

Phill Sly – Competitive Edge Interview Number 1

Biographical Information

Your full name?

Phill Sly

Date of Birth?

2 September 1974

Place of Birth?

Geelong, Victoria

Currently Living?

Richmond, London

Sponsors (if any)?

New Balance

Marital Status (name of your partner if you have one)?

Single

Occupation (if you are unlucky enough to have one)?

Hmmm, always have trouble with this one! I'm kind of a CEO/ Entrepreneur/ Business Developer and a semi-professional runner.

Height?

171 cm

Weight?

59kg

Shoe Size?

8.5

Hair colour (if you are bald, what colour was it when you had some)?

Blonde

Favourite shoe colour?

Are you serious?! I wear whatever colour New Balance sends me. Here in the UK after one or two runs, they all look the same colour anyway – brown!

Most loved pair of runners you have ever had (brand and style)?

New Balance R330 – racing shoe that I can race and jog in.

Favourite Race?

Probably the Hamburg Marathon – a great atmosphere, great course and intimate feeling.

Your top 3 running experiences/performances?

- International Chiba XC (Japan) 1993 - my first ever race outside Australia. I was a junior and finished second by half a meter.
- Pyongyang International Marathon (North Korea) 2001 – I finished 8th in 2.16.00, but it was more the privilege in being invited to such a strange, closed society.
- Generally speaking (this is not really a succinct experience) it is meeting people and visiting the variety of places that running has enabled me to enjoy.

Personal Bests for your favourite distances?

2.15.18 for the marathon in Hamburg (2003)



Photo's above: Phil competing in the Cabbage Patch 10 mile race in Richmond, London (Left) and with a nude nut in the New York Marathon (Right).

Competitive Edge Interview

CE – Phil you have been currently living in the UK for nearly two years, how have you found life over there?

PS – Thus far, I have enjoyed living in London. Richmond is well connected to some fantastic places to train, coupled with most of the conveniences for shopping and transport.

Being located on this side of the world has also created opportunities to race all over the world, facilitated many more business opportunities, friendships and relationships.

CE – You have been following up some business opportunities in the UK, have they been progressing and can you share some small details about what your business does?

PS – In coming over here, one of my prime objectives was to open up a European office for my software business, Basis Technologies. We operate in the SAP enterprise software space, where we help companies gain greater technical performance in their SAP system. Europe and North America accounts for around 80% of our target market, so to improve our chances of success, the business didn't really have much choice other than to expand in the region.

In Australia, I have am involved with Carnival Media Group. Furthermore, I'm also pursuing other opportunities both related and unrelated to the IT industry.

CE – Do you currently have any plans to return to Australia in the near future, or are there enough things in the UK to keep you amused for a few more years yet?

PS – Plans always evolve and change... I'd say that my time will be split between Europe and Australia for the foreseeable future. Ideally, I'll end up living in continental Europe and Melbourne and continue to do business in the UK. To contradict myself a little, geography doesn't really have to be a factor in how you earn an income – the internet and reducing cost of travel makes all this possible. However, there's a lot I need to put in place and achieve before this goal materialises.

I love to keep a really close eye on what happens back home in the athletics scene, community and family.

CE – We have not seen many results from you over in the UK recently, have you been running the Cross Country season over there? If so, how have you been going and what club are you currently running for?

PS – Hmmm, unfortunately, the reason you have not seen many results is because I recently developed an injury – a fractured toe. Prior to that I had been training quite hard in preparation for some heavy racing during January, where I'd planned to race a 10k and half marathon in Bermuda, a half marathon the week later in Holland, and then a UK XC for my club Thames Hare and Hounds. Right now I have the pleasure of cycling and deep water running in (would you believe) and outdoor pool!

CE – What are your plans for this year regarding marathons? Given that you have run 2.15, do you hold aspirations of competing in Melbourne for the Commonwealth Games in 2006? If so, how has your year been structured to give you the best chance of being selected?

PS – Again, plans always change... My goal for this year is to run my best ever marathon, and let the selectors decide if that is good enough. Until 4 weeks ago, London Marathon was chosen where hopefully I could run quick enough to set me up for a shot at World Championship and Commonwealth team selections. Now, getting over this injury is number one priority where I can then begin to plan for a marathon.

CE – In Australian marathon circles you are considered to have a unique training styles with a lot of fast long running, ie. running at close to marathon pace for large distances in training. Can you elaborate a bit on what would constitute a typical week in a normal marathon preparation?

PS – Its interesting that you say my training style is unique, because I think its very Lydiard based and more aligned with what was done decades ago. My premise is that to train for a marathon, it involves more than just being fit – you need to be specific. For many people, the last time they ran 42km was when they last raced a marathon. My stance is that once you accomplish the distance many times in training, you can work towards improving the *quality* of that distance. In preparing for a 10k race, you would regularly cover more than 10k in training, so I take the same approach to marathoning.

A typical hard week of training would look like this:

Day	AM	PM
Monday:	16k easy	16k easy/steady
Tuesday:	32k (easy first 16, HM/M race pace for next 14k, 2k easy)	10k easy
Wednesday:	10k easy	32-35k easy/steady – Usually 2.10-15
Thursday:	16k easy	5k W-U, long reps with short recovery ie 8x4min 60s rec, 5k W-D – session would often be around 20-25k
Friday:	Rest	10k very very easy
Saturday:	Long session (ie 6x3k 1min rec), (3x6k 2-3min rec) or 90-100min tempo run. Distance is up to 32-35k	Up to 16k easy
Sunday:	Between 2h10 and 2h45 easy/steady	Rest or up to 10k with strides

I tend to make sure I have an easy week every 4-5 weeks where the weekly km drops considerably and generally only one run per day. This would typically be supplemented with pilates/ core stability work and massage.

CE – You are also known as a runner who is willing to compete in several marathons in a single year. What is the most number of marathon you have completed in a 12 month period, what marathons were they and how did you go in them?

PS – Its something like 5 or 6 marathons. The difference is that I use the races as training and peak race simulation. Of those, I would probably only race 2-3 intensely. I would use a marathon 4-5 weeks before a target race to get my mind in shape and cover the distance.

An example was in 2002 where I ran Melbourne Marathon in 2.22 with the first half in 74.30, the next 16k at goal race pace, then backing off the last few ks. 3 weeks later I ran Seoul in 2.16.

It was an experiment, which has led me to believe that 4-5 weeks in between was best. In the end of 2003 I ran New York in 2.22 and then 4 weeks later Milan in 2.15.27.

CE – If you could add one thing to your training program that you do not currently have the time or motivation to do, what would it be?

PS – By far and beyond it would be more sleep! I would also love to do more training at altitude.

CE – Finally, on average how many times a week do people come up to you and say “Guy Pearce, great to meet you, damn I thought you were taller than that?”

PS – Had to think about this one because I never realized that I did?! When thinking about Guy Pearce, the first image that comes to mind is him in that Pricilla Queen of the Desert movie... I save cross-dressing to quiet private time... ;o)

CE - Thanks from The Competitive Edge

PS - Thanks and good luck with the venture. For anyone reading this wanting to know more about the running European road running scene feel free to contact me through The Competitive Edge.