



## Surf Coast Century Rookie Ambassador for 2021

### Annie Knight

“HTFU Annie!” to the “delirious buzz of pre-race banter”... these are just some of our 2021 Surf Coast Century Rookie Ambassador ANNIE KNIGHTS’ highs and lows of signing up to her first ultra marathon. Some of you may know and/or have met Annie at one of Rapid Ascent’s events! Annie is our Competitor Services Manager – the fingers behind the info@ email – the one that gets us to the start lines – a hidden gem that’s for sure!

Annie has worked in the events industry for 5+ years and has always been inspired to one day give a Rapid Ascent event a go on the other side of the fence; to finally get out of the Registration marquee and experience what everyone else gets to experience on race days! With the tick of approval from Surf Coast Century race directors Sam Maffett and John Jacoby, Annie has the 100km in her sights, and we thought what a great ambassador Annie would make. As the saying goes, ‘to practise what you preach’.

Annie lives on the Surf Coast and has a background of being a competitive open water swimmer, netball defender, casual jogger and a general all-round fitness base. We put the tough questions to Annie on the start of her ambassador and 100km training journey:

#### 1. Why did you pick an ultra marathon run, of all the Rapid Ascent events?

*Ultra-running and running greater distance in general has always lingered in the back of my mind. My parents ran marathons, so maybe there’s some modelling psychology there? I completed a half marathon 10+ years ago, but since then my attempts at stringing together more training have been thwarted by injury. Last year I spent 6 months in Alice Springs- spending time in that environment with awesome, inspiring people (shout to the Dusty Divas!) consolidated my love of running and helped me to feel that it was time to really persevere on getting my body right so that I could tackle longer runs. Also, I’m really introverted so spending hours thinking (or not thinking!) and listening to heavily curated Spotify playlists is very appealing. Oh and, I’m not a great mountain-biker (read: crap), so a Rapid Ascent multi-sport event was off the table!*

#### 2. What appeals to you about the Surf Coast Century?

*It’s on home turf! I like the idea of seeing (and probably being ribbed by,...) familiar faces of the RA crew while I’m out on course- Johnny, Ranga, BD, Kingo etc. Also, I wanted my first ultra to be on relatively flat, non-technical terrain (you should see my baby giraffe form on technical downhill!), so as to not push my body on too many fronts. HOWEVER since deciding to take on the Century, I agreed to support a mate (some of you will know Liz as the Run Larapinta sweep) who is tackling the full Larapinta trail in a couple of weeks...so that kind of blows my non-technical theory out of the water! Hahaha*

*It’s also a really good way to get out of the registration marquee. ☺☺*

### **3. Where and how did you start (with direction) on how to train up for 100km?**

*Initially my 100km goal started with telling my osteo about my somewhat lofty dream over a year ago. He was optimistic (to my surprise) and gave me confidence I could do it with some stringent injury management (OP, pelvis issues). Then I got the OK from Sam and John (RA directors) to have the day off (I will do anything for a day off!). I didn't have much of an idea on how to schedule my training for 100km, and I knew I was in charge of the schedule I'd go way too hard too early, so I downloaded Hanny Allston's 100km training planner (which is linked on the Rapid Ascent website) and got stuck into it. Hanny's program includes some cool podcasts which I would recommend for newbies, especially the one on nutrition and hydration.*

### **4. How has your body adjusted to the training so far? (eg, the good bits? Any setbacks?)**

*I flew through the first 6 weeks of training and was feeling reasonably comfortable. Really enjoyed having a set regime and becoming more heavily focused on strength training, which I'd never done before. Then...BOOM...PAIN....I had an injury flare up on a long run and it shook my confidence. The team at Torquay Sports Medicine\* were able to put me back on the right track with treatment, some amendments to my training plan, and a whole lot of patience and reassurance. It was a reminder that while the 'plan' might say to do something, listening to your body is everything! I think I had feared that if I didn't 'tick every box' I might not make it around 100km, so had been minimising/ignoring warning signs that I was overloaded. Admittedly I tend towards doing too much and not taking proper rest days, so yup – big ol' REALITY CHECK! So, my ongoing training goals are- believe in my capability, trust the program and professionals around me, dial back my need to push (for pace or distance), and put my hand up when I'm not quite right!*

*In case you hadn't picked up on it yet, I am determined to a fault! I'm working hard to adopt my new mantra: 'not training is training'.*

*\*Torquay Sports Medicine are an event sponsor and also happen to be the bunch of legends helping me to cross the finish line, so I'm a huge fan and strongly recommend them for allied health support.*

### **5. Have you ever had a day where you've questioned yourself to keep going with the training or thoughts of pulling the pin? What's your remedy for overcoming these thoughts?**

*On a broad level, truthfully...no. I've never questioned whether I would continue towards the goal of 100km. Even if injuries niggle, I might fear it's not possible for me- but I'm not willing to roll over, I'd have to be told I'm done (probably several times, and then get dragged off the course kicking and screaming).*

*That said, I'm a big fan of hot/dry weather and I'm not a naturally a morning person (ie. I require 2 x almond flat whites to be a human), so forcing myself out of bed to smash out a run before work can be tough. If I feel my determination waning I respond well to a bit of good old fashioned self-talk: 'no, do not roll over, remember what you're doing this for...think about the freedom you feel when you run- you need this for happiness...don't you want to feel strong today?...you're so lucky you have the choice get up and run, many people aren't so lucky!...are you trying to sneak out of this? go out there and sit in the discomfort and smile...'. Or, if I'm seriously out of sorts, 'HTFU, Annie', which is a Rapid Ascent philosophy and proves I've spent too many years sitting in an office with John Jacoby.*

*Honestly though, the days of not wanting to train are very few. I tend to be pretty one-track minded once I commit to something! Running is bloody fun (as is ocean swimming!) and helps my mental health enormously so it's not so much a chore as a necessity for happiness and health.*

*When we're in the thick of winter and it's 5 degrees, sideways rain and hideous, southerly winds – I will, no doubt, be announcing that running is for dickheads.*

**6. Favourite piece of ultra-running gear or gadget?**

*I have become quite obsessed with Le bent socks because I don't get blisters and the socks never smell! They have quite a nice level of cushioning too. Recommend!*

**7. What are you looking forward to most on race day?**

*More than one thing! I'm looking forward to start line nerves and the delirious buzz of pre-race banter. I'm looking forward to the Currawong loop! It's my favourite section of the course (Leg 3) and feels strangely comforting. I'm looking forward to the bit where I will undoubtedly have a melt-down ("oh my God, I can't do this") leading to a full existential crisis ("why would anyone do this? What is the meaning of life?") and having to counsel myself through it. Do I sound masochistic? Yes, I openly admit I am one of those people who likes to push to breaking point then see how to overcome. Lastly, I'm looking forward to that finish line moment- aren't we all!? Glad you went the safe option and didn't ask what I'm not looking forward to...*

**Follow Annie's training on Strava [HERE](#)**

We'll update you monthly on Annie's progress on how her training is going, her mental health and motivation; running shoe choice... the works!