

## London Marathon Trip Notes – part 2

### Reports from Friends

#### **Carol who was at Southern Illinois Classic marathon in Evansville Illinois:**

Long story yes they canceled the race but Deb I took control and stayed at the packet pickup and asking people if they still wanted to do the race and that is how Deb and I became the race director. Made my own list of people that want to do the marathon and we did the half twice. Jim S was also there and I'm going to do a spread sheet turn it in to Jim and he will put it together and we are sending it to the 50 state club. I have around 40 that did it. There is so much that went on but I don't have time right now to tell you about all that stuff. I have to go right now but I did want to fill you in.

**Charlotte and Tara at Go! St Louis** – It is unusual for these southern belles to not wear identical costumes but Tara's mother was just diagnosed with breast cancer so she wore pink. At the home of Budweiser, here they are. Go! Girls!



**Jefferson, race director of Kings Mountain in SC.** This is the make-up SC marathon just outside of Charlotte NC that was created in April 2010 because Myrtle Beach canceled. There were 14 of us who participated. The run this year was AWESOME! We had 103 total finishers! Changes from last year to this year include

- Long sleeve tech shirts
- Mile markers every mile
- pint glasses, crowns & certificates for awards
- 100 finisher medals. I have to order some for those last few finishers.
- actual support from the state park rangers

Now that the town actually sees what we can do we're looking forward to getting the whole community involved in making this a better experience year after year.

The temperature was also 75+ degrees for most of the day until 6pm then we had a huge (golf ball - baseball size) hail storm. SC weather in April is totally hit or miss.

By the time you're ready to check off number 100 we'll definitely have the whole town involved and be able to roll out the red carpet for everyone.

We also got lots of comments like "beautiful course but I think it may be tougher than Grandfather Mountain." Anywho. It's time to crank out the event follow up emails to all the stakeholders and the participants. Hope to see you at an event soon!

**Diane about Kings Mountain:** I was disappointed I was unable to attend this year's King's Mountain marathon due to family obligations. I had inquired from Jefferson how this year's run was. I am thrilled he was able to not only increase the number of participants but also the support of the park rangers. Hopefully I will make this one next year....may be able to make it #100 if I work hard...awe cheez...what am I thinking?!

**Maricar about Go! St Louis Marathon:** Hi running buds, Sorry to the people who've heard this story already, but here it is in writing..... Mega drama in St. Louis. It was 72 at the start, but it wasn't humid. We've definitely run more marathons that were hotter and more uncomfortable than what we did yesterday. The Southern Belles agreed that Louisville was hotter for sure. And Jersey still remains the hottest and most uncomfortable. So when we started at 7am, we knew it was going to be hot, but not out of control hot. We were not impressed at all with the organization of this race. For a race with 17,000 people, 15,000 halvers and 3,000 full, they should really get their shit together. They started the relay, half and full together. Big mistake. We marathoners were put in the slow corral. I knew there was going to be a 6 hour cut off and I was cutting it since I haven't done marathons where I've finished before 6 in almost a year. I knew I needed every second I could get. So I went from corral E to corral C. I crawled under a barricade and ended up scraping my knees and it started bleeding. Serves me right. But it got me started to talk to a 78 year old man named Pat who was just bullshitting with me at the start. Who would have known that he'd save us later? So we start running and Dave Mari finds me. We run for a while but I decided that the strategy for today was to back off and take it easy so I have juice left later. I walked all the uphill (which there were tons of) and ran the downhill/flats. I didn't even do the scheduled walk break and just ran/walked what the course offered me.

At mile 5, Dave and I get split at the water stop. Then at mile 7, I find Frank (who ran with me and Annette in Jersey during the stifling heat). He'd just run his 400th marathon and we had flashbacks of Jersey. However, I knew he was going to fast for me so we only got to run together for 5 minutes. I could not keep up with him.

At mile 9, I hear my name again. Who do I see but Mary Lenari! So we got to chit chatting and I see a sign at mile 10 saying half marathoners turn here. The full/relay had a banner but no one was going that way. So Mary and I follow the crowd and I asked Mary if this was correct b/c I saw a banner that said half. She said it was and I trusted her since she had run this course before. So we run another quarter mile with the half and see the old man Pat who I met at the start. He asked us what we were doing with the halves since he thought I was with the full. Mary and I start cursing and running back but there were 1000s of halves coming our way. So Mary and I just across the median to redo another quarter mile to go back to the split. We thought it was odd that no one was yelling half to left and full to right. Sure enough, we get to the split and there are barricades to block the full. We asked what was going on since we reached the split at mile 10 in 2hrs and 15 min and we were given till 3 hours. We were told that the course was closed. Mary and I went ape shit and said this was ridiculous (insert curse words) and sneaked over the barricade and continued to run. The course marshal started cursing at us and we said something to the effect of, "We didn't come from Jersey and Florida to run a half and be told to turn around when we met the deadline." Then something about how this was my 42nd state, 67th marathon and Mary's 83rd so we knew what we were doing. We see Frank about 100 yds from us and he did the same thing. So I knew if these people were going to mess with us, Mary and I were on fire, plus we had Frank who could also give them some lip.

So after we jumped the barrier, it took us to Forest Park. And we didn't have any markings on the ground to tell us where to go. Thank God some volunteers were still there b/c they didn't get the message yet about the course closing. So they were able to direct us at some spots.

We were in the park for miles 10 through 13 just trying to navigate. When we finally get out of the park, a cop car with one of the race directors in it start pulling up to us. At this point, Mary and I were the very last people in the marathon. We yell into to the cop car that we are experienced marathoners, we feel ok, we can support ourselves since we had money, water, food and a course map (which I don't really carry on a regular basis, but something told me to). We told them we knew what feeling like poops in the heat was like and that we were fine and to leave us alone and let us finish. The medal had better be there at the finish and they can follow our hot asses back to mile 26. At this point, I lift a little bit of my race ready shorts to show them my pale Jersey winter ass that hasn't seen the sun. Mary and I just had fun with it and we were followed by the cop car, sag van and trailer truck that picks up all the shit, from miles 13 to 18. We started having fun with them and I whip out my camera and start taking pics of them, we started posing with the cop car, etc. Now we are making them laugh and cracking jokes. Talking about how hot we were...literally and figuratively. They clearly saw Mary and I were in happy spirits and good shape. Since they saw that they weren't going to win the battle of getting me and Mary off the course, they had the volunteers wait till we got in before they cleaned up. So Mary and I continued to be provided with water and Gatorade.

At mile 16, we see Frank who starts looking like he wasn't having fun. Mary and I told him to bail and not to do anything stupid. He had nothing to prove, has run over 400 marathons and it's not like he desperately needed to do Missouri. He said he would go as far as he could and when he felt like he had to, he would bail.

