Vegas 2 days early to be on the safe side and not be stuck under a snow pile. As it turned out, that was a really good call. Huge credit here goes to Tony for taking the weather forecast very seriously early on and quickly being able to change flights and other logistics. With 3 days before the race, we had plenty of chances to relax, adjust to time (sort of...), watch the big snow back home on TV, take a trip to Death Valley and check out the race course a few times. The race course was 2.38 mile loop, which means you run 42 times for 100 mile distance. Saturday race morning came quickly and next thing I knew I was running 100 miles...



***The Runners***

Before the race, I asked my coach Howard if I should incorporate forced walk breaks early on (a very popular strategy for 100s and one of my long training runs was done that way too). He said that if I could run relaxed and strong, running was going to be more efficient than walking. As we all learned later, this was a really great advice in

my case! (And this again proves that working with someone who knows you and knows what he is doing really does help in many ways.) So, I decided to run as far as I could before I would be forced to start taking walk breaks. I was also curious as to how far that would be...



***The Inspiration***

I knew I could definitely run to 50, so I made that my small goal #1. I got to 50 in 8:22 (7 min slower than my 50m PR) and felt pretty good. So, I picked my next little goal to be 100k (62 miles) and got there in 10:36 (setting a new unofficial 100k PR by almost 2 hrs!) After that was covered all by running, I still felt pretty good and strong and decided to run to 70 miles and see what happens... 70 came and went and I still felt quite alright... I then made 80 my next target and ran there too. I was definitely slowing down (11 min/mi pace or so by then) but I was still moving very steadily. Somewhere at mile 88 I told myself that I had nothing to lose and decided to pick up the pace and try to get closer to the first woman, Stacey Costa, who had been about a mile ahead of me since about

mile 40... Stacey is a very accomplished and experienced ultra runner, so everyone in the race expected her finish time to be in 17-hr range. Almost from the start, we kept seeing each other 2 times per loop at the same places, cheering on each other and we were both quite aware of our positions in the race. This is yet another great thing about a course like that: the fact that you always know where your competition is, if you want to know. Even though I knew the entire time I was 2nd woman and very close to 1st, I was extremely dedicated to follow my own plan and run my own race and not chase anyone early on. But at mile 88 I decided to do a little gamble (it is Vegas after all!!) and go all out... Bet Big.. "All out" at mile 88 meant for me running about 4 miles at 8-9 min pace and those few miles (88-92) turned out to be some of my fastest miles of the entire race!!! Simple discovery that I could still pull it off was definitely very encouraging.

Stacey saw my "cruel" intentions immediately and also picked it up and built up some

safe distance again. Those 3 miles did take the life out of me, but knowing that I only had few more to go I was still able to keep it up at average 10-11 min pace all the way to the finish. Stacey finished about 5 min before me and we congratulated each other on amazing performances and new 100 mile PRs for both. Turned out, we were also 3rd and 4th overall as only 2 guys finished before us.



***The Award***

So, I basically ran 99% of the entire distance. I only stopped for water refills, bathroom breaks and while getting solid food down trying not to choke on it. Lots of food too... Cold cuts, hamburgers, hot dogs, noodle soup, burritos, lots of pizza, coke, Red Bull and a bunch of energy gels.. Thanks to my Soviet born iron stomach, all of the above was staying in, quickly processing and fueling my running engine. I never had any GI issues. So, essentially, I never got the answer to the question I had before the race: how far I need to run before I am forced to

walk.. Maybe in that 24 hr race in September, I will find out... But I also believe that when properly trained, running at the right pace and staying on top of nutrition, one can run pretty far...

To wrap it up, I want to say again: there is no such thing as "luck" on the race day, even in Vegas! You get what you put into it. And a few things can definitely help: good structured individualized running plan from an experienced and knowledgeable running coach, right motivation, great friends and support from those, and believing in yourself. The race was put on by a company called "Beyond Limits" and this was truly an event that took many people way beyond their limits as witnessed by so many PRs and great performances.



***Post-race***



***New PR***



# Race Results

## Jingle Bell Jog 4M

Dec. 7, 2013

Prospect Park, Brooklyn

Alison Whitehead	0:27:35	F32	8
Enrique Jaen	0:33:20	M48	
JoAnn Pate	0:33:59	F39	
Michelle Conley	0:38:10	F25	
Salvatore Carretta Jr	0:43:36	M57	
Damion Pelotte	0:49:26	M22	
Marsha Milan Bethel	1:01:17	F37	
Deirdre Dugan	1:05:45	F41	

