

GO! St. Louis Marathon

St. Louis, Missouri

April 19, 2009

This was my seventh consecutive GO! St. Louis Marathon. As I was reading through my 2008 report on this race, much of what I said early on in that report applied to this year as well--I wasn't expecting a good performance, my training wasn't very good, I didn't do enough long runs, my VO2max continues to drop, my weight keeps going up (201 this year versus 200 last year), etc. I remember thinking after last year's 4:25:32 that I was going to lose weight and train harder to try to finish this year in around 4:10-4:15--something I hadn't done since 2006. Obviously, I failed to live up to those resolutions. Going into this race, I figured I would finish somewhere between 4:30 and 5:00. For me, I don't think that's very good. It would only be a continuation of my slowing GO! St. Louis Marathon times:

Year	Finish Time
2003	3:46:37
2004	3:48:29
2005	4:00:17
2006	4:09:17
2007	4:27:58
2008	4:25:32

I don't think I did this race for a good reason. You have to really *want* to do a marathon. I didn't. I just wanted to continue my streak of running this marathon. (Yes, there's some vanity involved.) I was looking forward to getting it over with. Hopefully, I'll have a better attitude if I choose to do it next year.

Three days before the marathon, I took a Pilates class at the YMCA, and we did some pretty tough movements. During class, I was worried that I was overdoing it. Sure enough, the day after, my hips were hurting badly, due, I believe, to bursitis. I knew that that wouldn't stop me from running the marathon, so I started taking Aleve (something I rarely do) to deal with the pain and inflammation. The pain subsided over the next two days, and miraculously, I had no hip pain at the start of the marathon, nor any during the race. I got lucky.

We didn't get lucky on the weather, though. It started raining about an hour before the 7:00 a.m. start of the race. There was a steady drizzle almost the entire duration of the event. It stopped for a short time, but turned into a hard rain for a short time around 11:00 a.m. Needless to say, everyone was soaking wet, and dodging puddles was a constant game. Fortunately, there wasn't much wind, and the temperatures were fairly mild--mid to upper 50s. I wore long running pants and a jacket, and varied between being too warm and slightly chilled. (I tend to overdress for long events, out of fear that if I suffer an injury or cramps and have to walk a lot, I don't want to get too cold. I'll take too warm over too cold anyway.)

I started in the middle of the 10,000+ field of marathoners and half marathoners. I wasn't running for a fast time, so I was content starting with slower runners. I had to weave my way through lots of slower runners and walkers the first few miles. It thinned out after about six miles, and once the half marathoners turned around at mile 10, it was clear sailing after that.

My splits were as follows:

Mile #	Mile Time	Cumulative Time	Comments
1	9:02		I'm surprised it wasn't slower, due to congestion
2	9:21	18:23	
3,4	18:43 (9:22 avg)	37:06	Pace was steady. These miles were flat.
5,6,7	29:45 (9:55 avg)	1:06:51	Pace slows a bit on hills; on the verge of cramps
8	10:08	1:17:00	
9,10	20:16 (10:08 avg)	1:37:16	Able to maintain a steady, but slower pace
11	11:10	1:48:27	Energy level falling; first walking break
12	11:31	1:59:58	Pace slows significantly as walking increases
13	11:17	2:11:15	Flat area of Forest Park
14	13:30	2:24:10	At Wash. U.; no legs or energy left
15	13:18	2:38:04	Wanting to quit
16	14:00	2:52:05	Bathroom break
17	12:28	3:04:34	Trying to keep up nutrition, hydration, supplements
18	11:14	3:15:48	Worst hills on Delmar are behind me
19	12:32	3:28:21	
20	12:57	3:41:18	Raining hard; going uphill a bit
21	11:13	3:52:30	Feeling better; walking only as needed
22	12:06	4:04:36	
23	12:26	4:17:02	After long uphill exiting Forest Park
24	11:16	4:28:18	
25	11:54	4:40:12	Uphill on Forest Park Blvd and Market Street
26.2	13:04 (10:53/mi)	4:53:16	

The middle miles were the worst, physically and mentally. Had that part of the course not been so far away from the start/finish line, who knows if I would have called it quits. I was on top of my nutrition, hydration and supplements throughout the race, and that certainly helped me the last 8-9 miles.

My finish time of 4:53:16 put me 82nd of 104 in the male 50-54 age group. Every year, I not only get slower, I also fall farther back in the pack. Six years ago, I finished near the top 20% of my age group; now I'm clearly in the back.

I recovered very quickly after the race. I had a minimal amount of leg soreness, and it was pretty much all gone by Tuesday. It was clearly the fastest recovery I've ever experienced. I assume it was because this was my slowest marathon. I also had some painful chafing as a result of the soaking wet clothing, but that, too, went away in a few days.

Jim Glickert
April 26, 2009



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