So Mary and I start passing people left and right at mile 18. We asked them if they had to jump over the barrier and they all said that they didn't have to since they got there just before they shut it down. They closed the marathon race 1 hour 45 minutes into it. So we caught up to the people who were 30 minutes ahead of us. Mary and I start picking people off and the cops are now sad since they have to stare at boys assess instead of our hot assess.

Mary and I keep each other going despite me having an allergy attack and I could not stop sneezing with all the stupid pollen in my nose. Again, we were in total good spirits until we are alone in this concrete tilted highway and we see they are taking down the mile marker signs. How the hell were we supposed to know where we were? Nothing was on the ground. And now banners were removed.

An EMT named Candy came biking to us and we convinced her to stay with us since we had no idea where to go. She did and she got us to mile 24. At this point, Mary and I started to feel the heat really draining us since there was no coverage, we had to find our way through and we just got so damn tired being angry. We had a 6 minutes different on our clock, so Mary told me to go and leave if I wanted to get in other 6 hrs. These people meant business and they were not going to count us if the f-ing gun time was over 6 hrs. So at mile 24, Mary and I split since she had an extra 6 minutes. We were to meet at the finish and I was to get my 5:59:59 since there was no way I was going over a barrier and not getting credit for it. So we run to the finish which was a dramatic uphill and I see Lou Lou in front of our hotel waiting for me. Yes, we ran by our hotel at mile 25.5 which was super cruel. Lou Lou finished her half and according to her, there were tons of people finishing the half even after she got in. So they left the halvers alone and let them finish whenever they wanted.

I see the finish and 20 seconds in front of me, I see Larry Macon. He made the cut off at 1:45 and finished in 5:58. I came in at 5:55 and so did Mary! Which was crazy since our start time was 6 minutes apart. I was happy and felt pretty good despite the conditions. A lot of this of course is due to serendipity. There is no way in hell that I would have finished this race without Mary. NO WAY. I don't know if there were running angels looking out for me. But Lou Lou and I toured two Cathedrals yesterday and even went to mass at the new cathedral when we ended up at Saturday mass. We prayed we would finish, but maybe the running Gods also heard that I needed Mary to get me through and they made it happen

that we met at mile 9. They must have also sent Pat the 78 yr old man to look out for me and Mary. He did look like an apostle.

So poor Dave and Barb, along with 1100 people were told that the marathon was canceled and that the race was over. So they didn't even finish the half. They just left the course when they passed the hotel and took a shower and went to the airport. They were pissed that they didn't jump over. Barb, we are sorry you couldn't do your 100th, but maybe the running gods were looking out for you since your foot was hurt and you need surgery today.

Sometimes, I wonder how things happen and how planets line up just right. But Mary and I definitely had someone looking out for us. She found me in the mass of 17,000 people. Thanks to the damn Liberty Lady crown! Thanks Mary for miles and miles of support and laughter. Couldn't have done it without her.

After an ice bath and an hour in the shower, Lou Lou went to go have dinner with Joe's grandma. I ended up meeting the Southern Belles for a drink and dinner. I picked up someone at the hotel lobby named Glen from New Orleans and he joined us for two celebratory toasts to survival. They had a hard time with the heat, but again, we all agreed that we've done worse weather marathons.

So maybe Chicago has got the race directors running scared. We don't know. But we do know that this is not a race to go back to. Run another St. Louis race. This was a great town for touring. Lou and I went up the Gateway Arch, saw a movie on how it was made, went to a riverboat cruise, checked out Union Station, drove to different neighborhoods and had dinner at Cheeseology (a one of a kind restaurant not to be found anywhere else in the US). They have lots of touring here and beautiful places to be explored, despite it being the murder capital of the US.

So if you want to do St. Louis, do it. But don't do Go! St. Louis. They were trashed on marathon guide last year, and maybe they didn't care about it since they didn't make some of the changes that were suggested.

They also created this race more for the halvers, with marathoners invited if you dare. At least we got to start though. Where Carol Goslin was doing her 119 marathon in Indiana, they just canceled the whole damn thing. She had drama too.

**Barb Wnek who was to celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> marathon at St Louis** – Barb didn't get to finish and we are all so very sorry. From Barb: I was turned around because I started in the D corral. There was a man guarding the gate and he told me if I went through he would make sure I never ran another marathon and he was pushing me in the back. He even said his name. I wrote the marathon director.

**BIL Carl about Go! St Louis:** Quite the hassle disguised as a race. I've run the Go! St. Louis half two years and both had organization issues. They just seem unable to handle the large number of participants. I also had a friend who volunteered last year, and that was disorganized as well. I swore after the first year that I wouldn't run it again, but did, only to promise myself again to avoid it in the future. I certainly didn't want to try the full there. However, St. Louis is a great venue and can be a fun place. In fact, I'm registered for the fall Rock n Roll there. It sounds like you succeeded in convincing the powers that be to let you finish. Good for you. By comments on the Go! St. Louis Facebook page, others not so lucky were even upset by the fact that some of you squeaked through. But good for you! It does seem that they over reacted to the heat, and more importantly just didn't have the communication systems and process in place to deal with this contingency. There is a part of me that wishes I had run with you....something about seeing the pale whites of New Jersey.

**Question: Do we really need to run or exercise for longevity?** Want To Live To 100? Try To Bounce Back From Stress - by Dr. Mark Lachs on April 11, 2011 for NPR.

One question I get asked a lot is, "How old is your oldest patient?" Answer: 109. The next question is usually something like: "What nursing home is he or she in?" Answer: She is living at home, with all her marbles, profoundly engaged in the world around her. The last question: What is this lady's fountain of youth? A thousand calories a day and an hour of yoga?

No, Helen Reichert likes chocolate truffles. Her favorite beverage is Budweiser. And she once announced to me that she was thinking about smoking again. When I protested, she reminded me that she's outlived several other physicians and told me to mind my own business. So what's going on here? Unusual longevity often has a genetic basis, and Reichert probably does have a gene that contributes to her unusual longevity. But she also exhibits a powerful trait geriatrician's call adaptive competence. I define it loosely as the ability to bounce back from stress. Many scientists view this solely as biological stress. But many of us who care for older patients see adaptive competence as psychologically critical as well.

You don't get to be 109 without life hurling a few curve balls at you, and Reichert has had more than her share: bereavement, gender discrimination, medical issues. And after each, she dusts herself off and moves on. A few years back, she had a modest stroke that affected her language abilities. I don't think I've seen a patient of any age tackle rehabilitation and speech therapy the way she did.