## Ted Corbitt 15K

Dec. 7, 2013

Bobby Asher	0:53:44	M28	
Kyle Hall	0:54:14	M35	1
Matt Soja	0:54:48	M31	7
Kevin Shelton-Smith	0:56:16	M53	2
Garland Days	0:57:06	M43	10
Sean Dunne	0:59:20	M24	9
David Kornacker	1:03:39	M49	
Sean Moore	1:05:25	M49	
David Isaac	1:06:06	M51	
Laura Rodriguez	1:08:15	F34	
Julienne Bell-Smith	1:08:16	F32	
Benigno Veraz	1:09:14	M58	
Alison Whitehead	1:09:16	F32	
Paulina Nunez	1:09:30	F24	8
Anne Tiger-Days	1:11:18	F45	
Dominic Lombardo	1:11:44	M46	
Carolyn Hehir	1:12:15	F36	
David Monahan	1:12:36	M62	10
Rick Bloomer	1:12:42	M49	
Tom Long	1:13:12	M42	
Damian Mackle	1:14:11	M39	
Ciara Malone	1:14:11	F31	
Bette Clark	1:15:10	F58	7
Salvatore Carretta Jr	1:16:22	M57	
Stephany Evans	1:17:20	F56	8
Richard Conley	1:17:32	M58	
Juan Tony Gonzalez	1:17:43	M67	5
Ken Rolston	1:17:43	M62	
Manlio Mondo	1:18:05	M66	6
John Farrelly	1:19:33	M44	
Ariel Cruz	1:19:36	M37	
Mercedes Zegarra-Soja	1:19:50	F29	
Mandi Susman	1:20:11	F45	
Rob Vassilarakis	1:21:15	M42	
Dominga Jensen	1:21:23	F48	
Paul Paradise	1:21:26	M50	

Erick Fernandez	1:22:46	M32	
Maryann Khinda	1:24:55	F34	
Penelope Sheely	1:26:12	F44	
Eileen Hickey	1:26:28	F31	
Edward James	1:27:08	M67	
JoAnn Pate	1:30:38	F39	
Michelle Conley	1:33:19	F25	
Marta Scott	1:33:23	F48	
Monika Macezinskas	1:33:36	F67	2
David Pultz	1:35:28	M61	
Martina Cepeda	1:46:13	F57	
Katie Sullivan	1:49:22	F31	
Ramon Minaya	2:01:57	M73	
Damion Pelotte	2:02:23	M22	

## Joe Kleinerman 10K

January 11,

Bobby Asher	0:34:53	M28	9
Garland Days	0:36:53	M43	1
Kevin Shelton-Smith	0:37:37	M53	1
Sean Dunne	0:39:01	M25	
Adil Filali	0:41:46	M32	
Julienne Bell-Smith	0:43:48	F32	9
Gail Machado	0:43:50	F26	
Benigno Veraz	0:44:11	M58	6
Anthony Thoman	0:46:18	M51	
Ciara Malone	0:46:58	F31	
Reggie Cedeno	0:47:51	M33	
David Monahan	0:48:41	M62	10
Damian Mackle	0:49:08	M39	
Paul Paradise	0:50:47	M50	
Leonardo Vando	0:51:12	M38	
Salvatore Carretta Jr	0:52:11	M57	
Dominga Jensen	0:53:20	F48	
James Martino	0:53:46	M31	
Roberto Rapalo	0:54:51	M27	
Jill Staats	0:55:27	F62	1
Edward James	0:57:05	M67	6
Leoni Parker	0:58:46	F49	
Karina Rieke	1:01:17	F42	
David Pultz	1:03:22	M61	
Andrea Rafael	1:05:47	F46	
Martina Cepeda	1:10:52	F58	
Edith Jones	1:19:57	F74	6
Ramon Ruiz	1:26:36	M74	
Michael O'Brien	1:28:47	M50	

## Fred Lebow Manhattan Half

Jan. 26, 2014

Kevin Shelton-Smith	1:22:53	M53	1
Patrick Bernal	1:31:16	M37	
Benigno Veraz	1:38:29	M58	4
Sean Moore	1:38:40	M49	
Lauren Lundy	1:40:19	F33	
Deborah Heelan	1:40:20	F54	2
Daniel Hennessy	1:40:41	M49	

