



The RunTex race report declares the AT&T Austin Marathon delivered high drama. After reading the report, I see that the “high drama” was limited to the elite athletes and the fastest runners in their respective categories. Yet the majority of runners are not elite runners, and thus a lot of information is not relayed. Nevertheless, the SMRC members’ participation in the Austin Marathon provided its own drama, and their story will be told (shhh, along with some elite runners’ information).

5:00 a.m.

This is it: all the training, it all comes down to today. Laura, Elma, Teresa, Charlene, Elizabeth and Diana (“D.D.”) are the SMRC members running the AT&T Austin Marathon.

Supporting these runners today are Steve Minor (Elma’s husband), Domingo Medina (Teresa’s husband), Mike Wills (Elizabeth’s husband), and me. Notice how the ladies’ significant others show up TODAY for support (wise are they). I am also informed that Teresa’s daughters Mandy and Pat will be at mile 8 to cheer on Teresa and others.

Laura, Elma, Teresa, and Charlene had dual purposes for finishing the Austin Marathon: completing this marathon would also culminate in the completion of the Austin Distance Challenge.

As many of you know, this was a particularly long and hard road for Elma and Charlene. All would understand the decision for their non-participation in this marathon. A few weeks ago, they both sustained running injuries. They both made vital alterations to their training programs. The main adjustment to their training program was a word that is considered blasphemous by any runner who intends to run a marathon in less than a month. Although doctors blurt out this word with the intent to heal the patient, in the long run (no puns intended), it often causes damage to a runner’s psyche when they hear the word REST. Nevertheless, they are here this morning, still healing, and thus still injured. I am concerned.

I will be supporting the girls along the marathon course on my Specialized road bike. This is a great way to support the SMRC members if you are not running the race. Britt and I discovered this last year. I have also informed the other supporters (listed above) that they can give me a call on my cell phone and I could potentially give them updates on the SMRC runners.

6:30 a.m.

This is perfect marathon-running weather. There is no chance of rain; and at this moment, the temperature is 44 degrees, with the high predicted to be in the high 60s.

7:00 a.m.

Kaboom!!! The loud cannon fires, signifying the start of the race. Before the reverberation of the cannon ends, the fireworks are heard and seen from a quarter of a mile away.

I clipped into the bike, and within a minute I was a couple of yards behind a pack of lead runners. This group of five were wearing the same outfits and chasing a few runners ahead of them. Near us were two large industrial-configured flatbed trucks that were carrying the camera crew and the press folks along. I was simply intending to get from point "A" to point "B", which was at the designated 3-mile marker, to meet the girls, and was following the course to get there. I thought I might have been in the way, and was looking where to position myself when I realized that I was not in the way of the vehicles or the runners. The two vehicles positioned themselves perfectly between the main crowd and the elite runners so that the press and the cameras could report on both.

I have never been alongside elite runners of this caliber and began to notice a few things. The biggest thing I noticed is that I was clocking them at 11.5 to 12 mph and they were breathing easily!

7:16 a.m.

I quickly reached the 3-mile marker with the group of runners in 16+ minutes! I then pulled over and waited for the girls.

7:45 a.m.-ish

With the exception of Elizabeth, I saw the girls running together in their own pack. This was good news for Elma and Charlene. Laura immediately gave me her jacket. I was carrying my backpack so that the girls could discard any unwanted clothing to me.

MILE 6

I met up with them again and accepted more clothing. I was able to speak with each of them and ask them how they were feeling. All systems were a go for everyone. D.D. had pulled 100 yards ahead and the rest slowly began to spread apart. It was also at this time that Teresa fell way behind due to a bathroom break.

MILES 6-12

As they continued to spread apart from each other I continued riding along with them, keeping them company, taking more clothing, taking pictures, and informing them of where the other members were located. A post-race conversation with Laura informed me that informing her as to where the girls were located on the course and their wellness was comforting to her.

