

BOSTON 2014 race report

Final thoughts

As I journal my last thoughts, they are somewhat bittersweet. To know that I will never again have a race mean more to me than this last one. It is time to say goodbye for now to Martin Richard and to spiritually thank him for uplifting me in ways that I never thought were possible. But the victory Boston felt Monday was very sweet. A city of pure joy standing tall, and defending her honor for all who were lost and injured a year ago.

While I did donate to the Martin Richard foundation, I didn't make this about raising money. I just simply wanted my effort to make a statement to all, that through faith, commitment and perseverance, we truly can achieve our goals in life. To be stronger in numbers and to run as ONE in Martin's honor. I am overwhelmingly humbled by the thousands of comments I received during these past 53 weeks. No words can truly describe what it meant to me. As for how I personally wanted to honor Martin, I told him in prayer and my last post the morning before the race.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

This would become my verse on my racing jersey from my Boston qualifier in Sept. to all my shorter tune-up races leading up to Boston.

I was always aware that this race was never about me. It was much bigger than what Brian Keno could run. With that said, as a runner we all have personal goals. Mine was to run 2:48 and run a negative split on the tough 2nd half of the Newton Hills and Heartbreak. By the grace of God, I achieved both. 2:48:31 (1:24:35 / 1:23:56). Below are some of my thoughts during the run. It did seem to go by in a blur, and time went by very fast.

1-13 miles

I would start running with Spencer West in the first half. He was awesome in telling me everything the course was going to throw at us. We confided our plans and decided to run together. A Boston guy growing up and 6 Bostons under his belt, it was great to have that extra reassurance about what was to come and calling out my splits. Spencer told me he was short on mileage on his Boston buildup, due to a nagging foot injury, and wanted to run with me as long as possible. Since we were 4000 runners back, we remained patient. It took us 2 min. 14 sec. to get to the start line. Our opening miles were 7:01, 6:34 and 6:29 for an opening 5k of 20:50. The mostly down/flat course to the halfway point would be 6:27 minute miles to 10k, 6:22 pace for my third 5k and 6:20 pace from 15-20k (12.4 miles).

It would be in Wellesley where I basically hit the gas without even realizing it. I would run a 19:06 (6:09 pace) 5k with the screaming college girls and the town cheering us on. I truly felt so good, I thought something was wrong with my Garmin! I gained excitement knowing as I crossed the halfway point that every step I now took was a step closer to victory. I knew the famous hills were upon me, and this was now going to make me see what I was truly made of.

Newton Hills 25-35k

As I entered my first big test of a hill, it really didn't feel that bad (mile 16). I zipped up and over it very smoothly. As I entered the 2nd hill, I would see this very petite woman with a hat and gray hair flowing from underneath it. Her running stride was very unique. I said to myself, "how in the world can this lady be in front of me?!" As I passed her at mile 17.5 on this hill, I heard someone yell, "Go Joanie Go!" Oh my! It hit me!! It was none other than 1984 Olympic gold winner, Boston winner and former world record holder (2:20) Joan Benoit! It made all the sense in the world to me now. What an honor it was to see her. By the way, she would win the 55-59 age group in 2:52. Truly outstanding!

As I hit Heartbreak Hill, this was now my defining moment. I said to myself, "this one is for you Martin." I would power through this 10k hill portion in 39:44 or low 6:20's pace. As I crested Heartbreak, I knew it was only 5 miles to Boylston, and I was feeling strong, determined not to let anything stop me now.

The finish

By mile 24 and the World Famous Citgo sign in the distance, I could now truly start to feel the emotions. My laser focus to this point now had cracks. My body was starting to hurt all of a sudden. Some fear crept in. "Are you bonking Brian?" As I was peeling off runners from 4000 back at the start, it was suddenly not happening anymore. I was hanging on. Running with the crowd now. Digging in and telling myself. Relax. One step at a time. As I finally reached the Citgo sign, it was a welcome sight. One mile to go! My wife, two daughters and boyfriend Mike would be there cheering me on. It was so uplifting to see them.

The monkey was now on my back. I was losing my stride and my breathing to my emotions of tears, trying to hold back. I asked myself. "Can I do what I promised Martin? Can I run 2:48 and a faster 2nd half? Will you lose it now?"

It felt like it was slipping away. As I made the last turn, while my pain was present, it didn't seem to matter. I was on the long long homestretch - 600 meters of Boylston. Slightly downhill. Massive crowds and deafening cheers. I was now crying in joy, hearing the crowd, "Go Martin Go". I was now in an outer body experience. No feeling, no pain. As I crossed the line, I looked up to the Heavens, arms out in the sign of a cross and realized I achieved the goal I so desperately wanted for Martin. I bent over, exhausted, sobbing for about 30 seconds when channel 5 Boston came over and asked me about my racing singlet.

WE RUN AS ONE FOR MARTIN RICHARD.

After I gathered myself, Boston would get to know a snippet of my story, even if it was only cut to 30 seconds on the nightly news.

