

2011 Half Marathon # 4
Indianapolis Women's Half Marathon
(Julie's report)

September 3, 2011

A few weeks ago I started thinking about signing up for the Inaugural Indianapolis Women's Half Marathon. Logic told me that it wasn't a good idea, since I was already signed up for two Half Marathons in September and this one would make three in four weeks. This race was also just three weeks after I had completed my first marathon when I walked 27.8 miles at Howl at the Moon. Logic did not prevail - nine days before the race I signed up. A few days later we mentioned the "crazy thing I'd done" to Tom's sister Shirley. Then four days before the race I received a text from her "Could someone get me to airport at 5 am on Labor Day? Thinking spur of the moment unless race is sold out." A few hours later Shirley had flight reservations and we were set to walk our 4th half marathon of the year together. (This was her 7th half marathon this year.)

The weather had cooled off and was typically in the low 80's with overnights around 70. Then I checked the forecast. By the end of the week & race day, it was supposed to be back in the high 90's and humid. What were we thinking? Shirley arrived in Indianapolis on Thursday, and Friday afternoon we went to get her registered and pick up our packets. We



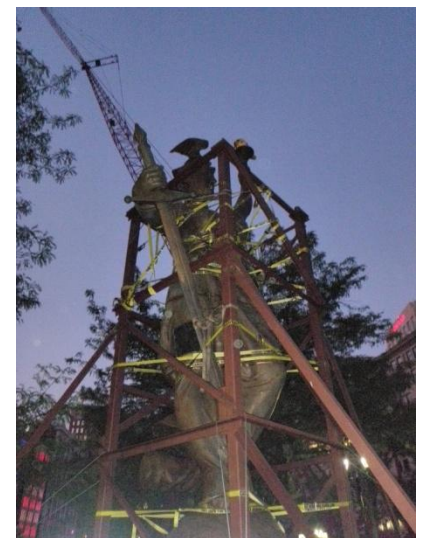
also checked out the start area and saw 'Victory' (the statue from the top of the Monument). She had just been returned to the circle after restoration and had not yet been raised to her place on the top of the Monument.

During the week Tom had been trying to plan his "cheering". What would his sign look like? Where was he going to be? etc. It wasn't going to be easy to figure out since there was so much variation in the paces of the people he wanted to support. For his sign, he was planning to use a marker and make something that said GO & had all the names on it. I was talking to a friend at work who suggested we could make the names like petals on a flower. I drew it in PowerPoint; Tom glued it to a piece of thin wood and cut it out with his scroll saw. At one point it was going to be a 'spinner', but we decided that was a little too much. The final result was fun.



Saturday morning we were parked downtown a little after 6:00. We stopped at one of the hotels to use the restroom, then walked to the circle. Tom's sign made a really nice shadow. We spotted several of Tom's friends at the circle, had a good time chatting, and took some start of race photos. It was fun to check out the crowd of all women runners. A few were wearing tutu's and other fun outfits. When it got closer to 7:00, Tom's running group took off for the start line. Shirley and I went over for another look at 'Victory', then took our place towards the back of the line. It took us 1 ½

minutes to get to the start line – the small races are certainly different than the large ones. (Some years at the 500 Festival Mini Marathon it takes us 30-40 minutes to get to the start line.)



The weather wasn't bad at the start, but it did turn out to be pretty hot the second half. Luckily there was some shade. The route took us through IUPUI campus, downtown, and then north on Pennsylvania to 38th Street, east to Fall Creek Blvd, then returning to downtown via Delaware St. There were water stops and port-o-lets every mile which was nice, except the water was warm (even at 7:00 am). Before we'd gone the first mile, we spotted Tom's flower several blocks ahead.



At about mile 3 there were some pink port-o-lets, then we passed the library and started looking for the flower again. He was farther north than I expected, but we spotted him just south of the I-65 overpass. It was amazing how far away we could spot the flower. Around mile 6, someone caught up with us and said that they thought they knew us. It was Jackie, whom we had met during the Hatfield McCoy Half Marathon in June when she offered to take our picture. She joined us for about a mile. She told us about the Half Fanatics group and gave us some pointers for the Dayton Air Force race in a few weeks.