During her last visit, she asked if I would consider taking on a new patient: Her 103-year-old brother, who goes to the office nearly every day. He's another adaptively competent centenarian. We all know people like this of every age. And we

*all know the other guy: the pessimist for whom even small disruptions produce out-of-proportion suffering and, dare I say, whining. Sociologists are studying these traits, and the theory holds up. My colleague Becca Levy, a professor of epidemiology and psychology at the Yale School of Public Health, has studied the longevity of people in their 50s as a function of their perceptions about aging. She asked if they agreed with statements like "Things keep getting worse as I get older" and "As you get older you are less useful." Even after she controlled for their medical conditions, subjects who agreed with ideas like these died on average seven-and-a-half years sooner than their glass-half-full counterparts. So if you're a boomer and you don't think your outlook on aging has any impact on the rest of your life, you might want to brighten your attitude a bit.*

*The other striking thing about Reichert is her self-deprecating sense of humor. A few years ago, her Alma mater, Cornell University, wrote to her. "You are our oldest living alum and we're delighted to offer you a lifetime subscription to our magazine," the university said. Helen scribbled five indignant words on their letter and mailed it back: "How incredibly generous of you!"*

*Dr. Mark Lachs is director of geriatrics for the New York Presbyterian Health Care System and professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College. He is the author of *Treat Me, Not My Age*.*

## ***Itinerary***

### **Wed Apr 13**

3:30pm Depart home  
4:30pm Global Entry appointment in Terminal B booked in 30 minute slots  
  
7:25pm Depart EWR via CO#28 with dinner

### **Thu Apr 14**

7:40am Arrive London's Heathrow (LHR)

Transport: The London Underground (Piccadilly Line) from Heathrow. The St James Park stop (Circle Line) is two blocks from the hotel (which is only five blocks from Victoria Station.) Cost is 5GBP for regular trains and 18GBP for Heathrow Express. Takes about 50 minutes. Heathrow Express departs every 15 minutes to Paddington Station and takes about 20 minutes. London Visitors card can be purchased at airport for unlimited Underground travel.

Expo Thurs and Friday from 10-8 and Saturday from 9-5 – take registration form and passport And check in at “Overseas Registration Stand” and check registration carefully.

### **ExCeL | 1 Western Gateway | Royal Victoria Dock | E16 1XL**

Directions by tube – Suggest purchasing RT ticket to avoid lines

The quickest route is on the Jubilee Line which runs through central London via Bond Street and Green Park and also through mainline stations such as Waterloo and London Bridge. If travelling on the Jubilee Line change at Canning Town station for the Docklands Light Railway (proceed up the stairs to platform 3) and depart two stops later at Custom House for ExCeL DLR

Alternatively, take the DLR from Bank or Tower Gateway to Custom House for ExCeL. Note that when travelling from Bank, you will need to change at Westferry station (no need to change platform) for the Becton bound train. Underground passes are valid for the DLR.

ExCeL is located just 1 mile east of Canary Wharf and 1 mile west of London City Airport. Another landmark reference is Tower Bridge, which is just 4 miles west of ExCeL. ExCeL is situated between Royal Victoria Dock and Victoria Dock Road.

Hotel Crowne Plaza St James – for 5 night single occupancy with 2 beds  
45-51 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6AF, U.K. Tel: + 011 44 20 7 834 6655  
<http://www.london.crowneplaza.com/>  
mini bar and coffee service in room; US plug; continental breakfast and VAT included

(Part of Marathon Tours is at Park Plaza Westminster, 200 Westminster Bridge Road – note that the Park Plaza had free internet)

Walk to many of London's most famous landmarks, in the heart of Westminster. Near to the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, art collections at the Tate Modern and the National Gallery, the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, and beautiful St. James's Park. The Crowne Plaza London is also within walking distance of the famous QE2 centre. Victoria Station and St. James's Park tube station are conveniently located nearby, allowing easy access to the airports.

### **Fri Apr 15**

Marathon Tours arrival – from website: Marathon Tours is pleased to be selected as the official North American travel agency of the Virgin London Marathon which allows us to offer you a guaranteed entry in conjunction with your travel arrangements. Known for its flat scenic course, world-class

competition and excellent organization, this gem of a marathon will have you feeling like royalty when you cross the finish line on the Mall after passing Buckingham Palace.

Entry of overseas runners is strictly limited according to a system devised by the London Marathon Committee. The field is limited to 46,000 runners while many more entries are turned away.

Our hotel packages offer features that will make your trip a memorable one. The St. James Court is a deluxe hotel located about 600 meters from the finish and a half block from Buckingham Palace. The Park Plaza Westminster is a fabulous 4-star property located just over Westminster Bridge with views of the River Thames and Big Ben.

Our welcome reception is a great way to meet fellow runners from throughout North America.

- Choice of accommodations with American buffet breakfast
- All hotel taxes
- Guaranteed race entry
- Welcome cocktail reception
- Transportation to the start from the selected hotels
- Services of Marathon Tours staff in London

6:00pm Welcome Reception at the Crown Plaza St James in the Edwardian Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Beverage and hors d'oeuvres to 7:30pm. (Note – it was sufficient for dinner.)

### **Sun Apr 17**

7:15am Bus to the start of this point-to-point marathon provided by Marathon Tours. Bus will take 'warm up bag' to the finish. Need extra throw away/trash bag.

9:45am "Virgin" London Marathon – 7 hour time limit for roads; 8 hours for medals  
<http://www.virginlondonmarathon.com/>

**Course:** The point-to-point course is very flat with only one small rise. The triple start winds out of Greenwich Park and Blackheath Park, loops through Greenwich and across Tower Bridge. Circling Canary Wharf the course runs along the Thames past the Tower of London through Trafalgar Square and onto The Mall where you will finish in front of Buckingham Palace. The course is one of the world's fastest and boasts of the existing women's world record. See course map.

At finish – walk back to hotel; 7 hour limit but 8 hours allowed for medals

### **Mon Apr 18**

Marathon Tours depart to Edinburgh Extension trip

### **Tue Apr 19**

12:05pm Depart London/Heathrow (LHR) via CO#113

3:25pm Arrive Newark

### **Participants**

Scott Guillemette, London Marathon Trip Manager for [www.MarathonTours.com](http://www.MarathonTours.com)

Tele 617 242 7845 or 800 444 4097 or [info@marathontours.com](mailto:info@marathontours.com) – staying at Park Plaza

Jacqui Kaufman Tele 207 834 6655 – staying at Crown Plaza St James

David and Dee Holman – in Paris for marathon week prior



## Course Map



## Trip Notes from a stranger's website

### Masses Merging

The blue and red routes will converge just before the 3 mile marker. For the next half mile both groups continue to use their own carriageway.

