

GO! St. Louis Marathon
St. Louis, Missouri
April 10, 2016

(Note: This report is shorter than my past ones. My experiences and results at the race are pretty much the same from year to year, so it's silly to rehash the same stuff over and over again.)

This was my fourteenth consecutive year of running the GO! St. Louis Marathon. When you have a streak of thirteen finishes in a row, you don't end it without good reason. You sign up and do the race again.

Training? What training?

Let's face it. I don't enjoy training. It beats me up. It takes time away from other things I need to do. What's more, I have nothing to prove or gain by training more and finishing the race faster. No matter how much I train, I will never PR this race again, so what's the point? I just want to finish the race.

Every year, I train less and less for this race. I joke that I'm trying to find the absolute minimum level of training necessary to finish a marathon. For this race, I ran 8 miles once or twice a week in the months leading up to it. That's it. Nothing longer than that. Most training programs have you do one or more runs of 12, 16 and 20 miles prior to a marathon. Those are indeed necessary if you want to finish a marathon quickly. I used to do runs that long, but no more.

An encouraging sign

For at least the last several years, in the weeks leading up to the marathon, I wondered how I was going to be able to finish it. In my training runs, I didn't have the endurance to run very far without having to stop and walk. I always knew, however, that experience is more valuable than anything in finishing a marathon, and I had gobs of that. Once again, I'd be relying on my experience.

This time, though, I noticed that I had slightly more fitness than in the past. On my regular running route, I was able to run farther up a certain tough hill than the year before. I can't really explain why I was more fit—although, again, it was very slight—but it was noticeable. It gave me a bit of confidence that I would be OK.

GO! St. Louis MARATHON & FAMILY FITNESS WEEKEND

APR 9&10 2016

MARATHON
HALF MARATHON
RELAY & 7K COURSE



gostlouis.org

The course

The GO! St. Louis Marathon course changed substantially in 2015. Only a few minor changes were made this year. (For some unknown reason, I don't recall the marathon course ever being the same from one year to the next. In fact, I'd wager that, in the last 14 years, we've never run the exact same course twice.) This course is ugly, except for the six miles through Forest Park. (The half marathoners don't run through Forest Park, so their course is especially ugly.) It's also hilly. There's very little of it that's flat.

A Shrinking Race

GO! St. Louis has seen a substantial drop in participation in recent years, after years of dramatic growth. Here are the number of full and half marathon solo finishers since 2005:

2005	6,039
2006	8,171
2007	8,619
2008	9,747
2009	10,355
2010	12,808
2011	13,461
2012	10,366
2013	9,429
2014	9,188
2015	7,626
2016	6,327

Despite the organizers' boasts about a flatter and more scenic course when they made the big course change in 2015, it sure didn't do much to stem the declining participation in this race. The number of half and full marathon finishers declined last year, and again this year. Unbelievably, this race is now less than half the size it was five years ago. It's also barely larger than what it was in 2005, when interest in running was about to explode.

Race weather

The weather forecast called for a chance of showers and thunderstorms. (It was partly for this reason that I didn't carry a camera during the race, and thus have no photos to share.) At the start of the race, the skies were partly cloudy. The temperature was cool. I wore a windbreaker. I could probably have gone without it, but I needed a pocket to carry a plastic bag to cover me in case of rain.

It turns out that wearing the windbreaker and carrying a plastic bag were wise decisions. More on that later.

The Race

My plan was to run the first eight miles without stopping, other than at the aid stations. I didn't quite make that. I stopped a few times for a short walk. As the race went on, I progressively ran less and walked more. I fully expected this, so it didn't bother me.

I reached the halfway mark in 2:28:41, about three minutes faster than last year. I knew that the second half of the race would be slower than the first —not only because of fatigue, but also due to many more hills on the second half of the course. That meant that I would probably be looking at about a 5-1/2 hour finish like last year. Trying to equal or better last year's time thus became my goal.

Math made easier

Mile 16 is where it becomes easier to do the math to gauge my progress toward a time goal. I reached mile 16 at 3:00:46. That meant that if I wanted to break 5:30:00, I had 150 minutes to do so, or 15 minutes for each of the remaining 10 miles. Fifteen minutes per mile is doable if I run when I can, and walk when I have to. I was hoping to go faster than that, and set a mini-goal of getting to each ensuing mile marker in about 12-13 minutes. That would give me some cushion to use on the tougher miles ahead, and give me a shot at beating last year's 5:25:04. (What always becomes an annoyance when you're doing the math to reach a goal time is knowing that the 26-mile mark is still 0.2 miles from the finish line. Those last 0.2 miles will take a few minutes to complete, so it needs to be factored in.)

