

**Fort Lauderdale A1A Marathon**  
***Bev Atkinson***

It was quite a nice event, actually. The Expo was bigger than it was in 2008 - bigger than Steamtown and humongous when compared to Wineglass! And they actually gave away FREE stuff!

We purchased a parking pass for the finish line - only 50 spots available and \$20 but well worth it. Nice buses to the start. Pretty well organized start although, as in any event, I passed walkers early on. I just do not understand that thought process. Anyhow, it was dark and in the low 60's, dry with a nice breeze from the north. However, I knew that wouldn't last! So my goal was to redeem my pitiful 2008 performance, get another BQ and use it as a long run for Boston. So off I went with a plan to do 10 min/mi and take it easy.

Nice course, flat, obviously. The start was a bit inland and we ran down a main drag and over the intracoastal (the only hill was that bridge) to A1A. Then we turned north for a little bit, headed a very short distance inland and turned into a park for miles 4-6 (give or take). Back out of the park and then back to A1A and north. The half group turned off somewhere around mile 8ish and the rest continued on pretty much straight up the coast when we looped through a neighborhood around 15.5 and headed back.

I felt fine and decided to push it once turned around. Oh yeah, let's push! Fortunately I brought sponges.....The sun was rising but I kept nailing the 10 min/mi and was still OK.....using my sponges and drinking and taking what had now become disgusting gels! And then, as expected, the high buildings ended and the sandy beaches were immediately on my left. This was about mile 23. I knew I could soon be toast! Literally!

I actually ran onto the sand to a beach shower and got my sponges wet! At mile 24 water stop the wonderful Ft. Lauderdale Road Runners Club had barrels with HUGE sponges (OK they were bigger than my little kitchen sponges) and they were floating in HUGE barrels filled with.....ICE and water! I thought I had really died and gone to heaven - that sponge was so cold I think my heart stopped. OK, none of that happened but I remember just standing there holding onto the barrel and soaking myself with that icy cold water.....several times. So now I had 3 sponges and off I went.

Of course, I slowed down a bit. But not as badly as I thought. It was 77 at the finish. I had to wait over an hour and a half to see my name on the results and beg for my award so we could finally get the H out of there! Remarkably I was none the worse for wear that afternoon or the next day. I haven't slept too well but that's OK.