

The ING New York City Marathon Nov. 5, 2006



My goal was to run an 8min pace 3:30 marathon (which is my 2008 Boston Qualifying time) and enjoy one of the greatest held marathons in the world. I am happy to report that I

accomplished both goals. The weather was perfect for us runners slightly over cast with temps in the upper 40's to low 50's. I had planned on meeting up with a fellow HRH club runner (Gordon) and run together at an 8min pace journey through the streets of NYC.

Gordon and I both ran Boston this year only to find out a few days later that we ran within seconds of each the entire way without knowing it. The challenge for this race was that Gordon was starting in the Green Zone and I was starting in the Blue Zone. The Blue and Green runners wouldn't merge until the 3 mile mark and then all three zones (Orange) officially didn't merge together until mile 8. But with ~37,000 plus runners in the race I really didn't expect that we would find each other.

With "Wes" drawn on my shirt I was getting a lot of "Go Wes" and "Wes you can do it's" however at around mile 3 I got "hey Wes I'm right behind you". Sure enough there was Gordon right on pace right on time. Not too soon after that we meet up with the official 3:30 Green Pace Group. It was pretty crowded running in this 8min pace group so we decided to pick it up and stay ahead of them. This would put some extra time in the bank for us in the end just in case we needed for our Boston qualifier. With the 8 mile marker coming up I told Gordon "hey there is the official 3:30 Orange Pace Group - Kim (another fellow club runner) should be near by" and no sooner than I said that there she was. With a big smile on her face she looked liked she was having a great time. With a couple of hello's and your looking great exchanges Gordon and I picked it up a bit to stay in front of that congested 3:30 pace pack of runners.

As we traversed the streets of New York I kept comparing how much more fun I was having this time over how I felt when I ran this back in 2004. Back then I was on my second attempt for my first Boston Qualifier. Then I was running a serious 7:30 pace by myself only conscious of hitting my splits and maintaining my pace. As we climbed up and down the Queensboro Bridge (mile 16) all I can do is say what a difference. In 2004 I had experienced big time leg cramps on this same bridge. This time I was talking with Gordon and waving to all those who were yelling out my name.

With my cheering family right on queue at mile 17 yes I was still having fun but I also knew that the real work didn't begin until we make it into the Bronx at mile 20. Like many other runners, Gordon and I fell in the trap of picking up the pace to fast on 1st Avenue because of the loud enormous crowds. I commented to Gordon lets save those 7:45's for the end.

Mentally I always looked at the 1st Ave stretch up to the Bronx (mile 18 - 20) as an up hill and the return on 5th Ave back into Manhattan to Central Park as a down hill. I told this to Gordon and he commented back "if you say so". At mile 20 I yelled over to Gordon "OK just another 10k to go - time to pull out those 7:45's". With that said I was determined not to repeat the last 10k of 2004.

In 2004 I was on track to run a 3:18 marathon by mile 20. By mile 23 I had quickly faded to a 3:20 estimated finish. Well to say that the wheels came off the bus is an understatement of the year. It was more like the wheels, the doors and the engine came off the bus. I ended up walking like a zombie in a Dawn of the Dead movie along Central Park South on the last mile and a slight drunken shuffle the last few yards to the finish. Very ugly 3:32 No BQ! I was not going to do that again and miss out on all of fun. With that said here are my stats:

Finish Time 3:24:59 (7:49 pace)... That goes down as a 3:24 in my book.

First half @ 7:52 pace

2nd half @ 7:45 pace

Last 10k @ 7:38 pace

Last 5k @ 7:29 pace

Last 1.2m @ 7:16 pace (now we are moving)

I Placed 3,264 out of 36,000+ runners and 25 minutes behind the world class cyclist Lance Armstrong.

A good text book negative split marathon with a very strong finish on Central Park South through to the finish. I'll thank Gordon for that. Then to top it off I meet up with another fellow club runner Tim in the finisher's shoot at the end where we post analyzed the race. Then I contacted HRH NYC Marathon central dispatcher (Aunt B) and got the update on the rest of the club runners. With plenty left in the tank at the finish this allowed me to enjoy a great dinner with the family at the Palms in the city afterwards.

After two terrible failed attempts to qualify for Boston at NY in 2001 and 2004 I finally got it in 2006. However the real icing on the cake was that I had fun and I got to shared it with my family and fellow club runners.

Good Running,

Wes