

GO! St. Louis Marathon
St. Louis, Missouri
April 9, 2017

(Note: I posted about 130 photos from the race that can be found [here](#).)

Until the age of 47, I never thought that I could run a marathon. I didn't even consider trying to run one. That changed in late 2002 when I decided to start doing triathlons and, in an effort to boost my running fitness, decided to attempt my first marathon the following spring. In April 2003, I ran—and finished—my first at the GO! St. Louis Marathon (known back then as the “Spirit of St. Louis Marathon”). Never would I have guessed that, fourteen years later, I would be going for my fifteenth GO! St. Louis Marathon in a row.

Training

After last year's race, which I finished in 5:27:20, I told myself that I was going to train harder, and finish in under 5:00:00. That's something I hadn't done since 2012, when I squeaked by with a finish time of 4:59:46.

Suffice it to say I didn't train harder this past year. I trained about the same as I had for the 2016 race. In other words, I didn't train more than the bare minimum necessary to get me to the finish line. Once or twice a week, I'd go out and run my regular 8-mile route. That's not very much.

I'm not sure if it's a hamstring or sciatic nerve issue, but I've been having some discomfort in the back of my upper right leg since last fall. It never stopped me from training, but it did hurt a little, especially when I ran uphill.

Anxieties

My lack of training and my upper leg pain caused me a lot of anxiety in the weeks leading up to this marathon. I thought that I could push through them and finish the marathon, but I wasn't completely certain. By the end of March, I just wanted to get this race over with. The last few days before

the race were the worst. I sat around, resting up for the race, while worrying about how bad it might go. It was awful.

Expectations

Going into the race, my most optimistic guess, or should I say “hope”, was that I would finish somewhere close to last year’s 5:27:20. However, I was realistically expecting it to take longer. A finish time of 6:00:00 or longer was possible, although I dreaded that thought. (The time limit to be an official finisher was 6:30:00.)

New course

In the last fifteen years, the GO! St. Louis Marathon course has never been the same twice. The changes in most years have been fairly minor, but in other years they’ve been substantial. The biggest changes occurred in 2015 when they eliminated Clayton and U. City from the course and added the bridge crossings to and from East St. Louis. This year’s changes were also big, with a new start/finish line along the riverfront, and the elimination of Market Street and Forest Park Blvd. from the course in favor of Chouteau Ave. and the Tower Grove Park area to the south.

The start/finish line along the riverfront and Gateway Arch was nice, but the lack of parking nearby required the use of shuttle buses that ran to and from Union Station. The shuttle buses worked out well, except that you had to walk quite a distance to them from the finish line. That’s not what you really want to do after having just run 26.2 miles.

The race organizers touted the new riverfront start/finish line pretty heavily in their promotions, but it still didn’t stem the long, continuing decline in participation in the full and half marathons. Combined, those two races are now smaller than what they were in 2005. (The 7K race that was added in 2016 has helped offset some of the decline of the other distances. There were 1,519 participants in that race this year, up from 780 in 2016.)

GO! MARATHON

St. Louis & Family Fitness Weekend

APRIL
09
2017

COURSE MAP

MARATHON | HALF MARATHON | MARATHON RELAY | MISSISSIPPI 7K



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
2017	5,711

Race weather

The weather was beautiful for a race, with a morning low in the mid 60s and an afternoon high of around 80. Somewhat overcast skies and a stiff southerly 16-18 mph breeze, with gusts up to 25mph, kept the conditions very mild until about 10:00 a.m. That's when the clouds burned off, warming things up about 10° in about an hour. It was warm, but not excessively so, and the wind helped keep you cool. (The absolute lack of shade on the course and the heat radiating off the asphalt did add to the warmth.) I was wearing a short sleeve jersey and my very light, sleeveless cycling jacket, so I remained comfortable. All in all, it was the among the best weather we've ever had for this race. (We've had some really ugly weather these past 15 years.)

The Race

My plan was to simply survive the race. I was going to take it easy, and rely on my experience (and determination) to get to the finish line. I would run when I could, and walk when my legs needed a break. Except for the first four or five miles, when I stopped running only to take photos, it was a run/walk all the way to the finish line.

