

The Need for Speed... Follow-up Report

If you read the blog post, “The Need for Speed,” you’ll remember my frustration recently at my two attempts at increasing my speed. You’ll also remember that Kim (he said I can use his last name, too, so...) Butler, the boyfriend, gave me a couple things to try at the next race to help prevent the weird leg cramps I get. I had another 5k recently, so I listened to what he told me. (I didn’t want to hear him say afterward, “Do people think I just make this stuff up?!?”)

I picked up my friend Michele early one Saturday morning. Luckily, she’s a morning person, and was cheerful as ever when I told her I had to warm up longer this time. After we picked up our race packets, we headed out to get started. The cool thing about doing local races is you get to meet lots of people. Well, we ran into half of them that morning and had to chat, so it took us awhile to hit the road. We warmed up and stretched for about 40-45 minutes – our warm up was as long as the race! That was a record for us!

The race started and off we went! About three-quarters of a mile into the race, my legs started cramping slightly, so I slowed a bit. A couple walkers passed me – ones I wanted to beat. I was a little disappointed when they were putting more distance between us, but then I lost track of them. I don’t know what I was thinking about for awhile, but the next thing I knew, I looked ahead and they were in site again! And I was gaining! Once I have someone in site, catching him or her becomes my goal!

As I was getting closer, I yelled something to them. The one lady turned and said, “Crystal’s coming!” And bless their hearts, they made room so I could go between all of them. I was going as fast as my little legs could go. I made the turn and headed back the direction we had come. I could tell I was putting a little distance between us. I just had to hold it for another mile! Those ladies had beaten me by a few minutes at a race several weeks ago, so I was trying with all my might to stay ahead this time. (I guess I can get a little competitive at times.)

My mouth was dry as a desert, so I grabbed a cup of water at the water station to wet my whistle. Except I inhaled and started choking on the water! Luckily, no one was to the side of me as I spit out the rest. I slowed enough to quit coughing and be able to breathe again... kind of important in a race.

I got back up to speed and passed a few more people. This was the longest three miles ever! I finally saw the finish line... I wanted to beat 40 minutes so badly! I couldn’t slow! Finish line! Hallelujah! My official time: 39 minutes, 58 seconds! Ha! Nothing like cutting it close!

I didn't win any overall awards – there are some *fast* walkers! The fastest woman in that race averaged a 10 minute, 11 second mile! Holy Moses! (Mine was 12:47 for comparison.) I did, however, win first in my age group and received this really cool handmade trophy. (This race was one of four in the Barnesville Grand Prix series. The race director for the series, Carl Kondrach, makes all the trophies. That is a labor of love!)

I had asked Kim just a couple months ago if I'd ever be able to break 40 minutes. After this race, do you know what he said? He said, "See? You could have been doing that all along. Now to get to 36 minutes." Well, alrighty! Another goal.

A longer warm-up and different stretching certainly helped, I think. It helped my legs, and Michele said it really helped her breathing. She walked her fastest time, too! Of course, you know what all this means. Yup, we are signing up for another one in a couple weeks. We have to try out this new method again, of course.

Two other really cool things that happened after the race: this picture and our friend, Heather.

There are photographers at most races. I usually hate photos of myself, but I could hug the photographer for this one! This photo shows leg muscles I didn't know I had! I told Kim I was framing this baby! He agreed. He went right out and bought a frame for me. He said, "We may never see them again!" Mr. Comedian. (Thanks to Ron Pradetto Photography for letting me share this pic!)

Michele and I have been walking with our friend, Heather. Heather also happens to be Miss Sunshine's mom, if you read the earlier blog post. Well, Heather has the walking bug now, too. She's walking twice a day! She walks the family dog and Miss Sunshine in the morning, and then in the evening, she walks with Michele and me. She wants to do her first 5k with us in September. I'm so excited! The three of us have such a good time walking – it will be so cool to race together!

Maybe this speed thing is okay after all!



Photo by Ron Pradetto Photography