

Fargo Marathon
Saturday, May 21, 2011
Fargo, ND
7:30 AM

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Did you know North Dakota grows more sunflower than any other state but the state flower is the Wild Prairie Rose and that milk is the official state beverage?

Fargo is the largest city in ND. The Red River, which flows northward, separates Fargo from Moorhead, MN. The metro area, which includes Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth, has a population of nearly 198,000. German and Norwegian are Fargo's top two European ancestries. Fargo is the home of North Dakota State University.

I flew into Fargo, via Denver, on Thursday. I stayed in Red River Lodge, a nice and reasonably priced motel in West Acres business/shopping district. It provided a shuttle bus to and from the start/finish of the marathon in Fargodome. The continental breakfast was available to the runners as early as 5 AM on race morning.

This was the 7th edition of the marathon. We were told nearly 23,000 had signed up for the marathon, half marathon, relay marathon, 10K, and 5K races. The packet pick-up in Fargodome on Friday was very efficient. Each runner received a long-sleeved technical shirt and a backpack. There was also a large expo. The second quarter reunion of the 50 States Marathon Clun was held on Friday afternoon. There were three sittings for the pre-race pasta dinner at 4:00, 5:30, and 7:00 pm. The food was quite good. There was a 5K on Friday evening.

The race morning temperature ranged from low 60s to high 60s, overcast, humid, and a bit windy. It rained a little, which was actually helpful. The race was very well organized. The 10K started at 7:00 am, followed by the marathon at 7:30 AM, and the half marathon at 8:30 AM. There were aid stations every other mile, up to mile 21, then every mile. There were 3 GU stations. There were pace groups. Traffic control was very good. Crowd support was very good too, especially in residential neighborhoods. We were chip-timed at 10K, half marathon, 20-mile, and the finish. There were a large number of bands and individual musicians throughout the route. The finish was inside the Fargodome. The finisher's medallion was very nice. There were plenty of recovery food items and drinks. There were massage therapists, as well as access to hot shower.

With the exception of a handful of short climbs, the course was flat. There were many turns. Be prepared to run on a mainly concrete surface. At about mile 3.5, we crossed the Red River and ran a 3.5-mile loop in Moorhead, which included running through the campus of Concordia College, before returning to Fargo. From about mile 9 to about mile 17 was out and back. We shared the last few miles with half marathon walkers.

There were 2211 marathon finishers (1290 males and 921 females) in the average time of 4:25:06. The winning times were 2:22:50 (overall male), 2:43:41 (overall female), 2:35:57 (masters male), and 3:19:45 (masters female).

There were 6158 half marathon finishers (3774 females and 2384 males) in the average time of 2:17:09. The winning times were 1:07:23 (overall male), 1:20:57 (overall female), 1:13:37 (masters male), and 1:31:56 (masters female).

There were 3099 10K finishers (2220 females and 879 males) in the average time of 1:11:01. The winning times were 34:11 (overall male), 38:59 (overall female), 42:17 (masters male), and 44:27 (masters female).

There were 5613 5K finishers (3876 females and 1737 males) in the average time of 40:08. The winning times were 16:30 (overall male), 19:39 (overall female), 16:43 (masters male), and 23:00 (masters female).

I ran the first 18 miles and jogged the last 8.2 miles. I ran the half in 2:02:48 (9:22 pace) and crossed the finish line in 4:20:51 (9:57 pace). I did not walk any. This was my 82nd marathon run.