

Reggae Marathon – December 2010
By David Holmen

From: David Holmen [mailto:d_holmen@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 08, 2010 5:58 PM
To: Diana Burton
Subject: Reggae Marathon

Diana,

Last weekend I ran the Reggae Marathon in Jamaica. If you've never done this race, I highly recommend it.

The race is run in the village of Negril. Most of the village is spread out along Seven Mile Beach. Weather was beautiful for hanging out at the beach, and there are resorts, bars and restaurants all along the beach.

I stayed at a family owned resort called Sea Wind. This resort was conveniently located, but most of the runners I met were staying at a nearby resort called Negril Treehouse. While Sea Wind is a nice resort, if I go back I will stay at Negril Treehouse so I can visit more with other runners.

This race claims to have the best pre-race pasta dinner in the world, and they're not exaggerating. There were several buffet tables with a seemingly endless variety of salads, bread, fruit and pasta dishes. Some of them appeared to be Jamaican dishes.

The race starts at 5:15 AM (about an hour before dawn). On both sides of the road, there were dozens of young men holding torches to provide light for the starting area.

Many races (including the various Rock N Roll marathons) claim to have music all along the course, but I've found most of them to be sporadic at best. This race really DOES have reggae music all along the course. Some was live, most was recorded.

They have water and Gatorade (in bags) every mile. (Surprisingly, the course was marked in miles.) I found it easier to drink from bags than the paper cups that are common in US races. The volunteers were great. I heard from other runners that later in the race when some runners were struggling with rising temperatures, the volunteers always asked every runner if they were OK.

Two things that make the finish line refreshments unique are coconut milk and Red Stripe. For the coconut milk, they slice off the top of a coconut and hand it to you, and you drink right from the coconut. Red Stripe is a locally brewed beer.

Despite the tropical conditions, I was able to finish the race in 3:25:56. I finished 16th overall, but just missed an age group award.

I look forward to seeing you in London, where you can meet my wife, Deb.

Dave