Runners from the green start will merge with the blue route at 1200meters.



photo: BBC



Jenny Wood Allen, Dundee,

ran her first ever marathon when she was 71. Till today she holds the world record for women older than 70. On April 16th, 2000 she was the oldest runner of the day. In 2001 sadly she had to give up after being knocked down in an accident caused by an overtaking runner. In 2002 she finished once more but claimed this was her last one - let's see, she is just 91. (photo: BBC)

### Toilets

600 meters on from the blue start nature's equipment for men provides a clear advantage. Built like a bypass parallel to the road there is an endless pissoir. To enter at the front and to leave at the rear men could do it jogging.

But on route you will find 500 portaloo toilet cabins. From mile 2 onwards, every second mile they are clearly signed "TOILETS 200 METERS AHEAD" and at the place "TOILETS HERE".



### Timing On The Route

Since 2002 the organizers have provided chip times only.

On route you will get your time at 10k, 20k, Halfway, 30k, 40k. Time is taken at various other distances just to check nobody is cheating. The control point at mile 8 serves to take photos of you as well. The photographers are placed on the bridge.



photo: BBC



knows he is winning for the third time:  
Antonio Pinto, Portugal, 2000 (photo: BBC)

### Distance Markers

Every single mile is clearly marked by big banners on both sides of the road. And at every mile (except 26) there is a digital clock to show race time.

Also marked are the distances in kilometers every 5K and the Halfwaypoint.

### Drinks

From mile 3 to 25 there are water stations at every mile. At both sides of the road they offer Vittel water (not sparkling). It is served in pre-opened plastic bottles of 330ml.

At mile 5, 10, 15, 19, 23 (new) [Lucozade Sport](#) is offered, this is an Energy Drink in reclosable pouches of 330ml.

If you want to be prepared perfectly for the day you can order the drink online e.g. at [TSM](#). The 1L-bottle of concentrated liquid (4.99 £) makes up for



between Embankment and Big Wheel  
the photo suppresses the Thames  
(photo: BBC)



5 Liter of the drink. Postage costs to e.g. Germany are just 3 £.

There are no more provisions offered by the organizers. However the excited spectators very often present cookies, fruit, coke etc. to the runners.

When approaching the drink stations please make sure that you do not alter your direction suddenly. Most times it will be advisable to use not the first table but move on near to the end of the station where it won't be crowded.



Raymond Challis (1946-2005) of Ely, died at mile 7 on 17/04/2005 running his 8th FLM. The experienced runner (3:42) suffered from an undiscovered cardiomyopathy. "He died doing something he loved and he is probably running outside right now," said the Rev at the grave.

## Showers

.. are provided six times along the route at mile 9, 13, 17, 19, 22 and 23,5. They are designed to run through, so you don't have to run a diversion. The showers are signed in advance by "SHOWERS 200 METERS AHEAD".



the winner's smile by Tegla Loroupe, 2000

## Medical Aid

... is provided by St. John Ambulance around the course. Their sites are mostly close to the drink stations. If you are in trouble ask officials at the drink stations for directions to the nearest medical point.

You will notice the helpful St. John people while they are offering Vaseline to the runners.

Within its 27 years the London Marathon had to face 9 fatalities. Please, check your health regularly.



## Traffic

Officially the roads are closed only to provide a finish within 5 hours. However, the organizers seem to stretch this as long as they can. But you might be asked to keep to the footpath if you are determined to finish.

The finish officials will still be there until 7.30pm to take your time and give you a smile.

(photo: BBC)

## The Sweep-Up-Bus

... drives behind (in) the field at the speed of a 7-hour-runner.

Your running number works as your underground ticket in case you have had enough before approaching the finish line.

At the Isle of Dogs (just when it begins to hurt) there are 8 stations of the Dockland Light Railway, and at Tower Bridge resp. Tower you find tube station. If you have the bad luck to have to stop already at Greenwich, there also is a DLR station..



(drawing: Greenwich website)



Three Elvies circling Cutty Sark  
(photo: The Times)

## The highlights (1)

The first famous sight along the route you will reach at mile 6 in Greenwich. Here the spectators stand at both sides of the road in several rows. There is even a grand stand provided to enable people to view the runners when circling the Cutty Sark.

During the following part the race gets calmer leading through less attractive suburbs, until suddenly after mile 12 you find yourself approaching Tower Bridge. Here not only the crowds are waiting for you, media workers film and interview running VIPs and funnily costumed runners. Leaving Tower Bridge remember to pose for your individual photo.

Passing the Tower Bridge one turns right, which might be a bit tricky for your mind as the finish lies to the left. Most of the runners will spot fast competitors on the other side of the road. They have already completed the long circle along the Isle of Dogs.

## The Highlights (2)

If you keep up with 8 min/mile speed you will be happy to meet the elite men at half-way-point flying in the other direction on the other side of the road. They have already run 22 miles. The women elite start 45min earlier (9.00am) and have disappeared already.

Running around the peninsula Isle of Dogs sometimes is described as tiring and boring. I found it tiring but still entertaining. First you pass under Canary Wharf Tower, then the road narrows and let you take in the atmosphere as you pass several pubs with live music. On the way out of the isle you



the scenery at the Tower  
(photo: Angelika Scheil)

have to ascend slightly, and to reach mile 19 means that hard work is going to be done now.

Approaching the Tower the road gets long and longer, and the tired muscles are not happy to move on the cobbles in front of the castle.



The three Elvises made it to the finish  
(photo: The Times)

#### Behind The Finish Line

... you are offered your well earned medal and your finisher t-shirt. You are asked to move up a little ramp (o dear!) which allows the assistants to cut off the chip from your shoe. This is why you better should not use the laces to fix the chip but the provided paper strips.

A few steps onwards you will be given a goodie-bag, containing more Vittel water (ggrr..), a mars bar, crisps and useless things more I can't remember. Of course, you get a silver foil to warm your body.

It is remarkable how many volunteers care for you, and help instantly if there is a problem. So I was immediatly helped when I suffered from a cramp, which I got trying to speed up to finish. Many thanks to all the volunteers.

And you will be photographed as well, if you like (non-committal).

### The Highlights (3)

With the Tower behind you the route descends into a big tunnel. Another place to shout again what sounded to me like Ogi-Ogi-Ogi, oi-oi-oi (no idea what the meaning is), but meanwhile the running heroes got a little calmer.

What follows is long straight stretch along the Embankment, the broad road parallel to the Thames, until finally you are happy to see Big Ben and to turn right in direction of Buckingham Palace. Now even the most tired runner should raise his head, and the final mile is pure enjoyment, passing Westminster Abbey (thinking of the candle in wind...), shuffling along Birdcage Walk to proceed to the front of Buckingham Palace. A final right turn at the Royal Victorian fountain and you will appreciate to see the finish line just in front of you.



**The finish area.**  
**Map is copyright The London Marathon Ltd.**





finish with royal surroundings: The Mall  
(photo: The Times)

### Showers, Changing

There are no showers at the finish. For bad weather conditions two indoor changing facilities will have been arranged. One is a covered car park on Carlton House Terrace (up the steps to Waterloo Place, then turn to the left). The other will be a tent situated off Horseguard Road. One can imagine how crowded these places would be.

