

2008 ARC at Boston Report

It was better than I imagined & I can imagine a lot. I had been dreaming of this day since I talked to a guy wearing a Boston Marathon jacket at a race nearly 3 years ago. He said my 5 mile time would translate into a Boston qualifier. I remember how I wanted that jacket & now I have my own. It took 3 tries to get there!

Being my first time, everything was new. From the moment we landed at Logan, I could sense the excitement. I would seek out runners to ask them how many Boston's they have run, where did they qualify, & etc. I talked to people from California at the Olympic trials, New Hampshire at the Pasta Party & sat next to a guy on the bus to Hopkinton with Canadian flags on his shirt.

The low clouds burned off right at the start & the temperature was in the low 50's. Fortunately I found Greg at the baggage bus on the way to the start. We would have gotten into our fenced corral had we not made a last minute pit stop. Two fighter jets screamed overhead after the National Anthem. The start is narrow so our placement in the middle put us about a half mile from the start. It took a little over 9 minutes to cross the line. As crowded as it was, everyone was moving at about the same pace.

The first miles were downhill so we ran an easy 8:18 pace. The race is on Patriots Day so a lot of people take it off to watch the race. They estimate there were a 1/2 million spectators. Greg & I and many other runners were giving kids high 5s along the route. There was even a giant Easy button to high 5 but it did not help. Greg throttled back at the 4 mile to go easy on his sore calf. Well before you get there, you can hear the screams of the students of Wellesley College. One girl held up a KISS ME sign, another MARRY ME. For a while I paced with a girl with KIM IMPOSSIBLE on her shirt. I was 3 minutes ahead of my target pace at mile 16. There you cross the Charles River & begin the first of the 4 Newton hills. I knew my brother & Greg's family were somewhere in the crowd between mile 16 & 17. I didn't know which side or what they were wearing. Fortunately, they saw me first. I ran over to them and talked briefly about Greg & was off to the next hill. I was surprised to see people walking up the hills. They must have had pain issues or were from the flatlands. The location of the hills makes Boston a tough course. I did fine going up them, it was the downhill after heartbreak that gave me problems. My quads were taking a pounding & I was starting to get dehydrated though I had been to every fluid station. The street around the fluid stations was covered with paper cups & sticky with Gatorade. I had a GU packet stick to my shoe but fortunately it came off right away & did not stay on for a half mile like at Portland. I relaxed my form & began taking water from spectators. It helped, the blurriness dissipated & I was able to tough it out & achieve my goal time of 3:45. At the Marathonfoto locations, they have pictures of me smiling & sometimes raising my hands but the finish photo is of me looking down to stop my watch. Next year duplicating that time will earn me another Boston because I will be in the next age bracket.

I was very pleased with the race that I had run. I walked the 2 blocks to the baggage bus very slowly because of cramping in my left big toe. There was no one at the reunion area to greet me. My brother had left about 5 minutes after I had passed him and walked to the subway to see me at the finish. The line at the subway was so long that I got there first. The finish area was gridlocked with people so they would have had to arrive early. The next day I was still sore but we did a tour of Fenway Park & walked a portion of the Freedom trail. You could tell who ran the day before because they had trouble going down stairs. A runner from Dublin took our picture at Fenway. The flight home was packed with runners & family but the people in my aisle were tired and slept most of the way. I was a celebrity for a couple days at work but I am just a regular guy again.

Would I subject my body to such torture again? Yes, as long as I can.

Will

