

RACE REPORT – ROUTE 66 MARATHON 2008

Pinch me so I know I'm not dreaming

Mary Knott

I met my sister and some of her friends in Tulsa last Friday night. My sis is running the marathon in every state so she signed up for the Route 66 Marathon to cross Oklahoma off her list, and convinced me to run the 1/2 marathon. My plan was to just go and run the 13.1 miles as hard as I could to try to gauge my pace for January. I lined up at the 7 minute mile marker at the start line and took off when the gun was fired. My first mile was the fastest at 6:56. After that I settled into a comfortable pace and maintained between 7:20-7:30 per mile. The course was flat for the first 8 miles and the weather was perfect. Slightly cool at the start - roughly mid-50's. Decked out in Pink Paradise I heard many comments about how cold I must be, but honestly, I must have been working twice as hard as everyone else cause I was radiating heat! I pushed myself with each mile that passed.

Since this was a trial run for PF Chang's in January, I wanted to practice my nutrition/ hydration plan so I drank water at each aid station and took a gel just before mile 8. I think I would have been better off without, but I knew I needed to practice. Better to have issues at Route 66 than in January. So I swallowed my Vanilla PowerGel with some water. Immediately, my stomach didn't want it there. But I pressed on. I figured I'd probably vomit it back up eventually but happily I never did. It's one thing to eat a smorgasbord during an Ironman when I'm running fairly aerobically. But at a 7:30 pace, there was nothing resembling digestion happening in my body. I held off taking any more water for the next 3 miles to let everything settle.

Having driven the course the day before, I knew that there were several hills between miles 8-12. I underestimated how much they would tax me. I approached the first hill and repeated to myself that I was going to feel the burn in my legs and my lungs. I told myself to be steady, not to back off too much. I managed the first hill without much trouble, but when I hit the second one, my quads were not ready. My legs burned with each step up the hill. My breathing became very anaerobic and I was sucking wind hard. I was pleased to see that my pace had only dropped by 10 seconds, clocking 7:40 for mile 10 and 11. Mile 12 was my slowest mile at 7:50, but after I crested the last hill with a little over a mile to go, I recovered quickly and finished with a 7:26 for mile 13.

I flew downhill the last mile into the finish line. I crossed the line in 1:38:08, placing 2nd in my age group and 15th woman overall out of 959. I was pleased to average 7:30 for 13.1 miles and PR by more than 6 minutes! My sister finished the marathon in 3:50:17, a new PR for her and her first time under 4 hours. I am recovering well and getting back to my training. I have about 5 1/2 weeks of hard work left before I begin my taper for PF Chang's. I am really excited to see what I can do! I was never athletic growing up, that position was left to my little sister. So for me to run as well as I am is amazing to me. I am going to keep working my ass off to prove to myself (and anyone watching) that this Skirt can run!