

## BLUE LAKE, NSW

by Cameron O'Neill

**N**EW YEAR'S Day. The objective was to run the classic "lakes circuit" - a spectacular 20km loop starting and finishing at Charlotte Pass in the NSW Snowy Mountains. The circuit takes in Rawson's Pass, Mt Kosciuszko, Blue Lake and finally crosses the mighty Snowy River before a steep climb back to Charlotte Pass. I had walked it before, albeit at a leisurely pace with hiking boots and a backpack, and had run and skied segments of the track, but this time the plan was to run the entire loop.

The plan was concocted that morning at my girlfriend Emma's place. The morning had been spent snoozing and picking at the seemingly never ending supply of leftovers from Christmas and New Years, and by early afternoon the guilt of a week without training had caught up with us, coupled with a desire to find cooler temperatures in the mountains. After a quick check of the Bureau forecast and a look at the rainfall radar, Em and I piled into our Subaru and pointed it towards Charlotte Pass.

It was 5pm, and thankfully around 10 degrees cooler, when we arrived at the Pass. We reckoned on about two hours running time that would see us back by nightfall. The sky was overcast, with gusting winds, but the BOM forecast was good and conditions were warm, so we set off with plenty of water and Powerbars.

**"Conversation was replaced with slow, heavy breathing as we worked our aerobic systems in the thin mountain air."**



Chugging our way to Kosci

The run starts with a gradual climb over a rough fire trail - a good warm up with breathtaking views. Despite the excesses of the festive season we weren't feeling too bad, and the fresh mountain air seemed to be doing wonders for a lingering hangover. Our pace quickened as we warmed up and settled into a rhythm. A creek crossing later

and the track steepened up to Seaman's Hut - an emergency shelter for many a grateful backcountry traveler during the winter months. However, today there was little snow, instead the native flowers and mosses had reclaimed their place over the landscape, providing plenty to look at. The view quickly faded from importance as the going got steeper towards Rawson's pass. Conversation was replaced with slow, heavy breathing as we worked our aerobic systems in the thin mountain air.

We huffed and puffed our way from Rawson's Pass, past the row of portable dunnies laid out for the tourists, up to the summit of Kosciuszko. By this stage it was about 6:15pm and the wind had picked up considerably. Despite threatening clouds and fading light, I was confident we'd make it back close to our estimated time. We had covered the 9km uphill from Charlotte Pass in about an hour and the rest of the run was mostly downhill.

From Mount Kosciuszko the track weaves its way along a steep ridgeline towards Mt Townsend, looking down to the cool clear waters of Club Lake and Lake Albina. You have to concentrate pretty

hard on this part of the track as it becomes very rocky in places. Not long into the descent to Blue Lake, Emma tripped and sprained her ankle. After a quick break to check that it wasn't anything serious, we started off, this time walking. However, Em's ankle again gave way so we decided to stop and strap it with a small bandage. This seemed to do the trick and again we were off. A quick check of the time revealed 7pm - it was starting to get dark and a weak drizzle had settled in. It was still warm so the precipitation was welcome, but it meant we had to be careful not to slip.

We hobbled past Blue Lake, foregoing the spectacular views in favour of getting back to the car before it got too late. As darkness descended we



3D map of the Blue Lake Run

flicked on our head torches and continued past MacKenzie's creek, stopping occasionally for Em to rest her ankle. Despite the injury it was great to be out in the backcountry, exposed to the mountain conditions but in relative safety on a very good track that we knew well.

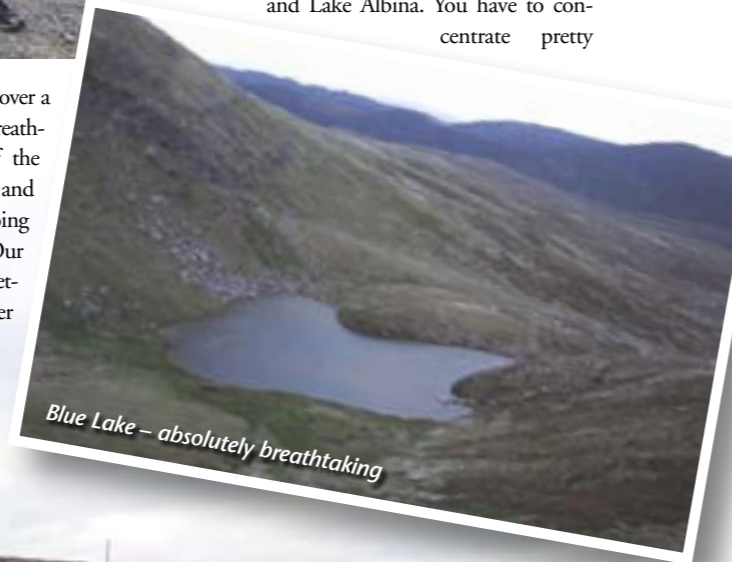
It was close to 8:30pm by the time we arrived at the Snowy River crossing. Luckily at this time

of year the river flows gently, leaving a thoughtfully constructed rock bridge high and dry. Em battled across in good spirits and we put our heads down for the final bash up the hill to Charlotte Pass.

We arrived back at the car at 9pm, tired and hungry but invigorated by the experience, and plans have already been made for a return visit next summer.

**R4YL**

*Have you done an epic run lately? Would you like to have your epic run featured in the next R4YL? If so here is what you need to have: a GPS log of your run; digital images from your run (including yourself and the surroundings); 600-700 words detailing your epic run. Send it to [epicrun@runforyourlife.com.au](mailto:epicrun@runforyourlife.com.au)*



Blue Lake - absolutely breathtaking



The picturesque Seamans Hut



GPS based training and performance recorders with Heart Rate monitoring for athletes and fitness enthusiasts

**GET A GARMIN!**



EDGE 305



FORERUNNER 305



FORERUNNER 301



it's about time and results

G005

GME Exclusive Australasian Distributor

SYDNEY (02) 9879 8888  
PERTH (08) 9455 5744

MELBOURNE (03) 9798 0988  
ADELAIDE (08) 8234 2633

BRISBANE (07) 3278 6444  
AUCKLAND (09) 274 0955

[www.gme.net.au](http://www.gme.net.au)