

Davy Crockett Bear Chase Marathon
Groveton, TX
Saturday, April 14, 2012
7:00 AM

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First of all, this was my 3rd marathon in 4 weeks; 12th one since October 1, 2011; & I felt tired throughout the run. It wasn't pretty but crossing the finish line felt great!

Groveton (population 1057) is a small town in Davy Crockett National Forest in East Texas. The marathon is a brainchild of Steve & Paula Boone. The packet pick-up was on Friday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Groveton Elementary School. Each runner received a long-sleeved cotton T-shirt. We were also treated to a pre-race spaghetti dinner. There is no hotel/motel in Groveton. I spent the Friday night in Crockett, about 27 miles north of Groveton.

The start and finish lines were at the Groveton High School stadium. The race day temperature ranged from low 70s to mid 80s. We ran the same out-&-back route twice (half marathoners ran it once). A total of 6 miles was on hard-packed dirt roads & footing was less than desirable. The rest was on a concrete country road. There were more hills on the way back than on the way out, which made the last 5 miles of the marathon challenging. We ran alongside pastures & through the forest. There were cows & horses which served as spectators! There were water/sports drink stations at approximately every other mile. Snack items were also available on the course. Each finisher received a nice medallion & a stuffed bear. There were a variety of recovery food items & drinks at the finish area.

It was a humid morning. The weather remained overcast during the first half of the marathon, which was helpful. Then sun was out & it became quite hot. We had to deal with some head wind too. And of course the rolling hills. In short, it was a well-organized marathon which offered a scenic, yet challenging, course.

There were 101 (67 male, 34 female) finishers in the average time of 4:57:35. The winning times were 3:05:08 (overall male) & 3:43:33 (overall female). There were 215 half marathon finishers, & the winning times were 1:31:23 (overall male) & 1:44:38 (overall female). There were 70 5K finishers, & the winning times were 19:14 (overall male) & 23:16 (overall female).

I ran the first half with Jim Kee, an amazing 65-year-old marathoner, in 2:11:20 (10:01 pace). We have known each other for a long time, talked a lot, & had a good time. He slowed down at the half & I ran the 2nd half by myself. I hit the wall at mile 23. It became very ugly, very rapidly. It took me more than 43 minutes to run/walk the last 3.2 miles. I crossed the finish line in 4:43:09 (10:48 pace). I placed 45th out of 101, overall, & 34th out of 67 among male runners. I felt dizzy for nearly 2 hours, which was rather humbling. I left Groveton around 2 pm, had a big late lunch (Persian food) in Houston,

& was home by 9:30 PM. This was my 94th marathon. Number 95 will have to wait until 15 September when I plan to run the Air Force Marathon in Dayton, OH. Meanwhile, I will have to lose nearly 10 pounds of fat that I gained while running 12 marathons in 6.5 months!

