

Fiesta Marathon
McAllen, TX
Sunday, December 11, 2011
6:45 AM

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McAllen is located in south Texas, in a region known as Rio Grande Valley. It is about five miles from U.S.-Mexico border and has a population of approximately 130,000.

Steve McNeil, my running buddy/friend, and I drove into McAllen on Saturday afternoon. It rained all day and night. Packet pickup at the convention center was very efficient. Each runner received a technical short-sleeved shirt and a tote bag.

The start and finish lines were at the convention center, where parking was plentiful. Check out the Veterans Memorial if and when you are at the convention center. Race day temperature was in low 50s. There was some headwind. It was cloudy; fortunately, there was no rain. We ran the first 9.3 miles with half marathoners. There were water/sports drink stations at about every other mile. We had to cross a large number of streets and traffic control was good. In some of the residential neighborhoods, we were on our own and had to be observant of the local traffic. Without the course monitors, who did a very fine job, I would have gotten lost as we had to make many turns. Each finisher received a short-sleeved technical shirt, a medallion, and a sombrero. There were plenty of recovery food items and drinks, which included hot pasta, deli lunch boxes, beer, and bottled water.

The course was flat, and it felt like a running tour of the city, which I found quite interesting. Miles 9.5 to 14, 16 to 18.5, and 19.7 to 21.5 were out and back.

This was a small marathon. There were 89 finishers (56 male, 33 female) in the average time of 4:32:23. The winning times were 2:40:18 (male) and 3:22:50 (female). There were several hundred half marathon and 5K runners, as well as several relay marathon teams.

Steve celebrated his 54th birthday by running the marathon in 4:05:01 and placing 3rd in his age-group.

I ran the first half in 2:04 (9:28 pace) and crossed the finish line in 4:16:42 (9:47 pace). There were only 3 finishers in my age group (55 – 59 male) and I placed first! I felt comfortable throughout the run. In short, I enjoyed running the 6th edition of the Fiesta Marathon. It was my 9th and last marathon in 2011.



