

Comrades 2026 Bill Rowan Program by Coach Parry – Official coach of the Comrades Marathon Association:

To Ask Questions sign up to: www.coachparry.com

It is only 11 months until the 2026 UP Comrades Marathon. The UP RUN is known for The Big Five Hills: Kowies Hill, Fields Hill, Bothas Hill, Inchanga and Polly Shortts. The 1st 3 are all run in the 1st 40km with Inchanga taking you to 50km and Polly Shortts with a little over 10km to go. There are also many other climbs like 45th Cutting, Little Polly's and Umlaas Road, however it's the unnamed hills that get you down and creep into your mind. In summary: The UP Run is an enormous challenge.

It is important to prepare physically, and equally important to prepare mentally for the challenge of running 87 odd kilometers from Durban to Pietermaritzburg.

It is important to do some running in winter to lay a platform for spring and summer. For those of you who completed the 2025 down run you may find that the programme starts out a little slowly for you, you can do a bit more than what is on the programme but do not get too carried away, in the coming months less is more and the focus is on improving your half marathon and marathon time. We focus on Comrades from March 2026.

If this is your first attempt at Comrades but you are a regular runner and can do a Half Marathon in close to 1hr45 then this is the place for you to start. If you are not a regular runner and have not run a half marathon before or are slower than 1hr45 then you need to follow the BRONZE programme, If you find your Time Trial times are closer to this programme, then you need to follow the Bronze programme with the Bill Rowan pacing plan.

The important message is to start out a little easier and build up a little slower to ensure you build up injury free.

This programme is time-based so people with more experience and greater running ability will get relatively more out of the programme and progress faster. Time-based programmes also prevent you from settling on a route that you need to run faster every time you run that particular route. It is therefore easier to maintain discipline and run easy on easy days. The aim is to run a sub 3:30 marathon before Comrades.

Later in the program there is a run on Wednesday. You need to monitor your recovery: If you are in good shape, feel rested and ready for each workout then do the additional set. If however, you are always feeling tired and struggling through workouts you need to keep that as a rest day. This is crucial; it is during recovery that we improve and get stronger, in the absence of recovery we get sick and injured.

Also note that training days are interchangeable, if your club has Time Trials (TT) on a Tuesday or Wednesday you can swap Thursday with one of these days.

Training Paces for 3:30 marathon:

Recovery (Rec):	4:50-5:04/km (7:47-8:08/mile)
Easy (E):	4:24-5:43/km (7:05-9:12/mile)
Long Runs (LSD):	4:37-4:50/km (7:26-7:47/mile)
2min Hill Repeats:	4:23-4:28/km (7:01-7:09/mile)
1min Hill Repeats:	4:03-4:08/km (6:31-6:39/mile)
3min:	4:04-4:06/km (6:27-6:35/mile)
90sec:	3:50-3:55 (6:10-6:18/mile)

Time Trials:	
5km	21:30
8km	35:15

Start at the slower end of the training paces and move towards the faster end as you progress through the coming months of training.

July 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 July	REST	45min E running	REST	50min E running	REST	55min E running	40min E running
7 July	REST	50min E running	REST	55min E running	REST	1hr E running	50min E running
14 July	REST	55min E running	REST	1hr E running	REST	1hr10 E running	1hr E running
21 July	REST	45min E running	REST	15min E; 5km TT; 10min E	REST	55min E running	40min E running
28 July	REST	15min E; 4x2min Hill repeats; 10min E	REST	1hr 05 E running			

August 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Aug					REST	1hr20 E running	1hr10 E running
4 Aug	REST	15min E; 6x2min Hill repeats; 10min E	REST	1hr10 E running	REST	1hr30 LSD running	1hr20 E running
11 Aug	REST	15min E; 8x2min Hill repeats; 10min E	REST	1hr15 E running	REST	1hr40 LSD running	1hr30 LSD running
18 Aug	REST	45min E running	REST	15min E; 5km TT; 10min E	REST	1hr E running	45min E running
25 Aug	REST	15min E; 10x1min Hill repeats; 10min E	30min rec running	1hr20 E running	REST	1hr50 LSD running	1hr40 LSD running

September 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Sep	REST	15min E; 12x1min Hill repeats; 10min E	35min rec running	1hr20 E running	REST	2hr LSD running	1hr50 LSD running
8 Sep	REST	15min E; 14x1min Hill repeats; 10min E	40min rec running	1hr20 E running	REST	2hr15 LSD running	2hr LSD running
15 Sep	REST	45min E running	REST	15min E; 8km TT; 10min E	REST	1hr30 LSD running	1hr E running
22 Sep	REST	15min E; 6x3min repeats, 1min rec; 10min E	45min rec running	1hr20 E running	REST	2hr30 LSD running	2hr LSD running
29 Sep	REST	15min E; 6x3min repeats, 1min rec; 10min E					

October 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Oct			45min rec running	1hr20 E running	REST	2hr45 LSD running	2hr LSD running
6 Oct	REST	15min E; 6x3min repeats, 1min rec; 10min E	45min rec running	1hr20 E running	REST	3hrs LSD running	2hrs LSD running
13 Oct	REST	45min E running	REST	15min E; 8km TT; 10min E	REST	1hr30 E running	1hr20 E running
20 Oct	REST	15min E; 12x90sec repeats, 1min rec; 10min E	45min rec running	1hr E running	REST	1hr E run	1hr E run
27 Oct	REST	10min E; 10x30sec at marathon race pace with 30sec rec;5min E	REST	15min E running	15min E running with 5x30sec pick ups OR REST		

November 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Nov						Marathon or 15min E running with 5x30sec pick ups or REST	Marathon or REST
3 Nov	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST
10 Nov	REST	20min rec run	REST	30min rec run	REST	40min rec run	1hr E running
17 Nov	REST	45min E run	REST	1hr E run	REST	1hr15 E run	1hr E run
24 Nov	REST	1hr E run	REST	1hr E run	REST		

December 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Dec						1hr30 E run	1hr E run
8 Dec	REST	1hr15 E run	45min E run	1hr15 E run	REST	1hr45 E run	1hr E run
15 Dec	REST	1hr15 E run	45min E run	1hr15 E run	REST	2hr E run	1hr E run
22 Dec	REST	1hr15 E run	45min E run	Merry Christmas	REST	2hr E run	1hr E run
29 Dec	REST	REST	1hr E run	Happy New Year	REST	1hr E run	45min E run