Alright, having run 26 miles one shows tolerance with oneself and other people.



a winner, who likes to drink  
a glass of his own red wine:  
Antonio Pinto, Portugal, 2000  
(photo: The Times)

### Pubs

On Whitehall (parallel to Horseguards Road) there are some pubs, where you won't feel lonely. However, the road is closed which enables you to sit on the corner of the pavement enjoying your pint watching Downing

### The Kitbag

**The baggage vehicles wait for you behind the finish on The Mall. The area is closed for spectators and to get back your things you have to show your running number. So your bag seems to be fairly safe.**



**well earned: medal place for every finisher  
(photo: The Times)**

### Find Family And Friends

**This is a point you should better do some planning about it. There are around 32000 finishing runners, and if just one relative is waiting for everyone, you can imagine the confusion which will develop.**

**Meeting points will be marked by the organizers. At Horseguards Road the trees carry letters, according to them people can meet referring to their names. It cannot be recommended to use this way. The area is too crowded.**

**The idea to meet at a less frequented letter, like Q or Z, seems to be created by too many other people. Perhaps you should make the effort to view the area the day before together with your companions and make your appointment properly.**

street and reviewing the 26 miles. It was worth it again.

recommended: The Lord Moon of the Mall,  
Whitehall 16-18, [map](#)



**a winner on his own**

### Results

**Improvements since 2002: We get a real chip time. Gun times are no longer mentioned in any way. Result lists and finish photos show only chip time.**

**The results are published in a fairly short time in the internet. The official website usually provides them on data bank basis, while at Evening Standard online you find a list.**

**Additionally The Evening Standard publishes the whole list printed during the week.**



a pair of feet: example for thousands  
(photo: The Times)



hearing nothing, seeing nothing  
(photo: BBC)



**Sarah Piercy,  
the happy wheelchair winner 2000**

According to London Marathon race director David Bedford the event is a mixture of Olympic Games and carnival. Here you can see why.



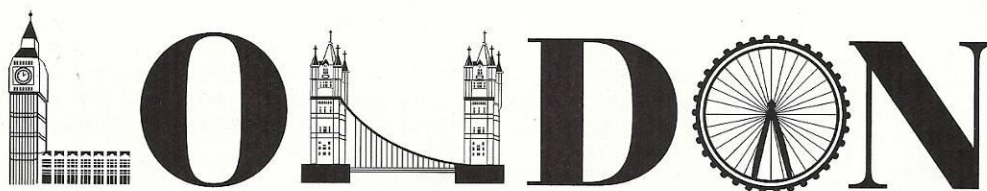






I don't need to do a trip report at all – here's a great report from last year by the fastest American on the London course.

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# LONDON

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## CALLING

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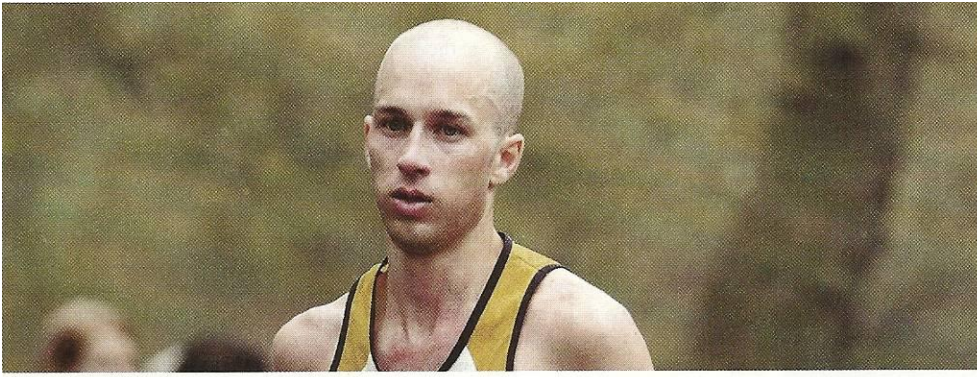
**Justin Mock chose London as the site for his best-prepared marathon attempt.**

DESPITE TRAVEL STRESS, HE RAN A 14-MINUTE PR AND FINISHED AS THE FIRST AMERICAN. THIS IS HIS STORY.

By Justin Mock







I had tears in my eyes as I picked up my finisher's medal after last year's London Marathon and shook hands with those around me. Sporting a huge smile, I had never felt so good about a race before. Race volunteers congratulated me and asked where I was from. "Colorado, in the USA," I answered. I had come a long way to race in the British capital, and it paid off with the race of my life. I was ecstatic.

After a few years of steady improvement, I knew I was long overdue for a big marathon PR. I had run 2:43:26 in 2008 (while winning the Colfax Marathon in Denver, on a course later determined to be long), but was confident enough to think that with the right training, I might be able to break 2:30. With the desire to travel and the potential to visit a friend in Spain, I started considering European marathons. By the time I decided to race London, the entry lottery was closed and my only way in was with Marathon Tours, a Boston-based vacation outfitter. Coupled with a four-night hotel stay, the entry package cost a whopping \$1,475. Marathon Tours assured me they would get me into the proper starting corral given my ambitious goal, but I still fudged my marathon PR a bit to make sure that I was placed as close to the starting line as possible.

I had run well during the summer, but knew I'd have to ramp up my training in the four months leading up to the April 25 race in London. And that meant training through sometimes cold, snowy and windy conditions in Denver. My training partners were a ragtag group — a few high-schoolers, aging coworkers, and a guy with just nine toes — but these friends kept me honest through the Colorado winter. Putting everything into a push to run sub-2:30, I consistently went to the track for regular speed work sessions during the full three-month training for the first time in my life, and the resulting benefits were huge. I hit 100 miles a couple of weeks in training, typical mileage for me during a marathon cycle, but the quality and speed were stronger than ever. I was thrilled to set PRs at several distances, but my race results still didn't indicate sub-2:30 marathon fitness. Five weeks out from the marathon, I finished the Shamrock Half

Marathon in Virginia Beach, Va., in a disappointing 1:12:10. As had plagued me in the past, I failed to close out the final miles, finishing in another positive split.

The last two weeks before the marathon proved incredibly stressful. The Icelandic volcano was disrupting transatlantic flights, and if I made it to London, air quality was expected to be a concern. Elite athletes were scrambling to make alternative travel plans but that wasn't an option for me. I'd prepaid my Marathon Tours package and, given that I didn't buy travel insurance, stood to lose the nonrefundable hotels and flights purchased for a week's travel through Europe following the marathon. Aside from the very real stress about the money, I knew I was in jeopardy of losing my shot at a fast marathon when I was in the best shape of my life. I didn't manage the stress well and went so far as to make plans to race the Country Music Marathon in Nashville that same weekend as an alternative. A few days before I was to fly, however, the race gods began to look favorably on me. The massive ash cloud parted and my red-eye flight from Denver to London four days before the race was the first of that route to resume.

