

Miracle Match Marathon

Waco, TX

Sunday, January 29, 2012

7:30 AM

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The marathon benefits Be the Match Foundation, which helps people who need lifesaving marrow transplants. I went to the packet pick-up/expo on Saturday afternoon in the convention center. It was well organized & efficient. Each runner received a tote bag, short-sleeved cotton T-shirt, & a few other items. Pre-race pasta dinner was also in the convention center. Hilton, the host hotel, is adjacent to the convention center & start/finish lines were within steps from the hotel. There are also a large number of other hotels/motels within a short driving distance from the race site.

We enjoyed a nearly perfect running weather. Temperature ranged from upper 20s to mid/high 50s, sunny, & there was hardly any wind. It is advertised as the toughest little marathon in Texas. The course was HILLY. The second half was a killer. Interestingly, the elevation map seemed to suggest that the 2nd half would be mainly downhill; it wasn't, as we had to run rolling hills. Of course as you go up, you must also go down & my bum knees did not like running down hills. The marathon is neither for the timid nor the untrained. I don't recommend it as a first marathon for anyone. I personally liked it a lot. The first 5 miles was an out-&-back to the campus of Baylor University, then a looped course which felt like a running tour of various residential neighborhoods. Between miles 15 & 18, Lake Waco was visible. The course was well marked & monitored. Traffic control was good. There was more than enough water/sports drink stations; as a matter of fact, I skipped a few of them. Some also offered snacks & fruits. There was sporadic neighborhood support. The race was chip-timed & there were pace groups. We crossed the Brazos River, via the Waco's Historic Suspension Bridge, to reach the finish line. The bridge symbolizes how the Miracle Match Marathon is meant to bridge the gap between donors and recipients. Each finisher received a nice medal and a wind jacket. According to the marathon's web site, finisher medals were handcrafted by Tim Anderson, engineer & equipment operator with the Waco Fire Department. Finishers were treated to chicken & beef fajitas, cold beer, bottled water, & bananas.

There were 193 (132 male, 61 female) finishers in the average time of 4:38:12. The winning times were 2:34:17 (overall male), 3:11:59 (overall female), 3:05:49 (masters male), & 3:37:24 (masters female). There was also a relay marathon & half marathon. A 5K was held on Saturday.

I had a good running day. I ran the first half in 2:06 (9:37 pace). I used to be a good hill runner & somehow managed not to let the many hills, especially in the second half, intimidate me! I ran them as hard as I could & didn't walk any. I crossed the finish line in 4:14:19 (9:42 pace). I placed 69th overall, 58th among male runners, & 4th in my age-group. I felt good throughout the run & actually enjoyed running a very tough marathon! This was my 90th marathon run.