In closing, the next day my wife would ask me, "what are you going to do with your racing shoes?"

I thought about it for a minute and told here - let's go to the finish line. A memorial was up for the fallen. I put my shoes around his picture and told Martin. Thank you for giving the joy of running back into my life. I then told my wife I wanted to walk to my hotel back down Boylston and Commonwealth by myself (1 mile).

I said goodbye again, a few more tears and knowing in his passing he made me a better man. I reflected back to April 15th 2013 and where I was on that morning. And here I was walking in Boston because of him, honoring Martin the only way I knew how. To just run with every ounce my body would give me. I hope he is smiling in Heaven, and being a runner himself on his elementary school track team, I could hear him say, "Great run mister!"

Brian Keno



Bob Dozoretz

Strider Smarts presented by Coach Bob

Different Stages of Running

There definitely are different and various stages associated with our running history, and even though yours may vary somewhat from mine, I believe most can relate to the following as I review mine.

Stage 1. Lose weight

Pretty simple concept here. In my mid 30's I was gaining a few pounds and didn't like the way I felt or looked, so I decided to take up running. My goal was 3 miles 3 times/week and wait for some changes to occur, which they did. I dropped a few pounds, felt better and decided to tinker with my diet.

Well, the more I ran, the better I felt. The more extra stuff I eliminated from my diet, the better I felt, so time for the next step.

Stage 2. Fitness

I purchased a small home gym and began working out, doing the usual exercises while still running and dieting. One day I looked closely in the mirror and saw some muscles that were not there before, especially my legs! I thought only great runners could have definition in their quads or calves, but thought I was seeing some on mine. Hey, I'm liking this - feeling better, stronger, faster, more energized - and also looking pretty good!

Stage 3. Goals

Ok, I know I can run 10 miles, and there are some 10K's around, so I should be able to easily finish one. My very first race was a hilly half marathon, and I liked it. I followed that with a bunch of 10k's and now had my sights on a marathon, which I did. Not knowing how to run it, I became dehydrated and hurting, but recovered well and kept running that distance. I graphed my races with time and distance and improved quite a bit, and also made many new friends.

Stage 4. Friendships

Going to many races, I found I was competing against familiar faces, or behinds, and also realized runners are nice people. This was a bonus to racing, as it was like a party each race, competing hard but socializing afterwards with friends. This was always followed by joining the group for breakfast, but I was amazed that a 20 minute race took 4 to 5 hours to complete from the time I left the house to my return. Thankfully no kids and a running wife!

Stage 5. Competition

For me, I always wanted to run faster, so I studied the sport and asked many questions, altered my training and supplements, and fortunately it worked. I realized I was durable and could train hard consistently and was fortunate to place in many events. When I exceeded my goals, I realized I actually had some talent as a runner, or gift as some would say, and remained competitive well into my 50's. I fully expected to compete, at least in my age group, as I became older, but so far that part hasn't worked out too well. Jury's still out on that.

Stage 6. Friendships

Friendships now actually mean more to me than competition, as just running with people, rather than competing is fulfilling. Meeting them at races or fun runs still has us connected, even after 25 years, and we still put a great emphasis on breakfast after. We even met for a meal without running, something very unusual, but possibly a start of a new tradition.

Stage 7. Goals

Doubt another marathon is in the future, but hopefully all the other distances are. Half Marathons are still my favorite, and 5K's are plentiful; trail races are fun with no time goals, and I still enjoy traveling to events. While I still have time goals, just placing is all I hope to accomplish at this point. No longer Superman, I have adjusted my training to a more practical regimen, hoping to regain some semblance of speed. It's coming, I think.

Stage 8. Fitness

I have always enjoyed the gym, diligently attending each week. I can still hammer out some leg workouts, but now it is to maintain, not build, and that ain't easy! I am using lower weights for my upper body, but that must be due to poor maintenance of the equipment! Certainly not me! My runs are also more for maintenance than competitive race sharpening, and I have allowed myself to ignore my training pace, just do it.

Stage 9. Lose Weight

Metabolism is a bad word. I don't like it and it surely doesn't like me. I basically eat the same as years ago, but somehow that dirty "M" word has crept up on me. I know what I need to do but... since I am running 10 miles Sunday, I surely need to carbo-load Saturday night..... Wednesday I go 9, so of course I need to eat more.....

I just ran long, so I need to refuel, quickly and a lot!....that 5K was tough, so better chow down before we go for breakfast....sound familiar?

Pretty simple concept here. In my mid 60's I have gained weight and don't like the way I feel or look, so I decided to increase my running. My goal was 30 miles/week but better make it 40!

I Am A Runner

Coach Bob

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Thanks to all the following volunteers that helped make the Pill Box Pharmacies Pines 5K Run such a success. The race was on 4/27/14 at Walter C. Young School in Pembroke Pines.

**Bill Wagner
Sandi Wagner
Robert Leaf
Gerry Jackson
Jenette Dozoretz
Mary Ellen Harrington
Christopher Harrington
Rafael Guijarro**