



The Austin Runners Club hosted its 30th Annual Decker Challenge this morning. There were many welcome changes that allowed most runners to experience the Decker Challenge (D.C.) differently compared to the last 5 years or so. The biggest difference in this year's Decker was the weather. Mother Nature "finally" cooperated with runners for this event. There were no 15 to 25-mph gusts of wind. It did not rain, nor was the heat a factor. SMRC members that have run this race before agree, it was probably the best Decker weather experience thus far.

Elizabeth Black-Wills, Charlene Martinez, Teresa Medina, Laura Mason, Mark Brendalen, Phillip Adams and I are the SMRC members that participated in this event. There were some bandits in this group.

Overall we had a great experience despite this race being one of the hilliest race events in Austin. I saw this elevation chart on the D.C. website and placed it here so that you can have some indication on how many hills are on this course.



Are We There Yet?

"That hill just kicked my ass," I exclaimed to the runner just a couple of yards ahead of me. Then the runner turned to look at me; and to my surprise it was our young friend David Fisher. David is attending U.T. now, and so we do not see much of him. David was running the relay portion of this event with his sister Emily. Their team name is Are We There Yet? David explained to me that he has not been running, and the proof for me was that we were running together. We laughed at the fact that when we both participate at this event we always seem to find each other between miles 4 through 6. Today I met up with him at mile 5, and then ran with Emily for a couple of minutes after they transitioned. That was fun running with both of them. Trust me, those Fishers have some great athletic genes. They placed 2nd out of 31 teams.

15 Minutes of Fame

This is it, my 15 minutes of fame. I was able to place 1st in my age group in an Austin race. Who cares if I was moved to first because two other men in my age group took the overall masters 1st and 3rd place? I can live with that, especially because this is a reputable and extremely challeng-

ing long distance Austin running event. For the record, I think I have 5 more minutes of fame left in me.

I would like to share my 15 minutes of fame with Tim Bayliss. Tim was also running the 26th Annual California International Marathon this morning. Tim met his goal and ran a 2:45:25 marathon! Congratulations Tim! I think Tim has 10 more minutes of fame left in him.

Distance Challenge Update

The Decker was the third race of the D.C. I trained specifically for this event. This means days of hill training. It seems to have paid off. I was able to gain a few minutes on my competitors. I am still trying to move up to third place. The results for the D.C. are always posted many days after the event results have been posted, so Teresa and I do not know where we stand.

The next D.C. race is the RunTex 20 Miler. This race is scheduled next year, January 11th in Georgetown.

Running Schedule

The next race on our calendar is the Jingle Bell 5K in New Braunfels. The race is scheduled for Saturday, December 13th. I recommend this race for the holiday spirit that it conjures. In years past the runners were offered small jingle bells to be placed on their shoes so that they ring when you run. I have also seen runners in costumes at this event as well. There is still plenty of competition on the course. This is still race season and many are looking to use this 5K as a speed workout.

Happy Holidays!

Randall Wood
SMRC V.P.