

I appreciate the opportunity to help my fellow runners achieve their goals.

Bob Williams and I led the 4:45 group this year. The wave start allowed us to be only 40 seconds off pace at mile as compared to last year's 2:00 deficit. We skipped the first water stop and were able to "get" on pace by mile 3 - 4. We slowly built a 1:30 – 1:40 minute buffer by mile 8. Our strategy was to walk about a minute at every water stop. Unfortunately, Bob had some leg (see chronic fatigue) issues and fell off pace around this point of the race and was never able to catch back up to the group. We ran the next 14 miles at a flat pace varying by only seconds per mile arriving at mile 22 with a 1:20 buffer. I would guess that there were 30+ in our group at this point. I rewarded the group with additional walks at the Allen Parkway underpasses. The group somewhat disintegrated at this point. A few runners were able to surge ahead knowing they were in the last miles. The majority fell off pace but not by much. I had one gentleman run the entire race side-by-side with me. He was able to shave 15 minutes off last year's time. We crossed the finish line at 4:44:46 (14 seconds under the Goal Time). The 4:45 "Bus" came in on time as promised.

It is a great feeling to walk around in the post race recovery area and have several people come up to me and tell me how much the pace group(s) helped them attain their respective time goal / finish. Now that my one day adulation and worship has passed, I look forward to pacing again next year.

I noticed this year that I wasn't as aware of in the past, another service we provide to the spectators. They were able to see the pace/time as we passed to know when to look for their runners.

See you next year.

Steve McNeil