

West Texas Crossroads Marathon

Saturday, October 1, 2011

Odessa, TX

7:00 AM

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The Midland-Odessa metropolitan area is located in West Texas. Odessa's population is about 100,000. The region is rich in oil and gas. My good friend and running buddy, Steve McNeil, and I left Corpus Christi around 4:30 PM on Thursday. We spent the night in Kerrville. We were in Odessa by noon on Friday. We left Odessa after the run on Saturday, spent the night in Junction, and were in Corpus Christi by noon on Sunday. A total of 1,103 driving miles.

Packet pick-up on Friday was very efficient. Each runner received a short-sleeved technical shirt and a bag of goodies. There was also an expo. We had dinner with Kristin and Joe, Steve's daughter and son-in-law, and spent the night in their home at Midland.

Race day temperature ranged from upper 50s to low 80s, sunny, very low humidity, and a bit breezy. The start line was at the parking lot of Crossroads Fellowship, which organized the race. The course was flat, through residential neighborhoods and country roads, included many turns, marked well, and monitored professionally by police officers and volunteers. There were aid stations at every mile. There was no crowd support. The finish was in Ratliff Stadium. At mile 25, we entered the parking lot of the stadium and ran a weird last mile, which included running the width of the parking lot three times before heading into the stadium, running a lap, and crossing the finish line. Each finisher received a nice medallion. There were plenty of recovery food items and drinks. I thanked the race director for organizing a nice running event and told him that he must have had a wicked sense of humor by designing such a strange last mile; my comment made him chuckle!

It was a small marathon and required mental toughness. There were 59 finishers (34 male, 25 female) in the average time of 4:34:11. The winning times were 3:05:37 (overall male), 3:49:14 (overall female), 3:11:21 (masters male), and 3:58:36 (masters female). There were also half marathon (153 finishers: 76 female, 77 male), 10K (86 finishers: 48 female, 38 male), and 5K (201 finishers: 126 female, 75 male) events.

This was the first of the 4 marathons I had planned to run in consecutive weeks during the month of October. Steve and I took it easy, maintained the same slow pace from the start to the finish, and crossed the finish line in 4:38:19 (10:37 pace). Interestingly, I was placed 32nd overall, 19th among males, and 3rd age-group, ahead of Steve's!