By the night before the marathon, I'd been in London for a few days and had seemingly managed the jet lag well, but of course sleep didn't come easily. I'm a picky sleeper and the room next door was noisy. I typically need white noise to sleep soundly and had brought a small personal fan with me. Unfortunately, it blew up on the first night when, being a rookie European traveler, I didn't put it through a voltage converter. It started to smoke, blew a fuse or popped a breaker, not only dying but forcing me to spend that first night in the hotel without electricity. And, while I admittedly use sleeping pills more often than I should during a typical work week, I don't use them before a race for fear that I'll wake sluggish. So, a characteristic, mostly sleepless night on the eve of the race it was.

Marathon Tours had answered several questions for me before the trip, but my only interaction with them in London was the bus to the start, which went smoothly. With the start logistics taken care of, I found a spot in the grass and lay down for an hour, maybe more, selfishly ignoring the gathered runners from around the world to focus on the challenge ahead. It started raining as I watched the elite women start their race, 45 minutes before the rest of the field. The rain intensified as we waited for the mass race start, but



fortunately I was prepared with several layers of clothes and stayed dry up until I shed a trash bag and stripped to my singlet a few minutes before the gun. After a 1-mile warm-up, I joined corral 1 as we began a slow move towards the start line. After complaining out loud about how slowly they walked us to the line, I immediately feared coming off as an ugly American. While I was relieved to be toward the front, I was still buried several rows deep as UK Athletics Club championship runners filed in ahead. My fib to make sure that I got into the first corral didn't appear to be necessary given the number of runners crammed into the corral.

Finally, after planning and training for more than four months, I was about to run what I hoped would be the marathon of my life. When the gun went off, my mind cleared and I was completely relaxed for the first time in weeks. I zig-zagged my way through the opening miles trying to find an open lane on the wet roads of Blackheath. Despite efforts to restrain myself, I got out slightly faster than goal pace, splitting 5:39, 5:35 and 5:31 through the opening miles. I couldn't believe that hundreds of runners were ahead of me and many more continued to pass. I tried to remind myself that I was a veteran of 13 marathons and couldn't get caught up in this early excitement. Racing with a Garmin Forerunner for the first time, I paid close attention to my pace and gained confidence from the reasonably consistent splits. By mile 4, I had settled into a groove and not a single runner would pass me the rest of the race.

Rounding the clipper ship Cutty Sark in the 6<sup>th</sup> mile, I was working with a British man who appeared to be slightly older than me and, together, we were steadily moving up the field. At mile 10, we ran past a stereo blaring John Denver's familiar

"Country roads, take me home ..." and I couldn't help but sing along. Having grown up in rural southeast Ohio, I've always identified with the song and it put a spring in my step, especially here in another country. The Brit, whom I later discovered was Martin Shore, and I stayed together to the halfway point of the race, where I let him pull me up the incline over London's iconic Tower Bridge. Just over

the River Thames, I split an ideal 1:14:14 for the first half of the race.

Coming down off Tower Bridge and entering the second half of the race, I really began to feel the energy of the event, the energy of this city. Through Canary Wharf, the crowds were huge, and given their boisterous support, I was thankful to be running one of the five World Marathon Majors. I dropped Shore and took advantage of a downhill stretch to log my fastest mile to that point, a 5:28. As the grade leveled off, I was thrilled to maintain that pace without an increase in effort, running 5:30 for the 15<sup>th</sup> mile. Runners were really coming back to me now and my confidence grew with each step. My body felt great and I realized that it was one of those rare days where I was totally in command of my legs, that they'd respond with whatever I asked of them.

I started to swallow guys up 10 at a time. I had the feeling no one around could run with me at this point in the race. I got a bit over-jubilant in the 20<sup>th</sup> mile and recorded my fastest mile of the day, a 5:24 — a pace I often struggle to maintain in local 5Ks at home in the high altitude of Colorado. Coming through 20 miles just under 1:56, I realized that sub-6:00s the rest of the way would get me to the finish in sub-2:30, the time I'd dreamed of for so many years and what I'd always thought was the highest goal I could reach for the marathon.

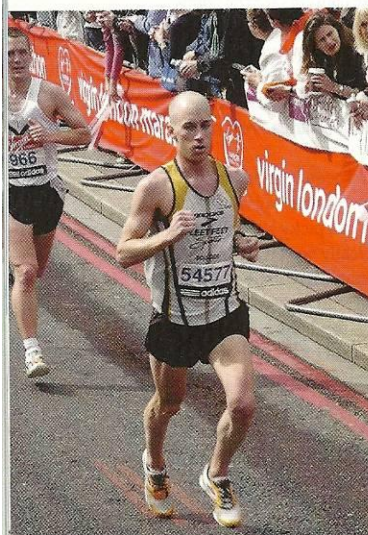
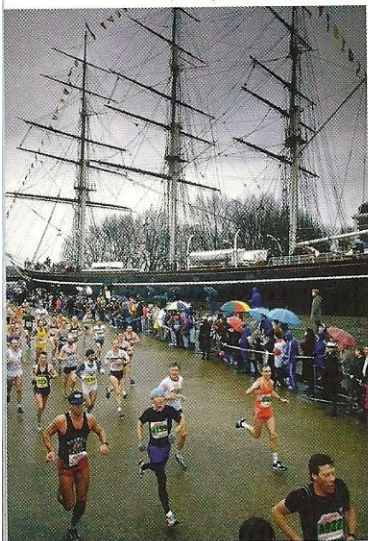
Some major work still had to be done, though. As I increased my effort going into the final 10K, the smell of fish and chips from some 85 pubs lining the course filled the air and nearly made me wretch. My pace drifted up into the 5:40s and 5:50s. Although we ran past many classic images of London — the London Eye, Big Ben and Buckingham Palace — I was completely oblivious to them, focusing only on the runners ahead of me and my watch. I dug deeper to fight off the growing fatigue and heaviness in my legs, knowing that I was on the verge of something great if I could run strong to the finish. Galvanized by that thought, I held sub-6:00 pace to the end, finishing in 2:29:29, a 14-minute PR.

After proudly answering that I was from "Colorado, in the USA," I later learned that I was the first American finisher. I knew that this honor was a result of limited American participation, and I hadn't worn a USA singlet, nor did I have an American flag draped over my shoulders post-race, but on this day, in this huge international race, I was the USA's best.