As we turned down Fall Creek it was getting warm and we enjoyed the sections of shade. We decided we had less than an hour to go, so we could handle the heat for that long. We were pleasantly surprised with ice water at mile 10! (It was much better than the warm water that they had at all the other stops.) At about mile 11 one of the support people rode by on his bike offering Gu and granola bars. Then at mile 12 we were told that the race had been "black flagged", which means they want you to slow down or stop due to the heat. (Typically they turn off the timing clock when they black flag the race.) We saw Tom again shortly after mile 12, this time his brother, Steve, was also with him. It was great to see them and to know we only had one mile left. With about a half mile to go they distributed American flags to each of us. (One feature of the race was to support women in the military.) We reached the finish line after 3 hours and 25 minutes (according to our watches). The race clock was not turned on, but it turns out that they did score the results. In addition to our medals, we also received a rose and a tote bag with some goodies in it. At the finish they also had several refreshments: water, bananas, oranges, fried shrimp, beer, wine & Bloody Marys. They were out of the little sandwich wraps and the chocolate dipped strawberries.



As always, Shirley and I had a good time and we look forward to our next half marathon in a few weeks.

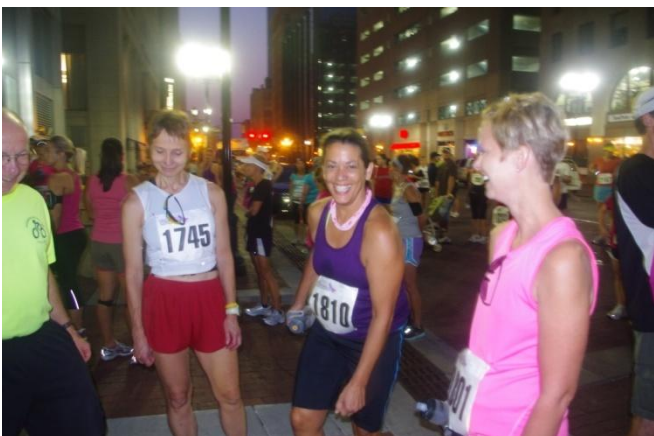
2011 Indianapolis Women's Half Marathon

(Tom's report)

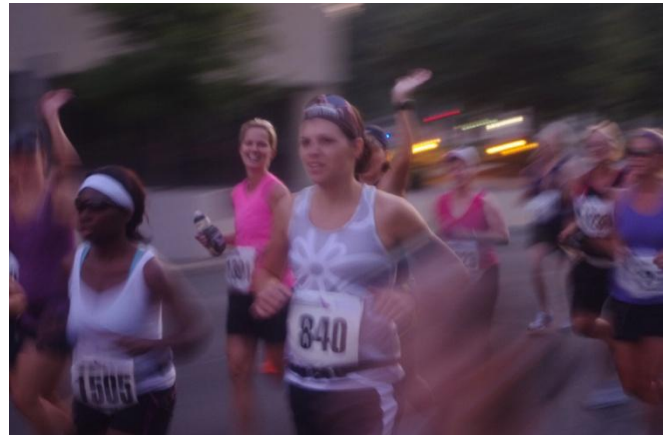
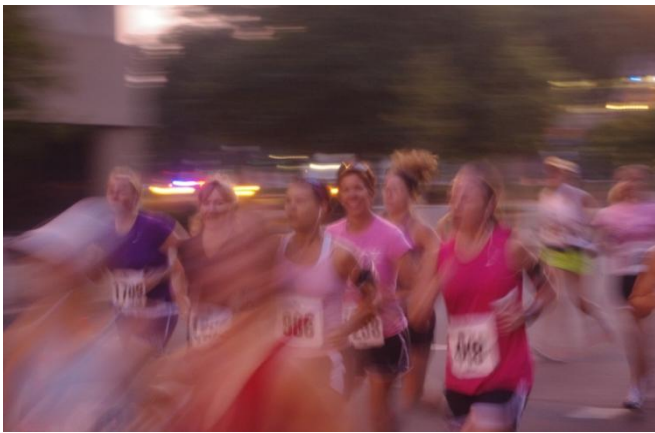
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I think that I had the most fun that I've had at a race in a long time on Saturday. Since it was the Indianapolis Women's Half Marathon, I wasn't running but cheering for my wife, sister and friends that have supported me so often over the years. Cheering isn't as easy as it looks. With a weather forecast showing temperatures climbing to the low 90's, I needed to be prepared. I packed a bottle of water, Gatorade, trail mix, my special cow bell, camera, hat, sunglasses and most importantly my sign. I initially was going to make a "homeless style" sign with the names of all my friends that were running painted on a piece of cardboard. Julie talked with friends at work and came up with the idea of a flower design with everyone's name on it. Julie printed it and I glued it to wood and cut it out. I understand that it was quite effective as a locating device for me, but I had to be careful not to hit anyone in the head with it as I turned (sorry Dick).

