



Philadelphia Marathon

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Philadelphia, PA

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My Philadelphia Marathon resulted in a time finishing time of 3:40.09, a personal record by just over 3 minutes for me. In the division rankings, I landed 134th out of 1061 women in my age group, 456th out of 4272 females.

The truth is that I wasn't expecting a PR that day. Unlike my previous approaches and mental outlook on other marathon days, that day, I just wanted to enjoy my race, running injury free. Sure, I thought about breaking my previous record, but that just seemed like one of those pre-race dreams. Maybe it was all that Rocky imagery in my head, perhaps tapping into taper helped me relax on race day.

In the end, I couldn't be happier with my results. In fact, the marathon motto pretty much sums up my experience that day: **BEST TIME OF MY LIFE!** Well, at least the best *MARATHON TIME* of my life.

Race Day

Like any typical race day, the day began *early*, the first alarm chiming at 4:25am. After exchanging a few pondering, *why-are-we-doing-this!* thoughts with Janine, we quickly changed our attitudes thanks to our motivational sound track, *Rocky, of course!* With all of our racing gear lined up on the hotel floor, we were able to quickly change, brew some hotel quality caffeine, eat breakfast and charge out the door! Ok, so there a few wardrobe changes, but after that it was out the door and onto the streets of Philadelphia with our throwaways in hand!

Philadelphia was full of colorful northern fall foliage and crisp blue skies. The temperature, while not so ideal for some, was perfect for me. I've experienced my share of less than ideal race day weather conditions in the past, so I've come to appreciate a clear sky and moderate temperatures.

There were over 27,000 combined runners for the day's events, including half-marathon runners, setting a new record for the event's 18th year. The start was positioned at the Philadelphia Museum of Art on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the race circling the runners through downtown, traveling past City Hall, the Schuylkill River and the Manayunk district and ending within a block of the race start.

Throughout the race, I maintained a steady ticking off of fairly consistent splits. When I hit the 20 mile mark in Manayunk at the end of the out-and-back Kelley Drive stretch, I felt surprisingly good. In fact, I felt so good that I ran an 8:18 for my 23rd mile! That would be my last "fast" mile of the race but I continued to push the effort until the finish line, and never did I end up at the mercy of the proverbial wall.

It was just after Mile 23 that I saw my dad for the first time. It's hard to put into words exactly what kind of effect seeing him had on me. For as long as I can remember, my dad has been my biggest cheerleader – ever present in the stands at my tennis matches and soccer tournaments – never too loud, never making a scene; this day was no different. A runner himself, I've had the chance to be there for him, too, running the last 10 miles or to cheer him on at his marathons. Seeing him with less than a 5K to go and being able to give him a big smile felt like a victory.

From there, it was just a couple hundred meters up one last little incline and then down into the chute. I took in the crowds, and when I saw the finish banner (there was no 26 mile marker), I sprinted across the line.





The next thirty minutes were spent slowly making my way through the seemingly endless lines of post-race food and gear-check collection areas. All the while I kept a lookout for additional friends.

Overall, I never hit a wall and I never felt like I was falling apart. And, I can happily say that it was by far my most solid marathon performance to date.

Oh, but the best part of the whole day? The post-race Philly Cheesesteak, vegetarian (of course). And Janine reports that hers was quite similar, her egg tacos topped with vegan chorizo and a black and white dairy-free shake made her one happy marathon finisher. GO VEG!

