

Zoom! Yah! Yah! In MN by D.Holmen **January 2012**

On January 8, 2012, I ran the Zoom! Yah! Yah! Indoor Marathon in Northfield, MN. This race is run on an indoor track on the campus of St. Olaf College.

To keep the track from getting too crowded, the field is limited to 44 runners. There's a lottery to get in. Initially, I didn't get in, and I was near the bottom of the waiting list. There were so many cancellations, that almost everyone on the waiting list had an opportunity to run. One week before the race, I got an email from Dick Daymont, indicating he was expanding the field to 47 to accommodate the last three runners on the waiting list.

This race marked the triumphant return of Greg Goebel to Northfield after he had a heart attack half way through last year's race. This year Greg finished without incident.

The course was 150 laps on a 282 meter indoor track. The track has three lanes. Lane one is flat, and lanes two and three are slightly banked in the turns. Every 30 minutes, we switched directions.

Each runner had their own lap counter/cheerleader. The lap counters were members of the St. Olaf women's track club. When you're running on a track, and you have someone cheering for you every lap, it's hard not to get carried away and run fast. In addition, each runner wore their name on their back, so we could cheer for each other.

The temperature inside the building was in the upper 50s, so it was surprisingly comfortable for running. Each runner provided their own beverages. There were tables in each corner of the room, so you could grab one of your bottles from one table, drink while running, and then set it down on any of the other tables. This was very convenient, but you had to remember where you last left your bottle.

There was music piped in, and I kept noticing songs with eerily appropriate lyrics (like Dizzy by Tommy Roe or I Get Around by the Beach Boys). I later discovered this was no coincidence. The race directors handpicked the play list. Every song was somehow related to running (or going in circles).

My goal was to run a time under 3:30 if I could. I wasn't sure if I was sufficiently recovered from the New Year's Double to have a good race. I also realized that the measured distance was for lane one, and since, on average, I would be in lane two. Over the course of 150 laps, this adds extra distance. I figure we each ran about one third of a mile extra.

I started a little faster than I planned, but I felt good. I backed off a little, but I knew I was still running faster than the plan. As I neared the halfway point, I decided to run a little more aggressively in the second half. Suddenly I was lapping a few of the same runners who were lapping me in the first half. After pouring it on in the last 30 laps, I finished in 3:22:29. That was good for 2nd place overall.

If you've never done an indoor marathon, you might naturally assume it would be monotonous. In fact, it's a blast. It's a very exciting atmosphere, and there's a great deal of camaraderie. By the end of the race, everyone is family.