

# A Good Run!

17 October 2016 · automation, regression testing, scrum

---

**“We got a good run from the tests” the tester stated.**

**“So what’s the story?” the scrum master asked.**

**“85% Pass” comes the reply, meekly.**

**“OK, just need to fix that 5% then.” The scrum master announces before striding off to announce that the team is only a couple of % away from success.**

\*\*Our tester takes a moment to try and process the exchange...

Firstly, their own words:

“We got a good run”

**Why had they said that? Well - in a sense \*- it was true. They had executed the tests\* before, and they had returned a much higher failure rate. But the code being checked was the same...**

OK, so there were at least 3 obvious ways to interpret the data.

1. The app code meets the criteria checked by the tests. ( Based on test run 2 )
2. The app code does not meet the criteria checked by the tests. ( Based on test run 1 )
3. The tests are as reliable as the toss of the coin. ( Based on both test runs )

Its surprising how unlikely people are to choose (3).

Secondly, the scrum master’s words:

“just need to fix that 5%”

Our tester assumes this relates to the de-facto “threshold” that is usually considered as good enough to release. As if the results were a linear scale, such as height or weight. If your code gets over 90% then it gets to pass the gate and get on the release roller-coaster.

The threshold tends to be arbitrary, I worked with a client that thought 86% was good but 83% was just not fit for purpose! Their use tends to indicate a problem. Why are we caring about a number rather than a possibly broken feature? What features or risks do the failing 10% represent? Why do we have so many routine failures? Do you hear these sort of conversations in your team? If so, then your team might need some coaching.\*\*