

**Surfside Beach Marathon, Half Marathon and Crazy Hard 50K - 2/26/11**  
**Alissa's Marathon Race Report**

Figured out my nutrition (eating and drinking almost nothing), and finally a marathon felt like it should. Had a very comfortable, fun 3:20 despite some stretches of soft sand, being sick with a cold, and 65 to 70 degree temps. Good for a 5-min PR, NYQ, & women's course record. Don ran the 50k and had a lot of stories, which I'll let him tell--you know he can do that better than me :). Vic from Corpus ran also. Fun road trip.

--Alissa

This is an excerpt from an email I wrote a friend the night before the marathon--I swear this place looked normal on hotels.com--we arrived to find it had a lot more character & characters:

It's BYO-everything here at the Freeport Hotel, including shampoo, Kleenex, trash receptacle, and alarm clock. Management was generous enough to provide us a bar of soap (which smells like pesticide) and two plastic cups (which say holiday inn express), as well as two small towels. Its ok because I cancelled my shower plans after we found the water is the color/texture of a lemon lime protein drink. Your hands actually feel/smell dirtier after washing, so I've been using bottled water. Don and I discussed whether refilling our bottles here would provide all the minerals needed to finish a marathon! There's a TV but none of the channels work. There's a mini fridge with the shelf conveniently pre-removed so a 12-pack can fit inside. Some other highlights include getting catcalls from beer drinkers on the 2nd floor balcony upon arrival, and already finding one dead little roach and one big roach leg on the vinyl floor. No live ones yet, thank goodness. at first I felt out of place in our running clothes etc, but don ingratiated us almost immediately by dropping loose natty lights all over the gravel lot and shouting about it. I felt like the mood changed a little bit after that, and we were established as just another couple of beer drinkers. Cool. For a long time in the room I was afraid to sit down or touch any surface, but I used windsurfing towels from my car and some spare clean and dirty clothes, anything I could find, to craft a makeshift sleeping bag. My pillow was the thickness of a paperback book and stained, but don traded me one of his and I supplemented/shielded it by folding my jeans on top. I wasn't kidding when I said this is the first time in my life I wish i carried a weapon, but luckily after returning from dinner it's mostly been quiet. The only occasional sound is someone coughing up a lung next door and people peeling out in the gravel lot. I guess the beer drinking crew passed out early, either that or have moved on to places where their advances have more chance of being acknowledged. Don is now sleeping peacefully and I guess I'll try to head that way soon myself. My cold hit me much harder so I can't breathe with my nose or smell anything, well anything but this room, which is pretty pervasive. So I hope I can sleep. Still, spirits are high and we've been laughing quite hard and often at all of this. Questioning why we do such a sport, in which by most people's accounts, this hotel stay will be the MORE pleasant portion of the weekend, compared with our running endeavors tomorrow. But its a true adventure, which is really the most we could hope for.

## *My First 50K* - The Surfside Beach Ultra Hard 50K (2-26-2011)

OK. So what WAS I thinking? My first 50K on the beach?!? Well, I paid dearly for it :) I was blessed to be able to run into and run about the first 10 miles with UltraDon which made those miles go by fast and with seemingly less effort than the next 21.1.

I enjoyed the course, even though the sand was a little too soft for my taste. Also, there was no food on the course. No Gu, no bananas, no oranges, not even any cookie crumbs. Just water and gatorade, I repeat no food! For seasoned ultra runners I imagine this is less of a problem than it was for me. I felt like I bonked a zillion times along the way. I'd recommend this course if you've done a couple of 50k's already, maybe not so much for a first timer though. It was rough. I was just glad to make it to the finish line and I was glad not to be dead last and even beat at least 1 marathoner. (It's the little things, right?) The race organizers were kind enough to save a plate of food for me and even though I eat vegetarian I felt obliged to eat some of the BBQ.

Luckily enough there was dense fog most of the day or else I would have come home with my usual post long-race-SPF-50-doesn't-work-if-you-only-apply-it-ONCE-lobster-skin-tone.

I was inspired to write this race report when I stumbled on the archives of the other CCRR race reports today and I found one for the Prickly Pear 50K which I am doing next weekend. I thought to myself, "this is REALLY cool for people who are wondering what a course is like before they decide to do a race!"

So there you have it. My first 50k. I lived to do it again next weekend.

-Sara Ahlers

Oh wait, can I call myself UltraSara now? (how many ultras must one run to add that to their name any way?) ;)