

Race Report - OC Half Marathon May 5, 2013 - Jana McCluskey

I went to bed at 8pm, lights out at 8:30pm the night before! I'm up at 3:30am and in a traffic jam at 4:45am! How crazy and surreal is this? But I need to catch my 5:30am shuttle bus to the Fashion Island start line. I'm on the final leg of my quest for the coveted "Beach Cities Challenge" medal! Very quickly explained, you must complete three consecutive Half Marathons (Long Beach Half, Surf City Half, OC Half) to receive this 3/4 pound, beautiful extra medal. This is my third, and only my third EVER, half marathon!

I'm a little nervous! I've had some run related aches and pains this week, "bad" sore. But I listened to my body, and reluctantly refrained (had to hide my running shoes!) from all running this week in order to rest the run legs and feet! I'm not sure how I'm going to feel as a result, but I know that I'm trained for this distance. Also, I did the PCRFB 50 mile bike ride on Saturday, yesterday. Could this sabotage my run this morning? I'm not feeling sore from the bike ride, but I'm still nervous!

The first mile was awful, felt hard! But I remind myself that I ALWAYS feel like this for the first 1-2 miles of every run. I just tell myself to keep a comfortable, steady pace and do it one mile at a time, just breathe and relax. I'm not here to set a record, I just want to finish and not feel horrible in the process! I decide to run the first 3 miles without a break. Wow, 3 miles down, and I'm feeling great. Now, Mile 4, time for a water/walk break, feeling great. Mile 5, still feeling great! I look down at my Garmin and I think "Hey, I'm on track for my best 10k, 6.2 miles, I should go for it!" So that was a great distraction, and I nailed it, my best 10k time, and I'm still feeling great and the race is nearly half over. Now the course is leading us into a few hills. I just keep telling myself to think about that B**** of a hill, Vista Del Lago, that I need to run in only 2 weeks for the OC Tri. So push, push up the hills, no stopping is allowed, you're training for VDL!!! Done, I took all of those hills as if I was leading the charge of a battle!

I see Donna around Mile 8-ish, nice to see a friendly face! I'm still feeling great! I just continue to try to focus on my own race, even and steady breathing, light foot placement, etc. I can't believe how "freakishly" great I felt up to Mile 11! Then fatigue sat in. But I'm only 2 miles away from collecting multiple race bling, I've got this!!! I pass on my walk break for Mile 12 as I notice that my Garmin is showing a very nice PR tracking!!! That last 1.2 miles was hard, I know it should be 1.1 miles, but the course was long at the finish (13.26 miles). Mentally you just have to keep focused on the finish line, not on what the Garmin distance is reflecting! So I stop looking at my Garmin! I just dig in, one foot in front of the other. Then I see Analisa cheering on the corner, that provided me a huge boost of energy!!! And then I see Danielle cheering near the "shoot", I'm so nearly there! I feel like I'm sprinting for the finish, I know from past video that my sprint sadly does not look like it feels! :-)) And there is the finish line, HOORAY!!! And my PR!!! 2:16!!!!

I'm still new to running and learning more and more with each race experience. But what I know for sure (to quote a famous talk-show host...) is that you must listen to your

body, and when you do, even if it means modifying and/or skipping training that day or days in order to rest your weary body, it WORKS!!! I'm learning the difference between what I call a "good" sore and a "bad" sore, and adjusting accordingly, regardless of what my running partners are doing. It's so hard to miss a run or modify, mentally you want to ignore the pain and just run through it. But often that makes it worse, and you get even more off track from your training. Follow the plan, and learn to really listen and understand what your body is telling you, it works!!!

Happiness is....gorgeous race bling, sharing the journey with some amazing training partners & TLV team mates/coaches, and a PR!!! And yes, I'm sore the day after the race, but it's a "good" sore!!! SUCCESS!!!

