

Coaching Case Study: *Alexandra Oliver at the Autumn 100*

Objective

To complete the Autumn 100 ultramarathon and earn the Centurion buckle, while testing pacing, fueling, and mindset strategies that could be applied to coaching clients.

Athlete Profile

- **Name:** Alexandra Oliver
- **Background:** Experienced ultra runner and inclusive running coach
- **Previous attempt:** Timed out on Leg 3, 66 miles in 2024
- **Coaching goal:** Lead from the front by applying tested strategies to personal performance

Overall Stats

- **Distance:** 165.73 km
- **Date:** 18 October 2025
- **Elapsed Time:** 27:33:52
- **Moving Time:** 25:02:26
- **Average Pace:** 9:59/km
- **Average Heart Rate:** 130 bpm
- **Elevation Gain:** 1,566 m
- **Perceived Exertion:** Max Effort
- **Shoes:** Altra Lone Peak 7 and Leg 3 Altra Carbon

Race Strategy

- **Pacing:** Run/walk on flats, walk/run on climbs, hold back early to stay strong late
- **Fueling:** Real food early (pasta, beans, digestives), PF&H gels and chews later
- **Gear:** Prioritised comfort over perfection; accepted compromises in sock-shoe combo
- **Mindset:** Focused, strategic, and emotionally regulated—used music only when needed

Key Insights

- **Pain Management:** Early discomfort is inevitable; mental boxing and acceptance are crucial
- **Fueling Flexibility:** Stomach shutdown after mile 50 required improvisation
- **Emotional Regulation:** Suppressed emotion until finish to conserve energy
- **Support Systems:** Team NLRC, volunteers, supporters on the course provided essential psychological lift
- **Technology Reflection:** Garmin sleep feedback post-race was humorous but not helpful—highlighting the need to interpret data with context

Coaching Applications

- Use real race data and emotional reflections to guide clients through pacing and fueling plans
- Teach adaptive strategies for discomfort and mental fatigue
- Reinforce the value of community and crew support
- Encourage clients to trust their plan and adjust only when necessary
- Helps athlete interpret post-race metrics with nuance—not just numbers



Pacing Insights

♦ Early Legs (KM 1–30)

- Pace hovered between 6:40/km and 7:50/km
- Consistent effort with minimal elevation change
- Strategy: You clearly held back early—smart pacing to preserve energy

♦ Mid-Race (KM 31–70)

- Pace slowed slightly to 7:30–8:30/km
- Notable spikes (e.g., KM 43 at 18:35/km) reflect aid station stops, elevation and terrain shifts
- Strategy: Gradual slowdown aligns with fueling challenges and night-time onset

♦ Overnight Stretch (KM 71–110)

- Pace ranged from 8:30/km to 11:00/km
- Several spikes above 13:00/km during climbs and recovery pauses
- Strategy: This was the toughest section—stomach issues, darkness, and mental fatigue

♦ Final Push (KM 111–165)

- Pace stabilised around 10:00–11:30/km
- Despite fatigue, maintained forward momentum
- Strategy: Emotional regulation and crew support helped to finish strong



Heart Rate Trends Analytics

- **Average HR:** 130 bpm across 25 hours of movement
- This suggests **excellent aerobic control**—you stayed in a sustainable zone
- No major spikes, even during slower segments, which implies fatigue rather than overexertion
- **Coaching Insight:** You paced by effort, not ego—avoiding spikes and staying sustainable. This is textbook ultra discipline



Coaching Takeaways

- **Effort over ego:** HR data shows restraint and control, even when pace dropped
- **Segment planning works:** Early pacing gave you room to absorb mid-race challenges
- **Recovery pacing matters:** Didn't panic when pace slowed—just kept moving
- **Support and mindset are performance tools:** The final stretch proves it