

I went on a vacation in Nova Scotia Canada, and a marathon broke out!

Yes; it's true. I did run a marathon on Sunday. But it's hardly my fault if the province of Nova Scotia put together a marathon (37th annual) in honour of and/or to coincide with my planned vacation in the lobster capital of Canada. After all, my resolve to retire from marathons or at least run them less frequently is notoriously weak.

First and foremost, this was fun. It's an incredibly small event, with all of the inherent small-event charm and hospitality. I always say that the number of friendly people you meet at a marathon is inversely proportional to the size. The camaraderie started in the small Bed & Breakfast; it continued at the local pizza joint; it was true at the start; on the course; and especially at the end. Every business and store in the area had a "Welcome Marathoners" sign out front.

Nova Scotia Marathon - Top 10 Reasons I Didn't BQ (somewhat tongue in cheek)

1. It was too hot.
2. It was too humid.
3. There were too many sneaky hills in the last 6 miles.
4. There were too many turns.
5. Because of #4 and vehicle traffic, course may have been long.
6. I ran it for fun and as a training run.
7. I was on vacation & drove too many miles to get there.
8. I ate too much lobster during my taper.
9. Staying with relatives, I drank too much beer & wine in the last week.
10. 5 minutes before the start, the RD advised that the BAA had NOT accepted the course certification.

It rained cats and dogs on Saturday, but that would have been preferable conditions to the humidity and unrelenting sun the next day. Great for viewing the scenery and for spectators; not so good for marathoning. But that's the crapshoot you risk when you run any marathon. Besides; it was July 22nd - middle of summer! - what do you expect?

I have all of my mile splits, but why bore the reader with them? Suffice to say that miles 1-6 in the oppressive morning humidity were between 7:53 and 8:50. During mile 6, the sun broke through and we were cooked. The humidity relented somewhat, but from that point to the finish there was never any escape (or shade) from the unrelenting ELSO (Evil Life-Sucking Orb). I had perfected my tan sitting by the pool at home the last 3 months and had applied layers of sunscreen before the start, but when I finished the marathon, I was sunburned. Now I know the real reason why Cape Sable Island in Nova Scotia is known as the lobster capital of Canada!

My splits continued between 8:45 and 9:40 until mile 19, but then deteriorated to 10:XX's the rest of the way. I passed 3 runners on mile 12 and never saw them again; jockeyed back & forth with another runner from 13-23 before she faded; and then got passed by 2 strong runners at mile 24. These "middle-aged women" blew by me calling out in unison "looking great, SIR". I made a point of correcting them afterwards that "SIR" wasn't the best way to get on my good side and to earn a place on my Xmas card list....but it was all in fun.

Part of the reason for slower splits in the second half - aside from the obvious - is that I stopped at every water stop and drank at least a full cup of Gatorade while joking with the volunteers. In addition, I had two other refreshment stops drinking cold Coke provided by my wife who was able to drive the course with another spouse who we had met up with at the packet pickup.

With nothing else to do Saturday PM, my wife and I drove the course twice in the rain - both directions - and my trusty car odometer kept registering ~1.05 miles for every mile marked on the course. I'm the first to acknowledge that odometers can vary, but this BMW has proven to be extremely accurate on U.S. and Canadian roads. Certainly, due to the traffic, it was impossible to run the tangents on the twisting roads in the second half. But it's a moot point, as I was a long way from

running any kind of competitive time anyway.

Some of the more memorable things that won't be soon forgotten:

- Numbered popsicle sticks handed to you as you crossed the finish line (to facilitate placement & timing).
- Post-race refreshments and awards - a sit-down meal with the most incredible fish chowder, rolls, and an assortment of locally-made pies topped with ice cream. Wow!

There will be many other memories of this enjoyable race. I highly recommend it as a destination marathon. I met people from 4 Canadian provinces and 11 U.S. states, including Florida, Massachusetts, Colorado, and even someone living just a few miles from me in New Jersey!

Preliminary statistics, as I imagine it will be some time before official results are published (things move at a different pace in this part of the world):

Time - 4:08:51

Pace - 9:29/mile

PLP - 60.4%

AG time - 3:26:56

Overall - 23rd

Division - 5th in Male 50-59

My goal marathon remains Mohawk-Hudson River in October. Clearly; I have some work to do in the next few months. That one promises to be a little less fun, although not necessarily less rewarding.