

Q&A - March 2020

1. Hey Sean, you're the 2020 Surf Coast Century Rookie ambassador! Congratulations. What does that tag mean to you?

It's really hard to explain how important this is to me – I have always loved running and my 40's were going to be dedicated to all kinds of endurance events, like many endurance enthusiasts I had a number of different types of Ultra races I wanted to tick off this list and a 100K was on top of that list.

However, in my late 30's (2014) during a run on the beach my heart stopped beating as I suffered a cardiac arrest – I was clinically dead for 45 minutes and my life was miraculously saved by 10 guardian angels.

I woke from a 5 day coma unharmed and with no brain damage (a miracle) and my life was changed forever. The next 3 years offered up a number of heart procedures to correct the electrical current issues with my heart and I was told by my cardiology team that running was off the table – a diagnosis I was not rapt with, so instead I perused an alternative route to working out how I could get back to endurance running.

6 years later with thanks to Rapid Ascent I am staring down the barrel of the Surf Coast Century and am honoured to represent the race as the rookie ambassador.



2. You've come a long way since having a cardiac arrest on the beach 6 years ago now at Whites Beach in Torquay. What will it mean to you finishing the Surf Coast Century 100km ultra marathon on September 19?

I can't imagine what that will feel like. I will be running for my wife and family who were told for 5 days that I wouldn't wake from my coma and if I did, I would be brain damaged. I will be running to say thank you to the hero's that tipped their hearts and souls into saving my life and I will be running to prove to myself that if I can come back from that and complete this race – I can do anything.

There will be A LOT of emotion attached to this endeavour so crossing that line will be incredibly special to a lot of us.

3. Now your plan was to complete Run Larapinta in 2019 but life threw a few curve balls at you. How did you go about overcoming those challenges?

I have worked tirelessly with my family and my cardiology team to ensure that when I am running – I am running safe.

I have had a defibrillator put into my chest, I have spent 3 years adjusting my med's with my doctors to ensure my heart is stable, my wife Kel watches all of my runs on Strava and when I run I comply to the heart rate zone limits on my Garmin as if my life depended on it (it actually does).

So when the my cardiology team suggested Larapinta was a stretch last year based on the data they were getting from my heart I wasn't prepared to put up a fight.



That same level of diligence and support from them has allowed me to participate in the 2020 Century however so I know that they have my safety in mind as well as a solid understanding of my want to push the limits of what I can do too and I'm really grateful for that.

4. Can you give us a helicopter view of your 6-month training program in the lead up to this year's Surf Coast Century?
In the 6 months lead up to the Century I will be working up to running 1 – 1 ½ hours every morning, having Saturday's as a rest and knocking out a big trail run on Sunday's.

I really struggle with fartlek and interval training as my running is strictly dictated by staying in the Green / Orange zone's on the Garmin – so they are pretty much out.

Outside of that I do 3 upper body circuits a week and a few spin sessions in the 'pain-cave' at home.

5. What's your favourite piece of ultra-running gear or gadgetry?
One of the awesome things about Ultra is the cool gear – I love that you can pack all of the water, food, protection and safety gear in one pack and comfortably run for hours. For me the best pack for that is my new Salomon Skin Pro 10 Set – bloody love it!
6. Who do you look to for inspiration to get up in the morning and make it happen?
David Goggins is my spirit animal and is responsible for me awakening my inner savage, Rich Roll opened the world of plant based eating and Ultra to me – going full plant based single handedly fast tracked my heart health, allowing me to run again and I love following the careers of Lucy Bartholomew and Courtney Dauwalter, they are freaks!
7. Where can we follow you and what other big projects have you got happening in 2020?
You can find me on Insta and Facebook. I travel around the country telling my story with my talk 'Life Of Purpose' and you can book me at: seanpurcell.com.au.

As for the rest of the year; well that is fully dependant on the storm that is Covid 19!!!

I am blessed to be a part of the LifeChanger foundation team - empowering Aussie kid's all over the country to awaken the hero inside them (check us out at lifechanger.org.au). We are working on moving our entire platform online at the moment, so if I'm not on the trails I am in my home office working on that for the foreseeable future!

Thanks for your time Sean and good luck with your preparation for the 2020 Surf Coast Century and the big dance on September 19. You can find out more about the Surf Coast Century at the [official website](#). Do the 100km or 50km race solo or team up and tackle the 100km in a team of 2-4 runners.