

Harrisburg Marathon 2006

Up until two days before the race, the projected weather in Harrisburg looked ideal. Low of 32, high of 50, calm and sunny. Then came Friday and a new prediction. Low of 50, high of 55, rainy and windy. The weatherman is always wrong I figured, plus I love to run when it's rainy and 50. If he is just wrong on the wind part this could be good. Plus, if the conditions are not great I can always fall back on Plan B - bail out at 10 miles and run in Philly the following week. Well, he was wrong. It was 47 degrees at the start and getting colder as the day wore on. 50 and calm good, 47 and windy, bad. It turned out to be a steady rain and steady 15mph wind which according to accuweather felt like 32. The race director assured us at the start that these were ideal conditions.

Harrisburg is an OK course. It's kind of a zig zag around town. I wouldn't say it is a pr course like Steamtown or Mohawk Hudson, but it is not a particularly hard course. You start in front of the capitol building and run around town for a bit, along some trails and through a couple of parks, and at about 7 miles you run along the river and some roads that paralleled the river for approximately 5 miles. That portion was directly into the wind. Misery loves company, so at about 8 miles I met up with a guy named Steve who was running my pace. A pack of five guys passed us and we tried to hang with them. Running in the pack was pretty neat and for a moment I thought we looked like a pack of Kenyan's....except we were fatter and much slower. After about a mile I felt I was working too hard and I would pay later in the race if I continued. I encouraged Steve to stay with them and he tried, but fell back and we were running together again. After turning away from the wind at mile 13, there are more loops, more parks, a little industry, and a few small but steep hills between miles 17 and 19. The hills were not a big deal. They probably cost you 30 to 45 seconds if you took them easy. Another mile or so and you are heading back towards the river with the wind at your back. That felt good. Steve and I stuck together until around mile 22. He was starting to drop off and I wanted to finish strong so I picked it up. I passed 5 or 6 people in the last 4 miles and ended up at 3:16. I was 32nd overall and 3 of 60 in my AG. Here's a link to my finishers photo:

<http://www.americanmarathon.com/photocart/index.php?do=photocart&viewImage=75928>

Looks like fun!! I thought I was in 3:05 shape, and maybe I was. There's always next year.

I started the race thinking maybe I'd bail out, but after 5 miles, even though I was over pr pace by about 10 seconds per mile, I decided to keep going. I guess I was just ready for the season to be over, and I did not want to do another week of tapering. Plus, the finisher's shirt was long sleeve coolmax....if I didn't finish, I couldn't wear it.

Next stop, Turkey Trot!