We all met at the port-o-let on the circle for the pre-race photo. It just seemed like the most appropriate place for this group. "Someone" overslept and came in after the National Anthem, but before the start. (Who is missing?) It was fun to watch Patty attempt to herd everyone to the start – not an easy task.



I headed off to Michigan Street while the girls lined up. I wanted to find a spot to watch the race after the runners had a chance to spread out. It was still dusky and hard to take pictures, but the 'blur' effect makes for a fun photo. I got a feel for who was running with whom and saw some people I wasn't expecting. This made it easier to spot them later in the race.



After Julie and Shirley went by I walked to just past the 4 mile marker and saw a bunch of pink port-o-lets along the way. I had a nice talk with a lady who was waiting for her partner to run by. My flower sign got a lot of attention. I was called the "flower dude", "world's greatest husband", and "best supporting man." Some people were disappointed that I didn't have their name on it and others were pleased that their name was. Other comments were "awesome flower", "great sign", and "where did you get your sign?" A couple of runners wanted to know where I was going to be next.



Everyone was looking good and it was getting easier to spot people. I'm always amazed at the different body styles that do these events. I enjoyed the outfits more at this race than most races. There were several ballerinas, a couple of butterflies, and many bright outfits. It was very warm and humid and was going to be a long day for some runners.



After Shirley and Julie went by, I walked over to the 11.5 mile area. This was a nice quiet street. When I arrived you could hear the squirrels rustling the leaves, acorns falling from the trees, and the occasional pitter-patter of feet of a few runners out for a morning run. And then the racers started to arrive and the constant ringing of the cow bell started – so much for quiet!





At this point I started to recognize strangers. One asked if I was “stalking” her since she had already seen me twice. Others said, “You’re everywhere” and some wanted to know how I got around so quickly. I told them that I cheated and took shortcuts. I saw an elite runner who was walking and was in tears. I felt bad for her, because unlike most runners this was probably “pay day” for her. She started running again and a support bicyclist said that they were watching her.

I waited until Amy and Tiffany went by and then headed to the finish line. With my cow bell hanging from my camelback and my sign sticking out my pack, it was hard to sneak up on anyone. I got back to the start area and met up with some of the group for an “after photo”. Everyone was looking good and smiling.



My brother met me at the finish area. We hung out for a little while and then walked to the 12 mile marker to find Julie and Shirley. We stood in the shade and waited. A few runners were looking for the flower sign, and one even stopped to take a picture. At this point we found out that the race had been black flagged.



Steve and I took the shortcut back to the finish to wait for the girls. The clock had been shut off, but the officials were still recording finish times. There wasn't much food left and they were running out of ice, but each finisher received a rose in addition to their medal.

We waited for the awards ceremony and Patty won her age group. After the awards we met Amy, Laura, and Lizzie at Barcelona for a light lunch. It was a fun day.

