UNDERSTANDING YOUR - TRAINING PROGRAM

Generic Programs - One early coaching course I attended opened with a challenge to write an ideal training program for a certain event. It took about 3 seconds before hands went up with questions; how old was the athlete, what gender, what their training history was, etc.
A program such as this provided to you can be a great guide and of assistance, but take time to evaluate its contents and your current situation. Perhaps you need a greater focus on building endurance, for others it may be strength. Manipulate the way you use the program to maintain your strengths, address your weaknesses and ideally, keep a good consistent, injury-free build-up to ensure a great day out on Sunday December 9th.

Circuitbreaker - Your long run will be a staple part of any preparation for a long distance event, but they can be mind-numbing, especially if you're running solo. These circuitbreakers are great for adding some quality and focus to get you through the hours required. You may use these every week or just every now and then to break up the routine.

Mona Fartlek - it's always good to have staple session in your program that can challenge you but also provide some objective feedback with how you're travelling. Mona Fartlek is perfect for that and the upside; the actual session is only went (20) minutes long. If you do this over the same course each time you complete it, you can measure how much distance you cover in the session. The real gains in this session may be not in how much faster your efforts are but how much quicker you run the recovery portions and therefore covering a greater total distance.
Mona Fartlek is now a well used session around the world and for new comers its can be confusing but it will come second nature and add a level of accountability to this session each time it comes around. The session involves alternating efforts with the same time period in recovery in the following order;
2 x 90sec on/90 sec off, 4 x 60sec on/60sec off, 4 x 30sec on/30sec off, 4 x 15sec on/15sec off and as always should include a good warm-up and warm-down.

Hills - strength training for runners! The benefits are well documented and there is a variety of ways you can integrate hills that will benefit strength, speed, power and technique. Whilst there are not a lot of hills in the GC50 events, all of the assets above will make your day go a lot smoother and faster. There is a mix of hills sessions dotted throughout this program but given this race is likely to fall 'late' in the run season, there isn't as many as you'd find in a typical pre-season or even a in-season program.

Tempo Runs - the classic oxymoron; 'comfortably hard'! Tempo runs are great physical training but also great confidence builders and regularly integrated throughout your program will put you in good stead on race day. The objective is to execute a pace that is just a little slower than race pace so that you get the physiological benefits that you will call upon come race day without the full stresses on your body of race pace.
NB For those training for the longer distances, your intended race pace will likely be a lot slower than your pace for a 10k or half, but to get a quality session; these are the paces you'd be better working with.

Speed sessions - 'if you always do, what you've always done; you'll aways get what you've always got'. It's easy to add mileage and this can definitely help improve your outcomes, but tinkering with other variables such as speed/intensity and recoveries can also be a valuable tool to improving your times. You can complete these sessions anywhere but tracks can be useful in keeping the sessions accurate and providing feedback on your progress. Don't just judge the session on results though; are you able to hold your form longer each time, are you recovering quicker. If you're not going to be coached; make sure that you're evaluating yourself.

parkrun - one of the beauties of this growing institution is that it can be whatever you want it to be; a time trial, a recovery run, the end of a session or a social run. It's not essential that you parkrun, but it's a great tool to use and a great way to engage with like-minded people. There also located in a growing number of locations which means they are both accessible and also capable of providing variety and/or stability in your program!