

ING New York City Marathon 11/07/10

Paul Nicolaides

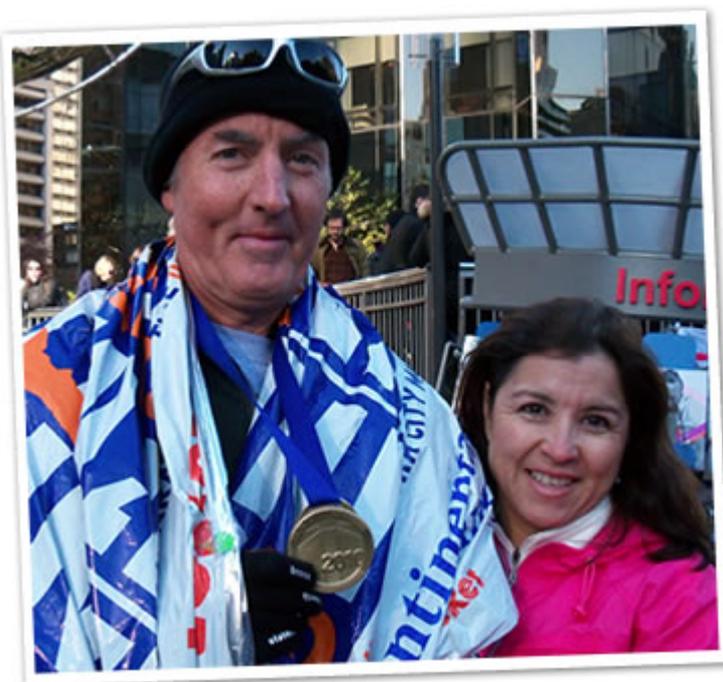
Finish time: 2:55:54

Running Background:

I consider myself an advanced runner and I primarily run for fitness. Spending a summer in Maine in 1997, I met some runners who belonged to the Boston Athletic Club. We drove down the turnpike and worked out with the BAA at the MIT Track on Tuesday nights. That experience showed me that I could return to Texas and train for a marathon. I went back to San Antonio and trained and ran a 2:51 that fall and then went to Boston and ran a 2:42. At 42 I was thrilled to run these times in my first two marathons.

Training:

Since turning 50 four years ago, I haven't run a marathon. I took a year off at 50 and lost sight of a goal I once had, which was to place top three as a 50 year old at Boston. Now at 54, newly married, happy and content with my golf game and running with buddies, I didn't have any running goals. My lovely wife encouraged me to train and run the New York City Marathon. I increased my mileage to about 50 miles a week for ten weeks, with high of 73 miles. I did the three 20 milers, and added some longer 5k repeats on the track. During my training I averaged 52 miles per week.



For people thinking about running a marathon I would say the longer the race the shorter the stride, I read that in a Jack Daniels article on stride length about 10 years ago. Practice your race pace on the track, a running coach advised me. Try walking at the 5k markers when you drink early in the race. I heard that at an Austin Marathon Expo- that famous guy from Runners World. It works for me to walk about 10 strides and then return to my running pace. It helps me manage my pace. Proof is I used this strategy at the San Antonio Marathon in 2004...first half at 1:25, second half at 1:26- for a nifty 2:51. A marathon is all about managing your pace.

Race Day:

It was cold and sunny, it never warmed up. I went out at about 6:25 pace, caught up in the enthusiasm for about 8 miles. Then I took water and walked 5 or 6 steps. The next eight miles were at about 6:37 pace. At the half way mark I saw 1:25 and realized I just ran my fastest Half since turning 50. I walked two more times. Some one gave me goo at mile 19, thank God for that! I slowed to 6:54 pace the last 6 miles. My hamstrings felt tight; everything was cold. I wore black arm warmers, they were great. I saw a runner pull up and grab their hamstring muscle. I prayed to God to help me make it. I thought about my wife tracking me on her Ipad. The thought of her watching, tracking me just made me run stronger, maybe not faster, but in the end after 22 miles, you just tell yourself to run strong, run strong, run strong. I know she was there. It was like she was inside me and helping me to be strong. The fan support was amazing. The NYRR volunteers were simply great all week. I love New York. I finished, raised my arms in triumph, my head in praise, and found my wife. "Honey we did it." My first marathon since turning 50, my first New York marathon, and my first marathon as a married man.

Recovery:

My recovery was no problem. Complete rest for one week; walk the dog. Second week, light running, mostly tread mill, a brisk ten miler with a friend. The third week, four more days off then a Turkey Chase ,4 miler, at 6:13 pace. Then I start thinking about another marathon. Somewhere in the spring time after you turn 55, suddenly your a young man in a new age group.

Tips/Words of Encouragement:

Life is a journey and the stages you go through. Same with a marathon. Take it one stage at a time. Listen to everyone, but pay attention to those who know what their talking about. Whatever you do in training, do the same thing on race day.

Plans to Run Another:

I plan to run another marathon because I can. Seriously in the long run it brings me out of myself and I get closer to my fellow runners. For my next marathon, I'll do 5K repeats on the track, run some 22 milers, stop thinking of a 20 miler as a big deal, run more 2 a days, and run more miles.