Paulina Nunez	1:45:41	F24		<b>Al Gordon Classic 4M</b>	Feb. 22, 2014
David Monahan	1:46:03	M62	6	Matt Soja	0:22:44 M31 3
Julienne Bell-Smith	1:48:49	F32		Grant Titre	0:23:40 M36 2
Rick Bloomer	1:49:34	M50		Paul Paradise	0:29:59 M50 10
Ciara Malone	1:49:48	F31		Ahmed Harris	0:30:22 M39
Leonardo Vando	1:53:23	M38		Manlio Mondo	0:31:04 M67 3
Damian Mackle	1:55:22	M39		Stephany Evans	0:32:47 F56 3
Dominga Jensen	1:55:28	F48		Edward James	0:35:41 M67 5
Tom Long	1:56:35	M42		Maryann Khinda	0:37:19 F34
Dennis Martinez	2:08:40	M32		Salvatore Carretta Jr	0:45:07 M57
Salvatore Carretta Jr	2:14:32	M57			
Wendell Tong	2:14:46	F45		<b>Salsa, Blues, and Shamrocks 5K</b>	Mar. 2, 2014
Edward James	2:15:58	M67		Washington Heights	
Enrique Jaen	2:20:18	M48		Bobby Asher	0:16:55 M28
Andrea Rafael	2:34:23	F46		Marcos Duarte	0:17:05 M39 3
				Matt Soja	0:17:15 M31
<b>NYRR Gridiron 4M</b>	Feb. 2, 2014			Kyle Hall	0:17:28 M35 6
Sean Dunne	0:23:14	M25	10	Sean Dunne	0:17:49 M25
Bobby Asher	0:23:43	M28		Kevin Shelton-Smith	0:17:53 M53 1
Grant Titre	0:23:53	M36	2	Grant Titre	0:18:02 M36
John Pelliccia	0:26:13	M24	8	Garland Days	0:18:13 M43
Ciara Malone	0:29:05	F31		Anna Carlson	0:18:30 F31 9
Damian Mackle	0:29:48	M39		Carlos Lopez	0:18:39 M33
Manlio Mondo	0:30:50	M66	4	Patrick Bernal	0:19:20 M37
Roberto Rapalo	0:31:12	M27		Adil Filali	0:19:44 M32
John McCarthy	0:31:52	M54		Laura Rodriguez	0:19:45 F34
Stephany Evans	0:32:17	F56	6	David Kornacker	0:19:52 M49
Dennis Martinez	0:34:03	M32		Alex Lyashchenko	0:19:54 M30
Edward James	0:36:44	M67		John Pelliccia	0:19:57 M24
Glen Shane	0:37:36	M74	4	Rodolfo Diluca	0:20:07 M39
Jeremiah McCarthy	0:38:54	M20		Sean Moore	0:20:14 M49
Ramon Ruiz	0:39:06	M74	5	David Isaac	0:20:20 M51
Michelle Conley	0:40:32	F25		Julienne Bell-Smith	0:20:26 F32
Katie Sullivan	0:43:31	F31		Daniel Hennessy	0:20:34 M49
Salvatore Carretta Jr	0:43:37	M57		Harrison Isaac	0:20:39 M15 5
Mark Hugel	0:44:16	M62		Antonio Varrenti	0:20:40 M51
Yazmin Flores	0:44:40	F33		Miles Moloney	0:20:41 M24
Edith Jones	0:45:09	F74	8	Brian Drennen	0:20:42 M39
Aoife Walsh	0:45:23	F38		Benigno Veraz	0:20:43 M58 7
Ramon Minaya	0:46:17	M73		John Farrelly	0:20:44 M44
Kathleen O'donnell	0:49:20	F46		Gail Machado	0:21:00 F26
				Rachel Gissinger	0:21:04 F37 10
<b>San Blas Half Marathon</b>	Feb 9, 2014			Alison Whitehead	0:21:08 F33
Coamo, P.R.				Rick Bloomer	0:21:10 M50
David King	1:52:40			Anthony Thoman	0:21:13 M51
Bette Clark	1:59:00			Mark Galway	0:21:22 M37
Dick Conley	2:01:00			David Rippon	0:21:24 M44
Jill Staats	2:05:00		1	Paulina Nunez	0:21:30 F24
Leo Vando	2:16:00			Ciara Malone	0:21:38 F31
				David King	0:21:54 M63 8
<b>Jackpot 100</b>	Feb 15-16			Dominic Lombardo	0:21:58 M46
Las Vegas, Nevada				Deborah Heelan	0:21:59 F54 8
Elena Makovskaya	17:33:27	PB	2F	Damian Mackle	0:22:00 M39
			4 OV	Anne Tiger-Days	0:22:02 F45 3



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## **CLUB NEWS**

**Membership:** *Please renew your membership which was due 1/1/14* (If you haven't already). Membership rates are: single-\$25; family-\$40. New members add \$15 to pay for team singlet; additional singlets cost \$15. Please send checks payable to VCTC to: VCTC P.O. Box 341, Bronx, N.Y. 10471. Applications are online at [www.vctc.org](http://www.vctc.org) Please e-mail Rick Bloomer or David King with any changes of address, phone, email and whether you would like to be added to the group email.

**Meetings/Workouts:** For 2014: Team meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.

*Club workouts are Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at the Van Cortlandt Stadium track at 242nd St and Broadway, Thursday evening tempo runs meeting at 7 p.m. at the Tortoise and Hare Statue/X-country finish line, Saturdays at 8 a.m. (we meet at handball courts at 242nd St and Broadway)*

**Newsletter stories:** The newsletter is published bi-monthly. We welcome all contributions. Deadline for the May/June issue is April 25, 2014. Maximum length is 600 words. Please e-mail [kingkvd@optonline.net](mailto:kingkvd@optonline.net) and/or [ogard777@yahoo.com](mailto:ogard777@yahoo.com) and try to include a photo.

**Race times:** Remember to send race times to Peter Coy [petercoy@verizon.net](mailto:petercoy@verizon.net) or 52 Stelfox St., Demarest, N.J. 07627. Please include name of race, date, location, finishing time, your name, age. Optional: place, age-group, personal best.

**Website:** Visit us on our website: [www.vctc.org](http://www.vctc.org)

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*Van Cortlandt Track Club*

*P.O. Box 341*

*Bronx, N.Y. 10471*