More importantly, however, I had achieved the goal I had worked so hard to attain. After all of the planning, training and obstacles, I'd run sub-2:30 in my first serious attempt at the mark and I had done it on a huge stage, one of the world's most competitive and deepest marathons. I was thrilled and overwhelmed. For someone with a modest running background, this was my Olympic gold medal. ✎

*Justin Mock lives in Denver, Colo. The 29-year-old wraps his mileage around full-time work as an accountant.*

Read more about running World Marathon Majors races for non-elites at [runningtimes.com/apr11](http://runningtimes.com/apr11).





From [www.marathonguide.com](http://www.marathonguide.com)

Average Ratings: Course - ★★★★★ Organization - ★★★★★ Fans - ★★★★★

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★★★★★ **A Great Day for All** (about: 2010)

**Course: 4 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

S. S. from Warlingham, Surrey (5/14/10)

4-5 previous marathons | 2 London Marathons

This being my second London Marathon, I was interested in comparing my previous experience and seeing if the new sponsors had made any significant changes.

The event is very well organized from the expo to collecting your kit bag in the finish area. Thanks to all of the volunteers, without whom the event simply would not function; thanks to the St. John's ambulance service, which provided medical attention to so many on race day; and of course, thanks to the spectators who turn out in their thousands to support the runners.

The only negative was the congestion I experienced from the blue start area. We stopped 3 times in the first 6 miles, which isn't really helpful in setting a rhythm. Perhaps the organizers should consider wave starts, particularly if they intend to increase the number of runners.

There was the new addition of carb gel stations at miles 14 and 21. Perhaps another gel station at around mile 9 would help some of the runners.

I was lucky enough to run the New York Marathon in 2009, and although London comes very close, it just falls short. But I would recommend London to anyone considering running a marathon.

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★★★★★ **World-Class Experience** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

[P. N.](#) from Kansas City, USA (5/1/10)

6-10 previous marathons | 1 London Marathon

Everything the other reviewers have stated is true - wonderful course (Tower Bridge was a huge highlight), great crowd support, plenty of water and Lucozade, and a gorgeous finish. My only complaint is similar to the others - the one-size-fits-few finisher's shirt is a shame, especially for such a world-class event. I was especially disappointed that the organizers did not even make a shirt available of ANY kind with the Virgin Marathon logo in XXL. I supposed they don't have enough Clydesdale-Division runners to justify having them available. This is a surprise, given that every other marathon I've run has at least some available for purchase. Other than this relatively minor (yet still disappointing) drawback, this is truly a spectacular event!

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★★★★★ **A Very Special Event** (about: 2010)

**Course: 4 Organization: 4 Fans: 5**

J. M. from Chicago (4/29/10)

11-50 previous marathons | 1 London Marathon

This is an extremely well-run and planned event. Like any big enterprise, however, a few tweaks can make it even better. I have now run all five world majors, and a few other large marathons, so I think I have a pretty good basis to make some comparisons.

First, the good. The course is flat (but not fast for mid-packers, due to congestion on the course), the scenery is great, and the spectators are just outstanding.

More so than any other major races, there is an effort to inject humor into the race, via costumes. As an example, Sir Richard Branson ran wearing large, red butterfly wings. Princess Beatrice was one of 34 runners identically dressed (lime green tutus and calf warmers), bungeed together as a "human caterpillar," setting a Guinness World Record for such an effort. There were at least two "Borats," wearing the iconic thong, which goes up and over the neck. Thankfully, one also wore spandex shorts under the thong. The other... well, not so much.

I saw a Sherlock Holmes, complete with deerstalker hat, and woolen caped coat (looking very overheated). Lots of costumed super heroes and other cartoon characters, and a disturbing number of men running as intentionally unconvincing women (think Monty Python). Another theme was running in animal costumes. I saw a camel, several horses and a giraffe, whose neck, without exaggeration, was at least 10 feet tall, more likely 15 feet.

There were water bottles every mile (starting at mile 3), bottles of sports drink every 5K, and gels twice towards the end of the race. The volunteers were plentiful, supportive, and just generally outstanding. Lots of medical help on the course, including paramedics in pairs on bicycles. The start area was capacious, with a big screen TV and music. In the start area, the portable bathrooms were plentiful, in good locations, and constantly resupplied as needed. Also, there was plenty of water and sports drink at the start.

The most notable and best part of the race were the runners themselves. Almost all of the runners ran for charity, and very significant funds are raised every year. The race organizers deserve to be commended for this unique aspect of the race, and there was a notable feeling of community out on the course.

Now for the needed tweaks. The biggest problem I found, which was also noted by my friends who also ran the race, was congestion on the course. I was in the Blue Start and in the first mile we came to a complete stop for about 30 seconds, and slowed to a walk a couple of more times. Even later in the course when you are sometimes funneled to one half of a narrow street, there is significant congestion, slowing and even stopping. There was more than an hour difference between the fastest runner in my group and the slowest, and we all experienced the congestion. Because of this, I have never been physically bounced around by other runners as much before. Also because of the congestion, and the littering of bottles over the entire course, I have never seen so many tripping hazards on a road marathon before.

There are three starts (Blue, Red, Green) with 9 corrals in each. However, there was no attempt to stagger the corrals. Simply staggering each corral (a minute or two delay between corrals) would probably go a long way to solving this.

The hydration vessels also are worth noting. The drinks were served in bottles, which was both good news and bad news. The good news is that the hand-off of fluids was quick, and there was not much congestion at the aid stations. Also, the bottles had a very nice cap, which allowed you to squirt the fluids into your mouth. It was also good news that you could carry the bottle with you, and hydrate as needed. Now the bad news. The bottles littered the entire course. Both the bottles, and sometimes just the removed caps were everywhere, and quite dangerous to your footing. And with the congested course, you couldn't see the tripping hazards in time.

The final area which needs improvement is the bathrooms on the course. Unfortunately for me, this was a race where I needed the facilities several times on the course. The lines were long (more than 10 minutes at two of the stops), they were out of paper, and they were pretty filthy. There is a real need to increase the number of bathrooms, and assign someone to service them (like at the start) during the race.

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★★★★★ **The Best Marathon Experience** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 4**

*Mark Hargreaves* from Hambledon England (4/26/10)

4-5 previous marathons | 1 London Marathon

This is the best-organized, big-city marathon that I have run. The baggage truck arrangements are better than Boston's because race numbers are allocated randomly, which avoids congestion at the finish to reclaim your bag (whereas in Boston people finishing at about the same time all end up queuing at the same bus because race numbers are allocated on the basis of predicted finish time). Large open-sided lorries are far more effective than buses with tiny windows. There was no congestion in the finish area - compared to Berlin where it was a nightmare. The course is fabulous... running over Tower Bridge is fantastic and an unforgettable moment. In addition, there is much else to see on this course in the way of iconic buildings and landmarks. The mile markers are impossible to miss and incorporate clocks, which I've not seen elsewhere. The water stations are numerous and bottles are so much easier to handle than cups. The crowds were great but don't quite match the support in Dublin. There they really know how to boost your sense of well being. "You look fantastic" and "Great running" do a lot more for me than blasting whistles and hooters in your face.

