

**New Year's Double in Dallas Area 2012**  
**By D. Holmen and J. Altman**



Unique medal: photos by David Holmen

From David Holmen

Over the 2011-2012 New Year's weekend, I ran two marathons in Allen, TX (north of Dallas). These races were part of a two-day event called the New Year's Double.

When I first heard of the New Year's Double, I thought it was a great idea. I could not only end 2011 with one last marathon, but also begin 2012 with a marathon. What made it even better was having New Year's Eve and New Year's Day both fall on the weekend. I only had to take one day off from work to run two marathons.

In addition to the marathons, there were also half marathons, 5K races and half marathon relays each day. I think most runners did the same distance each day, but you could run any combination. You could also choose to just run one race.

All of the races were run in Celebration Park. The marathon and half marathon were run on a 6.55 mile loop. The marathon was four laps, and the half marathon was two laps. The 5K race was run on an out-and-back course along a portion of the same loop.

Temperatures were in a comfortable range for running, and we enjoyed sunny skies, but there was a chilly wind both days.

I saw several Marathon Maniacs and 50 Staters, including Larry Macon, who celebrated his birthday by running his 113th marathon of 2011 on New Year's Eve.

My goal was to run each race under 3:30. Since I still haven't recovered the conditioning I had last summer, this would have been a challenging goal. To do it would have required disciplined pacing. Unfortunately, I started a little fast in the New Year's Eve Marathon and then got competitive when I saw a chance to place in the top 10. (There were prizes to the top 10 men and women.) Until the final lap, there were always one or two other runners who were either just ahead of me or just behind me. I didn't want to drop in the standings, so I was pushing the pace the whole way. I finished in fourth place with a time of 3:22:57. I knew that effort would come back to haunt me the next day.

After doing everything I could to recover from the first race (including a 25-minute ice bath), I showed up the next morning a little stiff, but not too sore.

It took an effort to work out the stiffness, but I managed to start the New Year's Day marathon on pace to beat 3:30. It took too much effort to run that pace, however, and after about 16 miles I started to fade. My last ten miles got progressively slower, but only one runner passed me. I think everyone else was struggling for the same reason.

I finished the New Year's Day Marathon in 3:42:41. Although I was nearly 20 minutes slower than I was the day before, I still finished 3rd among the men.

All prize winners received champagne glasses with the New Year's Double artwork. I received a pair of champagne glasses on New Year's Eve and another pair on New Year's Day. (It took some careful packing to transport them home safely.)

The finisher's medals employed a clever design. The New Year's Eve medals looked like one half of conventional medal, with an S-shaped edge. The New Year's Day medals looked like the other half, and they were designed to fit together. If you finished races on both days, you also received a "challenge plate" which wrapped around the two smaller medals to form one large medal. The individual medals had magnets to hold them inside the challenge plate.

This is the second straight year I've run at least one New Year's race. It may be the beginning of a tradition.

From Judy Altman

Well, as far as surprises/happenings at the New Years Double...I'm sure that it will come as a shock to all of you who know how FAST a runner David Holmen is, that I BEAT him on New Years Day! Yep, I FINISHED MY HALF MARATHON AT LEAST 10 MINUTES BEFORE HE FINISHED HIS FULL MARATHON!! At the New Years Eve race, David finished his FULL MARATHON before I finished my HALF MARATHON! Sheesh, I'm lucky that they let me use the same course.

I saw lots of Marathon Maniacs and Half Fanatics. Lots of runners and walkers jumped at the opportunity to do back to back races. The races sold out early. The weather was chilly but beautiful with sunshine and blue skies. The course did have the disadvantage of being run on concrete paths, but this was easily alleviated by running along the side of the path on the short cropped winter type grass.

The New Years Double was in Allen, Texas, about 30 minutes or so, north of Dallas. I drove my rental car, guided by GPS, into downtown Dallas to see The Sixth Floor Museum which is the building from which the fatal shots were fired that killed JFK. The museum was well done, and I promise that it felt so weird to view all the photos and time line explanations, after having watched it LIVE on tv as a teenager. The famous "Grassy Knoll" looked so much smaller and less significant than it had on tv. Just strange. Have any of you been there, and if so, what did you think?

The race director of The New Years Double arranged for a free screening of the movie "The Spirit of the Marathon." I had seen it a couple years ago and I had been moved to tears. I found the movie equally moving this second time. If you've never seen it, please try to do so.

Let's see, what else? Well, the close proximity of the Whole Foods to the host hotel was handy! The host hotel was a new La Quinta with a nice free breakfast, and at \$79 per night, it was quite the deal. The race was held at Celebration Park which was a very short 5 or 10 minute drive from the hotel.

So that's about it, sports fans, but if we ever decide to get together over New Years, Dallas may be a good place to party. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

