

Not a real report, but some random thoughts...

Good:

*The weather: Yes, too warm, but at least we had the clouds and rain.

*The finisher t-shirts--women's cut AND a nice fabric. Recipe for an instant favorite.

*The company: had some great conversations and formed a supportive pack with 2 guys that lasted about 12 miles.

Bad:

*The 3:20 pace group didn't happen. First sign of problem was before the gun when the leader decided the sign was too heavy, turned it upside down, and stuck it next to the starting gate. He grabbed some little baby 3:20 balloons instead. I was thinking, uh oh. Our first mile was 8:11. Second was 8:00 ish. (avg should have been 7:35). At that point I ditched the group and tried to make up time. They never passed me (even though I finished at 3:25).

*The contingent of middle aged, overweight belly dancers around mile 20-something, accompanied by loud, strident music reverberating through an underpass. Not a joke. This was after my nausea had set in, and I almost tossed the cookies right there. So much jiggling flesh on both sides. I had to focus hard on keeping my eyes on the ground and studying the asphalt. Lowest morale point of the entire race.

*Mile 22--I ran over a little boy age 3 or 4. He darted in front of me chasing a bigger boy who I had avoided. He went down hard. I went back to pick him up, he was crying and I started crying too b/c I felt bad. His mom told me to not worry and keep running.

*Looong walk to food at the finish, across the center and through a long maze that required passing cases and cases and tables of bananas and people holding them out at you. Not amusing when you are feeling queasy.

On a personal note--I am disappointed that apparently I get nauseous after 20 miles of running. Pace before that felt relaxed and manageable, easily under my 3:23 goal. I felt the energy to pick up the pace a notch, but quickly felt sick and the rest of the race I kept swallowing so as to avoid throwing up, and had to slow to mid 8 minute pace. Nothing I ate or drank digested (which I realized later when it all came up intact...sorry for TMI...but it was only water and gu). I was so thirsty so I kept drinking, but the water did not digest so I got dehydrated anyway. So maybe the answer is no water, no food? Maybe ditch my crutch, the camelbak? b/c none of it did any good.

Good event though, overall, and great times with friends.

- Alissa Inman

Race Report: HALF MARATHON

Wow these are wonderful great stories from people I know and appreciate. My story is short and simple. Everyone knows me as Lupita, right. Well, on my bib it said Guadalupe..which is my birth name, which I don't like, and I complained about that to my husband and daughter .grrrrrr.(we don't have a choice about our names) I had my plan but never fails, my butterfly stomach in the morning before the race began at 5 am, when Paul's alarm went off. I felt queasy, but at the same time I was looking forward to run with Donna. But unfortunately we didn't get to meet. I kept looking for her but everyone to me was wearing pink shorts. I could not find her at all. Too many people. At the beginning of the race I started running but I couldn't get going or find my pace it was hot, humid and trying not to slip on the wet cement or road was a worry. My shoes were all wet from a big pot hole, people trying to jump it and land in it. This was not even the first mile. I kept running and tried to concentrate on my running and thinking I need to finish this... "steady, steady" Paul always says. The crowd was very nice and loud I keep hearing my name once in a while. I kept running but my stomach was not happy, it never fails on a long run that I had to find a potty. My stomach felt better but at mile eight, that's when my feet start hurting, my right foot arch started hurting...so if was running slow, now I was running slower. As I finished at 2:23. Suddenly, the guy with microphone spots me...and yells GO GUADALUPE!!!! GO GAUDELUPE!!!! GO!! And I laughed to my myself and couldn't wait to tell Paul and Matty about it.. That's my name. But you can call me Lupita.

Lupita Nicolaides

Love, live and run.

Houston Marathon 2011 Don Winkley 1/31/11

As a 14 time veteran I didn't have to jump thru many hoops, so I entered. I have developed an ad version to huge big city marathons. Just too crowded and impossible to run - dodging walkers 5 abreast - ahead of runners at mile 2.

The expo was as I remember, packet pickup even faster. I needed some new running shorts and found 6 pair at my price at the expo.

We stayed at a hotel really close to the race expo-start-finish. Parked on the street for only a few dollars for a meter.

Really good fun to have a pre race dinner with Corpus marathon friends and drink a few specialty beers.

Race day. I knew that I was in about 4:10 shape but really wanted to run a bit with Logan as this was her first marathon and we had run together in training. Logan however got much stronger in the last month before the marathon while I sort of lost fitness. So I did not expect to stay with her for the entire marathon.

The gun, the two wave system seemed to actually work. I don't remember any 5 abreast walkers, in fact it seemed most lined up behind the correct pace group. What a welcome change.

I got just behind the 4 hr balloon guy but by the time I arrived at the start line he was gone. How he maneuvered so freely thru the traffic and got so far ahead - well it happens.

Saw Logan briefly as she also seemed to weave effortlessly thru traffic and disappeared into the mass of runners behind the 4 hr guy. Try as I may I never closed on the 4 hr group and never caught sight of Logan. Heard she ran with the 4 hr pace group.

While I don't ascribe to the crash and burn approach to marathon racing - I also have no pride. I ran really hard trying to stay with the 4 hr group and got down to 9:18 pace by mile 17. It was over. I was pressing really hard to stay on pace and when it is over - it is over! Now a recalculation - perhaps a 4:10 was possible, I could slow down to a 10 min pace.