Fly in the ointment

It was at around mile 18.5 when a volunteer at an intersection in Forest Park mentioned that a storm was approaching, and was expected to reach us in about 45 minutes. I had noticed the darkening clouds in the distance,

and figured our luck was running out. Forty-five minutes would allow me to get to around mile 22 at the time of its arrival. Hail was reportedly associated with the storm, so there was a chance, we were told, that we'd be directed off the course and into a shelter.

I kept looking at the sky, and the situation gradually got worse. I was just exiting Forest Park at about mile 22.5 when things quickly went crazy. Strong gusts of wind and some thunder were the first signs of impending nastiness. I was near an aid station at the time, and the volunteers were all trying to keep things from blowing away. Very heavy rain soon began, with more than enough lightning and thunder in the area to make it a bit unsettling.

Just as the rain started falling, I pulled out of my pocket the plastic bag that I had brought with me, and put it on. (I had cut out holes in it for my head and arms.) It helped in keeping my jacket and jersey from getting even wetter (beyond my sweat), but it really helped in keeping out the chill caused by the wind and cold rain. My hat helped keep the rain out of my eyes, but at times it was still difficult to see. Of course, within a minute after the rain began, my shoes and socks were completely soaked.

Come hell or high water

Soon after passing the 23-mile mark, I noticed that the runners well ahead of me were walking across the median on Forest Park Blvd. and gathering with a large group of other runners near the covered entryway of an office building on the other side of the street. As I approached the area, a race official said that the race had been stopped, and that anyone who proceeded on would be disqualified.

There was no way I wasn't going to complete the last three miles. If they wanted to disqualify me, fine. Who cares about official finish time or another finishers medal? I was going to cross the finish line. That's all that mattered to me.

I started to cross the median to join those ahead of me, but noticed that they were suddenly returning to the course to continue on. A race official at the office building's entryway had told them that he hadn't heard any news

of the race being stopped. (Conflicting instructions and communications problems are common in situations like this.)

I continued running, despite the rain and lightning. They lasted for about another mile or so before dissipating, and stopped by the time I reached mile 25.

Final miles

The storm did cost me some time. Before it arrived, I was a bit ahead of last year; now, I was gradually falling behind it.

I reached the 25-mile mark at 5:10:03. That gave me 15 minutes to complete the last 1.2 miles and break last year's time. I pushed myself as best I could, but unfortunately it took me 17 minutes to go that distance. I finished in 5:27:20. I was just glad to finish, especially after running through that storm—the strongest I'd ever raced in.

My fourteenth consecutive GO! St. Louis Marathon finish will always be one of my most memorable.

Thanks for reading!

Jim Glickert
Osage Beach, Missouri
August 1, 2016 (yes, four months after the race)

P.S. Yesterday, I signed up for the 2017 marathon.

GO! St. Louis
marathon
weekend
APR 9-10, 2016

GO! ST. LOUIS MARATHON & FAMILY FITNESS WEEKEND

Saint Louis, MO Apr 9, 2016 7:00AM

Leaders

Results

James Glickert

search

BIB

874

JAMES GLICKERT

Marathon » Osage Beach, MO

FINISHED

05:27:20

OVERALL

1,155th

OF 1,338

MALE

714th

OF 788

MALE MASTERS

326th

OF 374

MALE 60-64

24th

OF 31

0

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Interval	Time of Day	Chip Time	Chip Pace	Gun Time	Gun Pace
Start	7:03:47AM				
Bridge Challenge	7:48:07AM	00:34:00	09:43 min/mi	-	-
10K	8:07:34AM	01:03:48	10:16 min/mi	01:07:33	10:53 min/mi
10 Mile	8:52:38AM	01:48:52	10:54 min/mi	01:52:37	11:16 min/mi
13.1 Mile	9:28:42AM	02:24:56	11:04 min/mi	02:28:41	11:21 min/mi
18 Mile	10:35:11AM	03:31:25	11:45 min/mi	03:35:09	11:58 min/mi
20 Mile	11:00:18AM	03:56:32	11:50 min/mi	04:00:17	12:01 min/mi
Finish	12:31:07PM	05:27:20	12:30 min/mi	05:31:05	12:38 min/mi

Mile	Pace for this Mile	Cumulative Time	Cumulative Time in 2015
1	10:25	10:25	
2	9:15	19:40	20:29
3-4	11:25	42:31	43:19
5-8	10:34	1:24:50	
9	12:09	1:37:00	
10-11	11:29	1:59:58	2:04:22
12	11:58	2:11:57	
13.1		2:24:56	2:31:22
13-15	12:11	2:48:31	2:54:28
16	12:15	3:00:46	3:08:01
17	13:48	3:14:34	3:21:16
18	12:43	3:27:17	3:33:26
19	14:09	3:41:26	3:46:09
20	15:06	3:56:33	4:00:53
21	13:35	4:10:09	4:14:27
22-23	15:04	4:40:18	4:42:43
24	14:51	4:55:09	4:55:49
25	14:55	5:10:03	5:09:06
26.2		5:27:20	5:25:04