MILES 12-18

At mile 12 I checked on the girls once more, and then headed out to find Elizabeth. All were still running and feeling well. At approximately mile 16, I ran into Daniel and Naomi on the side of the road. What a pleasant surprise to see them support our runners in this way! I quickly pulled over and spoke with them for about a minute. I informed them that the runners were well and where they were on the course. I then asked if they had seen Elizabeth. They said that they saw her with the 4-hour pace group. I

then went on ahead and caught Elizabeth at about mile 18. I rode along with her for a while, and she looked strong and was feeling well. I informed her about the other runners and then we said goodbye. I called Mike to inform him that she was well.

MILE 18

For those of us who have run marathons before, we know that mile 18 is somewhat a significant point in the marathon. I mean, by mile 18 your body has begun to give you indications as to what will most likely be nagging you for the rest of the marathon. It was at mile 18 that I decided to rest, eat, and wait for the girls.

Once again I spoke with everyone. They had now separated farther from each other. D.D. was looking strong and said that she was feeling stiffness in her thighs. I knew this had to be due to the hills. I also noticed that she was slightly ahead of the 5-hour pace group. Elma was looking like she just ran 18 miles after taking a lot of time off from her training for rest. This was good news. I figured that she could make it to the finish as long as she kept using the Galloway method of running and walking. Laura was looking well and had no complaints. Teresa had mentioned tightness in her chest and slight trouble breathing due to residual congestion in her lungs. She said that she would be walking a bit more from here on out. Charlene said that she had run up to this point, but that she was walking the rest of the way. This was good news also. I knew that she would finish.

MILE 25

I then decided to book it towards the finish line, and see if I could catch back up to D.D. and give her support, especially since this was D.D.'s first marathon. I was also looking for the girls one last time before I saw them at the end. Unfortunately, I did not see any of the other girls. I was riding fast to make it to mile 25 and passed thousands of people. I am actually quite surprised I did not have an accident. My eyes were filtering thousands of outfits and bodies while dodging runners, cars, other cyclists, supporters off the side of the road, and other debris found on the roads.

I caught up to the 5-hour pace group and could not find D.D. I also noticed that the pace group was a few minutes behind. I waited and soon saw D.D. 200 yards behind the pace group. She was drained, but was going to make it. I encouraged her and off she went. I then encouraged Elma and then rode to the finish line with Laura. We then waited for the rest of the runners to finish. Another welcome surprise was receiving a call from Tim and Sharon at the finish line. I spoke with them and kept them informed as to approximately when the first girls were crossing the finish line.

FINISH LINE

All the times are posted on the SMRC website. Congratulations Laura, Elma, Teresa, Charlene, Elizabeth, and Richard (TX State Tri Club) for completing another marathon! Congratulations D.D. for completing your first marathon!

What is not posted on the SMRC website are the results of the Distance Challenge. Allow me to present this information to you.

Congratulations Laura, Teresa, and Charlene for completing ANOTHER Austin Distance Challenge! Congratulations Elma for your first completion of the Distance Challenge!

Combined, these girls have completed more than 16 Austin Distance Challenges. To my knowledge, no male from the SMRC has completed the Austin Distance Challenge.

Laura Mason	18 th out of 22 in 45-50 age group
Charlene Martinez	20 th out of 22 in 45-50 age group
Teresa Medina	9 th out of 18 in 50-54 age group
Elma Minor	12 th out of 18 in 50-54 age group

HUMOROUS NOTES

D.D. ate every food item that she could get her hands on along the marathon route.

D.D. was wondering what kind of crazy runners would be willing to take a shot during a marathon. She thought the Clif shots were alcohol shots.

I asked D.D. what inspired her to keep going when she thought about quitting. She said that at mile 25.5 she walked for a moment to catch her breath after the hills, and saw her boss, Dr. Minor. He yelled out her name in support; but she took that as a slight scolding and began running.

Elma repeatedly told me that her main motivation for finishing the Distance Challenge was to obtain the finisher's jacket. She left the race without picking up her jacket.