

Houston Marathon

01/17/10

Steve McNeil

Steve Race Report: Target Time 3:59:59, Finish Time 4:03:21. On pace until mile 24, gave away 3 ½ minutes in last 2 miles. My personal hero, Randy “Rockstar” Fuentes ran with me the whole way. When my fellow pacer cramped up at mile 15, Randy took his balloons. When I fell off the pace at mile 24, Randy continued with the pace group to run ~3:59:28 (under 4:00).

Alissa Inman

I've gotten so many messages and emails about my absence at the houston finish! thanks for the concern. I'm fine today. My race report is that I became ill and dropped out of the marathon at mile 24. I was under my goal pace at the time and calculated i could have walked it in and still gotten a PR, but i made the decision based on feeling sick and wanting to leave and not face crowds or a medical tent afterward, and I had a fun race until then and wanted to keep it a good memory. I was stupid--was using a combo of gel and beverage that I picked up the night before and found it did not agree with me (banana drink, chocolate gu, and espresso gu....ugh). My second gel turned my stomach for a while but i got past that and stayed on 7:35 avg pace through around mile 21 or 22, chatting, relaxed, happy. I wanted one more boost of energy for the homestretch and had my last gel on schedule, and right away i started throwing up, then stupidly started taking oranges from the sidelines, yet another flavor that didn't mix well with the others and made me sicker, still running but thirsty and dehydrated. I started shivering and my back was cramping, and i could not keep down water, and i realized the banana stuff had been too much sodium and had not really hydrated me. If it was my first marathon i would have stuck it out to the finish, but i didn't feel I needed to prove anything to myself. Ken was there with his bike and i pulled off my chip and he took me the rest of the way on the bike. I wondered if I might feel like a quitter but in retrospect iam still glad I stopped--i was nauseous the rest of the day and still could not eat until that night, and more running would have been bad. So no regrets, you learn every time and if anything my long-term goal will be even more ambitious, to break 3:20, because i feel that is doable now that I've come so close. Plus there is the tri season to look forward to.

Well...the real story yesterday was Clay and John both getting marathon PRs, and Mike Rivera having a good half. Plus i ran with Jesse for a while before half split off but didnt get to see how he finished. I didn't get to talk with anyone else--how did everyone else's race go?? Let's hear some better reports than mine!

Clay Brieger

This was my third Houston and sixth marathon. Houston 2007 was my first. Previous times were 3:55 at Houston 2007, 3:46 at San Antonio 2007, 3:32 at Houston 2008, 3:43 at Boston 2009, 3:23 at Indianapolis 2009 and 3:19 at Houston 2010. My goals coming into this race were to PR, go sub-3:20 and sub-3:15.

The weather was perfect, low 40's at the start and mid-50's at the finish. There were two 3:20 pacers. They started apart and never ran together as far as I know. I started about 10 yards behind the second pacer and it took several miles to catch up to him due to the crowds. Houston starts the half and full on two adjacent streets. They merge at two miles and stay together until mile nine. This makes for a crowded first few miles. I was surprised to see my first mile was as fast as it was.

Mile 1- 8:04

Mile 2- 7:27

My splits are from my Garmin auto lap so the miles aren't exact with course. Garmin distance was 26.35. The next few miles I just tried to stay behind pacer and relax and assess how I was feeling and when or if I should leave the group.

Mile 3- 7:32

Mile 4- 7:29

Mile 5- 7:26

It usually takes me about five miles to get into a zone and start feeling comfortable. That wasn't happening. My glutes and hamstrings already felt sore and I was wondering if I was just going to have to stay at 3:20 pace. The other pacer was probably on 3:17 pace and our guy told us the same guy did that the year before and died at 23. I said there may be some mad people with him if they crashed and burned b/c of the too quick pace,

Mile 6- 7:32

Mile 7- 7:31

Mile 8- 7:28

Mile 9- 7:33

Mile 10- 7:42

Mile 11- 7:28

At mile 11 the pacer said were on 3:19 pace; I didn't think so but looking back maybe we were. I was making mental assessment on my condition and trying to stay loose. I did not feel physically as good as I thought I should in these miles and started thinking about the GMP I had zeroed in the last weeks, ala Hudson. I had concentrated on 7:20 to 7:25 pace. We were down to the pacer, a young guy in black named Nash and another younger guy.

Mile 12- 7:39

Mile 13- 7:40

An interesting thing about the Garmin that I noticed in the first half was average pace. My chip time was 35 seconds behind gun time. Every couple of miles someone would be at a marker calling out average pace. It would be 4-5 seconds slower than my Garmin. For the entire race I showed a 7:34 but it was really 7:38. Anyway, I felt like we were slowing and I wasn't feeling any better. I decided I would pick up the pace and see if there wasn't a pace that was faster but felt better so I left the group at about 12.9 miles. My chip time at the half was exactly 1:40 and I was already ahead of the group so I'm not sure the pacer was correct at Mile 11.

Mile 14- 7:21

Mile 15- 7:41(overpass)

Mile 16- 7:34

Mile 17- 7:37

Mile 17-18 was that spot that we normally have, that sinking spell. I was starting to feel bad and hoping it would pass. This when Nash showed up. He was holding a strong pace and said the group slowed on the overpass and he left them. I said well get me under 3:20. He said he had a body clock and if I stayed with him we would make it. He wasn't wearing a watch. Almost immediately I felt better than I had all day and we put in some strong miles passing many people.

Mile 18- 7:31

Mile 19- 7:24

Mile 20- 7:26

Mile 21- 7:33

Mile 22- 7:32

Mile 23- 7:31

Now we get to that point in the race where you start thinking about hanging on. I was pleased that it didn't hit before. Nash had gone ahead about 50 yards and I was on my own and saying just hold it as close to 7:38 as you can this mile. Just general soreness. No hint of a cramp.

Mile 24- 7:41

Somewhere along this section were several underpasses that you had to go down and then up.

Nothing bad unless it is at end of a marathon Sh!t!

Mile 25- 7:48

I've made it 25 miles and was feeling good all things considered. I caught back up with Nash and that helped both of us. I continued passing a lot of people all these last miles. I passed several guys that looked my age and one passed me at about 23. A bandit girlfriend jumped in at 23 and was pacing him. That pissed me off but I kept him in my sights the last miles.

Mile 26- 8:05

Not sure why I slowed here other than it was mile 26. I think I lost concentration some. I knew I had my 3:20 and was doing a lot of looking around. I saw a friend here and he yelled at me to quit looking and get my 3:20 so I put on a sprint at the end. I caught that other old fart and beat his a\$\$ too. LOL

Mile 26.35- 6:49

By far my best marathon and not just because it was a PR. I finally ran one without a huge fade the last miles costing many minutes. It was the first one with no cramp, not even a hint like I had at Indy. I took Gatorade at the stations and some water, no gels. In retrospect, maybe I should have dropped the pace sooner but then I might have cramped. I'm not near as sore as I thought I would be so I hope I can jump back into training soon like I was able to after Indy. Will see about that later in the week. I want to give a big thank you to all you guys and gals on this thread. It took me a year and a half but I finally accomplished our original thread title, Sub-3:20

Clay