The first four miles of the course took us over the Martin Luther King Bridge to East St. Louis and back to St. Louis over the Eads Bridge. The next three miles went south—directly into the wind—to the Anheuser-Busch Brewery. The next six miles went through St. Louis streets and neighborhoods that had never been part of the course before. The residential areas were enjoyable, but the commercial areas were pretty dull.

The halfway point was in Tower Grove Park. I reached it in 2:37:55, about thirteen minutes slower than last year. It was at this point that I knew for certain that I would be finishing slower than last year. That didn't bother me, as my expectations were pretty low to begin with.

The second half

From Tower Grove Park, we first headed north and then west to Forest Park. We entered the park at mile 17, and exited at mile 20. Forest Park is always great to run through, except that some of its hills are pretty tough this far into a marathon.

The good news for the last six miles was knowing that Forest Park Blvd. and Market Street—both of which were nothing but hills—were not part of this year's course, for the first time in the race's history. This year's final six miles were flatter, but two miles (miles 21 and 22) on Chouteau Ave.—which were nearly straight as an arrow—seemed to go on forever. (I like courses that have lots of turns, since your focus is only on short distances at a time.)

The 23-mile mark was on Jefferson Ave. It was here that we started to head back to the business district of downtown St. Louis, and eagerly anticipated the next few mile markers.

I looked for the 24-mile banner, but somehow missed seeing it. For what seemed like a long time, I ran along, not knowing just how much more I had to go. I kept an eye out for the 25-mile banner, but as I ran and ran (and walked and walked), I figured that I had missed that one, too. No sweat, I told myself. I'll just look for the 26-mile banner.

Shortly thereafter, I made a turn a few blocks from the convention center and spotted the 25-mile banner. I instantly went into a combined state of disbelief and anger, having discovered I had much more to run than I was expecting. It was demoralizing, but I kept moving. (What else are you going to do at this point?)

The next few blocks took me past the Lumiere Casino and downhill to the riverfront. Once I reached the riverfront, it was just a straight, quarter-mile shot south—into a very stiff headwind—to the finish line at the steps of the Gateway Arch. That last quarter-mile seemed like an eternity. I was hoping that adrenaline would allow me to run the entire distance, but it didn't. I was reduced to a walk several times.

The finish

I crossed the finish line in 5:48:00, and I was tremendously happy to have finished. I was also terribly relieved that all of the anxieties I had about this race over the prior days and weeks were finally behind me. I did the best I could on this day given my level of training.

A volunteer handed me my 15th GO! St. Louis Marathon finisher's medal, and I asked a race photographer to take a picture of me flashing "15".





GO! St. Louis has always had beautiful finishers' medals.

Thanks for reading!

Jim Glickert
Osage Beach, Missouri
April 21, 2017



GO! ST. LOUIS MARATHON & FAMILY FITNESS WEEKEND

Saint Louis, MO Apr 8, 2017 8:00AM

Leaders

Results

James Glickert

search

BIB

119

JAMES GLICKERT

Marathon » Osage Beach, MO

FINISHED

05:48:00

OVERALL

1,088th

OF 1,181

MALE

688th

OF 722

MALE MASTERS

317th

OF 337

MALE 60-64

27th

OF 28

Photos

Timing

ChronoTrack Live did not take photographs for this event.

Your photos may be available at MarathonFoto - [Click Here.](#)

Mile	Pace for this Mile	Cumulative Time	Cumulative Time in 2016
1			10:25
2		23:57	19:40
3	11:48	35:45	
4	12:43	48:29	42:31
5	11:40	1:00:09	
6-7		1:22:48	
8	11:58	1:34:47	
9	11:58	1:46:46	

Mile	Pace for this Mile	Cumulative Time	Cumulative Time in 2016
10	12:49	1:59:35	
11	11:27	2:11:02	1:59:58
12	12:39	2:23:42	
13.1	14:13	2:37:55	2:24:56
14-15	26:32	3:04:48	2:48:31
16	14:06	3:18:54	3:00:46
17-18	28:17	3:47:11	3:27:17
19	14:06	4:04:18	3:41:26
20			3:56:33
21		4:31:46	4:10:09
22	14:10	4:45:57	
23			4:40:18
24		5:18:07	4:55:09
25			5:10:03
26.2		5:48:00	5:27:20