By mile 23 even 10 min pace was impossible to keep. Waddle, jog, enjoy the wonderful leg pain which began at mile 17. Cramps hit at mile 25 - the hamstrings cramped - now to limp in.

Finished 4:15:58 good for 2nd in the age group. Post marathon feed, lots of extra hot hot sauce on my eggs. Leg cramps were minimal post race, made it to the hotel, hit the beer and took a nap. A really enjoyable trip up and back. Another is in the book.

UltraDon Don Winkley

Ultradon and I had a duplicate race minus the cramps. Started with the pace group and slowly drifted back till mile 15 where I had to run smart. Had a great time and sorry I didn't see more of y'all. I had talked with Clent the day before and talked with Don and Charlie O at the start with the pace group and then everyone took off. I would have liked to run a sub 4 but the heat and humidity were in the way, such is life. I was more proud of the woman who used to say to me "run Forrest run" until she discovered that she could do it too. She finished her first marathon at a 5:51 pace and just started to train over the summer, then turned it up 16 weeks ago and told me that she wanted do her first full marathon when she "matured", age wise that is. It was great to have Jerry and Alexis with us over the weekend and glad that they were successful with their half marathons. In addition we were happy to have their help with post race recuperation support. Thanks to all of you guys for your inspiration and group support. My wife and I are proud to be a Roadrunners.

Happy trails to all.

Leslie Kane

(This was Leslie's wife, Marcie's first marathon)

My Pacing Team Race Report.

I was one of three pacers for the 5:00 pace team. Thank you Michelle (Wolpert) and Bob (Hoekman), although we didn't run together very much, I enjoyed co-pacing with you. We had a very enthusiastic group. A lot of first timers and novices. They were the friendliest bunch I had ever paced. Their questions and inquiries were numerous. This group was trained, it appeared, and anxious to accomplish their respective goals. They just need someone to calm them and get them down the road on pace. We served that requirement and then some.

I told everyone who came by the Veteran's table on Saturday that unless they were attempting to qualify for Boston, I would add 10 – 15 minutes to their goal time due to weather. I hope some heeded my advice.

Our group started out, as expected a little behind pace for the first mile or two due to the masses. We were able to lock into a pace that kept us 50 – 80 seconds ahead of pace thru the early miles. From the beginning our group split into three fractions with Bob a bit ahead, me in the middle and Michelle a little behind. At the ½ Marathon mat, my group was exactly 12 seconds under pace. Our starting group had expanded, as it always does, with people joining us along the way. I could tell because the spectators would say something like "look at this huge group" as we came by. I estimate there were 50+ runners with me at that point. As we all know, a lot of things can happen between 13 and 20, mostly bad. We held a 50+ second buffer thru every mile marker up to mile 20 and our numbers were reduced to ~20. Again, adding and subtracting runners along the way. At mile 24-25 you can tell those that have "the look" and are holding back. I encouraged them to surge ahead, if they felt like it, several did. I crossed the finish line at 4:59:22 (according to my watch) with 10 or so runners within 30 seconds and only one female who ran the entire race at my side.

After crossing the finish line and seeing the faces, some crying, of those you helped achieve their goals priceless.

I look forward to next year, my 30th Houston Marathon, as "Pacer/Coach/Doctor/Therapist/New Best Friend".

Thanks for your hard effort Carlos & Arlen.

Steve McNeil

Houston, we have a problem...

Actually, not. The potential thunderstorms and heavy rains didn't occur to put a damper on the event. However, humidity and some light rain were present but not to the extent that it seemed to cap the excitement and anticipation of participants.

Memorable Points (in other words, what I liked):

Hotel stay that was close to the expo and start line is always a plus.

Expo process went fairly quick. Some good buys but I managed to walk away with more than enough freebies and an even happier debit card.

I tell you what, Pappa's BBQ in the downtown area has one of the best bacon cheeseburgers you've ever tried. I won't even try to describe the thick cut French fries sprinkled with seasoned salt.

I wasn't overly-anxious or worried about my finish time on this race. I ran the S.A. RNR marathon in November with a 3:58, so this middle-ager was just looking to finish in 4:00. Barring an unforeseen injury, I'm looking forward to a better finish time in Austin in Feb.

The race itself: 1) multiple water stops so I had water to pour over my head (Gatorade is just too sticky ;-p), 2) lots of orange slices and banana halves to keep me fueled b/c I dislike GU and I dislike weighing down my Spibelt with too much stuff, 3) the cute kids offering Kleenex tissues, and 4) the spectator support in the last miles of the race.

Post-race: 1) I'm liking the Honey Milk, finisher's shirt & mug 2) wait time less than 10 minutes for a free massage, and 3) the abundant booth volunteers and food servers --- so much better that there are too many rather than not enough.

Unmemorable Points:

The smell from the rain gutters in the first 5K was awful. 'Nuf said. Entertainment along the race was mediocre. But then again, they're volunteers.

Generally speaking, I had an enjoyable time in Houston with its hospitable atmosphere, good food and endless activities.

Jacque Roach