It's great for spectators too, as moving around the course by public transportation is so easy. It's always nice when complete strangers offer congratulations afterward, and London is no exception. If you only run one major, run London.

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★★★★★ **Awesome experience** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

*Miguel Paramo Calderon* from Mexico City (4/26/10)

4-5 previous marathons | 1 London Marathon

I highly recommend this marathon as it is definitely one of a kind. I've done 5 previous marathons (including Chicago and Berlin) and my experience in London is remarkable. Excellent organization from the expo to the finish line; lots of easy-to-carry Lucozade bottles during the course. Crossing the London Bridge in the middle of a crowd screaming and supporting is an unforgettable experience, like no other place. Honestly, this city has a special magic that makes it one of a kind. I still need to go for New York and Boston (to complete the five majors), but once I achieve that, I'll be running again here, doubtless.

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★★★★★ **Way ahead of the field** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

*Michael Ingram* from Radlett Hertfordshire GB (4/25/10)

11-50 previous marathons | 6+ London Marathons

Here are suggestions for making the world's best marathon unassailable:

- \* Print names under the running numbers, like the Swiss.
- \* Get rid of the blue start bottleneck, which brings your run to a halt.
- \* Increase gel supplies - they are a welcome addition but the race ran out this year.
- \* Improve the T-shirt to a modern running shirt.

Everything else is just so, so perfect. Let me give you an example: at the water and Lucozade stations, you just hold out your hand and water or Lucozade is put into it. You do not stop, and you do not have to help yourself; you, the runner, are the king.

This attitude pervades the whole ethos of London. Half a million people line the street holding a party, and you are the guest of honor.

London is fully of fancy dress, celebrities and charities.

If you have not run London, you have not experienced the ultimate pleasure that marathon-running offers.

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★★★★★ **A couple of minor points** (about: 2009)

**Course: 5 Organization: 4 Fans: 5**

b. d. from usa (11/9/09)

50+ previous marathons | 1 London Marathon

All in all, I had a fantastic time. Big Ben bonged 3 p.m. just as I ran by. Nothing can top this.

Being an American, I suppose I have gotten spoiled about the quality of T-shirts we get here as opposed to the ones we got in London. Absolutely horrible, papery cotton shirt with no size selection. I ended up buying a shirt that I am proud to wear.

I was back in the ninth corral of the blue start and discovered I could slip back through to the bathroom before I ever crossed the starting line. No one was using the bathrooms at the start at that point, and time spent in the bathroom did not register on my chip. HOWEVER, bathrooms on the course were not plentiful enough. I lost 20 minutes at the one other place I stopped.

As a humorous aside, I informed the customs agent at Heathrow that I was there to run the London Marathon. She confiscated our passports (not at all funny) and said we needed special "stamps," which she was unable to locate. I was informed that she "made a note about me." When I looked at the stamp (visa) later, it said that I was to earn no money nor conduct any business while in the UK. Evidently her concern was that I was going to WIN and remove large quantities of British pounds from the UK. Had I known at the time that I was being mistaken for the winner, I might have been flattered and amused.

Short story: tell customs that you are a tourist!!

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★★★★★ **Top marathon - should be on everyone's list** (about: 2002)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 4**

[James Skinner](#) from Gloucestershire, England (10/6/09)

6-10 previous marathons | 1 London Marathon

London is one of the world's great marathons. This is often said but it is true.

London was my first marathon back in 2002, and looking back on it now, having run a further eight marathons in eight capital cities all across Europe, I realize that the London Marathon is special.

The course is flat and fast, allowing for a quick time/possible PB. The only concern is your starting group, which affects getting away from the start and into your normal running stride as soon as possible. There are over 35,000 runners in London, making this one of the world's largest marathons, so the start is crucial.

Taking place in April every year seems about right, with temperatures normally around 16/61 or slightly higher. Wind and rain can be a problem, but that could be true at any time of year.

The organization and crowds are what make London the race that it is. The pre-race expo is very good, selling plenty of Adidas merchandise, which make great souvenirs to have afterward. Meanwhile, the crowds are pretty deep across the course, with the exception of the Docklands area early on. They are especially vocal towards the later stages and are literally four- or five-people deep in the final miles.

Overall, with almost 30 years experience now, London hosts a great marathon every year. London is rightly part of the Marathon Majors, and this event should be run by all marathon runners at some stage.

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★★★★★ **A biblical experience!** (about: 2008)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

[Simon Knowles](#) from London, England (5/22/09)

6-10 previous marathons | 1 London Marathon

The London marathon is simply one of the greatest things you can ever do. This was my first major marathon after running smaller ones in New Zealand and Australia and this blew me away. The race could not be organized any better, in my opinion. Here are the main factors:

**EXPO:** It's located a fair way from central London, but easy to get to on the underground. Picking up bibs was straightforward, and there was an immense amount of clothing, etc. - plus plenty of running experts to give advice.

**PRE RACE:** I was lucky enough to be up near the front, but getting to the race is very easy on the train to Greenwich.

**COURSE:** The course winds its way all over the city, and is supported incredibly most of the way, apart from some quieter places in the east, but the insanity of the crowds in Greenwich and the Embankment more than make up for it. Running over Tower Bridge is something never to be forgotten, and the deafening noise through Greenwich is spine-tingling! When the pain starts to hit along the last 5K or so along the Thames, the crowd definitely gives a massive lift.

**SUPPORT:** The refreshments were fantastic, with water every 2 miles or so, Lucozade every 5 miles in handy squeeze containers, and food at various stops. Also large clocks at every mile. I didn't wear a watch because clocks were so easily visible. One tip: it's worth writing your name on the front of your singlet; the crowd will be yelling the name, which was incredibly uplifting when the pain sets in!

All in all, just an epic experience that will never be forgotten!

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★★★★★ **Great Race** (about: 2009)

**Course: 4 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

R. T. from Sydney, Australia (5/22/09)

## **6-10** previous marathons | **1** London Marathon

This was a fantastic and very enjoyable race. The best thing was the organization - absolutely first-class, right up there with NYC, Berlin, etc. The expo was good, and pre-race information was very detailed. I loved the starting area; it had plenty of toilets, space to stretch out, and drinks. Spectators were unbelievable, particularly in the final few miles and around Canary Wharf. The only negative is that this is a very crowded race. Despite the large field, the course is actually just a very narrow road in places, and even several miles in, I was still forced to walk in places due to congestion. That's not conducive to a good time if you are an average runner. It doesn't take away from the fact this is a great event, though; I would love to do it again.