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## Gotta Love Races in Europe - a shirt, a medal AND a bottle of wine!

Saturday, April 25, 2015



DH and I packed a lot of variety into this trip to Europe. He was presenting a paper at a conference in the Czech Republic. This just happened to coincide with the Czech National Championship Half Marathon.

I couldn't just be a spectator as the field ran by, could I? Or could I?

There were negative voices in my head.

Out of 11 countries represented, there were no runners from the USA

I had just run a HM 4 weeks ago. I never run 2 distance races so close together.

The oldest female age group was 55 and up. I'm 13 years UP. My daughter is closer to 55 than I am!

The race was at 1pm. I NEVER run in the afternoon, let alone race in the afternoon.

I was still rather jet lagged.

The cut off time was 3 hours. After that you got a DNF.

But the race was part of a sports festival with many shorter races and activities and I wanted to participate. So I picked up my race packet.

Then:

The evening before the race, while walking through the old town square, I slid off a cobblestone and twisted my ankle. That night even after ice and an ace bandage wrap I couldn't even flex my foot or point my toe without pain. I didn't think I would even make it to the starting line.

The next morning my foot felt better but I was glad the race was in the afternoon giving me a few more hours to heal.

Unfortunately, the lovely course through the old city streets had a LOT of cobblestone sections. Since I now had a healthy respect for cobblestones, I decided that I would be really careful in those sections, a

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good place for walk breaks and just enjoy the experience.

The weather was beautiful, about 43 degrees with a light wind.

The crowd was great and everybody was really nice to me as I explained in my ungrammatical Slovak who I was and why I was there. Slovak is close enough to Czech that I can manage to be understood in both countries.

My only problem was that most of the time I had no idea of my pace. I was running easily and felt great. The bulk of the field was gone, but there were still people behind me. I didn't expect mile markers, but the only distance markers I saw were at 5 km intervals.

By 15K I was pretty sure my time would be a personal worst, but strangely enough I didn't care. I was caught up in the moment. The spectators were yelling encouragement and I responded to them all in the best Czech-Slovak I could think of.

The finish was through the old medieval town gate on guess what - big thick, well worn cobblestones. I started walking and then reconsidered. What the heck, gotta run it in. And I did. And I didn't hurt myself.

Yes it was a personal worst 2:28:03, but that's 32 minutes ahead of the dreaded DNF.

I felt great, like I could have kept running. How often do you finish in a setting like this?

The city gate is in the distance and the monument is in gratitude for the end of the Black Plague.



Then after a quick shower, it was off to the airport for the rest of our vacation. More on that in days to come.

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**THIS2WILPASS**

Wow...congrats on the finish...I admire your...hutzpa... 😊 I know I spelt that wrong  
2199 days ago



**RATHPAT**

What a great experience! I love Prague and would have loved to run a race through it, but probably not a HM. I haven't attempted that much distance yet! Great gift of wine! I think they give wine for the HM here in our city of Nimes, France. I only did the 5k so I got jars of tapenade. We got to run into the old Roman colloseum to cross the finish line accompanied by a brass band! I like that you got to run through the old city gate! Did you run over the Charles Bridge?  
2218 days ago





**MARYJEANSL**

Good for you. A personal worst is still infinitely better than all those still lying on their couches. And hey, I hope you enjoy(ed) the wine!  
2234 days ago



Comment edited on: 4/29/2015 5:41:43 PM



**CAROLCRC**

Enjoy the wine! It really is a different experience racing over there.  
2234 days ago



**BOILHAM**

Love your spirit and tenacity doing this run! What an accomplishment. Thanks for posting on my spark page so I could find this blog and read it. I'm so glad you mentioned that I have inspired you in some small way. Although I constantly say how I do this for me, there is a huge boost from those who tell me I've inspired them. Who knew an old coot like myself could ever be an inspiration? And yet, I'm told this all the time.  
Thanks for a great blog, and I'm glad the ankle injury was not severe enough to sideline you entirely.

2235 days ago



**KANSASROSE67**

I love it that you did this...way to step out of your comfort zone! What a great experience. Have a wonderful time on the rest of your trip.  
2236 days ago




**CHANGINGHORSES**

That is awesome! Boy I would have been nervous under those circumstances too. Good for you having the courage and confidence to run this race! That is what running does for us!  
2237 days ago



**WALLAHALLA**

How  You definitely have hero status in my eyes!  
2237 days ago



**CD4114015**

Absolutely fantastic blog...but sorry about the ankle but you did SUPER. SO glad to see your blog today and will be glad to see more of your wonderful blogs and pictures! So keep 'em coming and have a super great time!



2237 days ago



**PRNCSCUP1-2FULL**

You don't know me, but I am so impressed! Impressed with your attitude, your willingness to join in and just do it, your running after hurting yourself on the cobblestones and well, just everything!! I am just so impressed. The only Slovak I know are curse words taught to me by both of my grandmothers! so, me running and shouting back to the spectators may have gotten my butt kicked! Congrats! Enjoy your vacation and enjoy the wine, the shirt and the medal! Congrats again!  
2237 days ago



**FORZACHANDMATT**

Wow - that is so fantastic!!  
2237 days ago



**PHEBESS**

Wonderful! You are such an inspiration - probably to all those Czechs, too!!!

You have a great stash of prizes, but not as fabulous as the memories will be!  
2237 days ago



**DR1939**

What fun. BTW, I've collected Plague Monument pictures from all over Europe and even one from India. They fascinate me.  
2237 days ago



**MISCHAKEO**

What a great race. It sounded like an exciting adventure and one that you thoroughly enjoyed.  
2237 days ago



**TERI-RIFIC**

I'm sorry you hurt your ankle, but what a great decision to run anyway. What a fantastic





experience. I can't think of a better way to get a personal worst!  
2238 days ago



**SUNNYWBL**

How  wonderful!  
2238 days ago




**DOVESEYES**

Fantastic have a great holiday.  
2238 days ago



**PHOENIX1949**

  
2238 days ago





**SUBMOM2**

That's fantastic! Good for you!!  
2238 days ago




**ONEKIDSMOM**

Woo-hoo! And FYI, that time is respectable in MY book. I finished the back half of the double half Mary in 2013 in 2:28 or thereabouts... so you have my kudos... especially given the  
   
cobblestones!  
2238 days ago




**HOLLYM48**

I am so impressed! Wow, what an awesome run! Who cares about the time, you did it with an ankle that wasn't at its best and under a few other interesting circumstances.  
  
You are an inspiration! Way to go! That is just pure awesome!  
2238 days ago



**GINIEMIE**

Okay, you are over the top. I'm glad you went, glad you managed not to hurt yourself worse and that you finished the race. Worst or best you did something and in a country rife with cobblestone. I personally have had quite a few twisted ankles due to cobblestone so I know the risks. I am proud of you and your effort. You deserve a prize and your vacation enjoy.  




2238 days ago

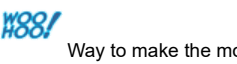




**WATERMELLEN**

That's absolutely fantastic. What a great sport you are!! Just says so much about you that you made it to the start AND the finish. I'm betting no shirt, medal or bottle of wine was better earned!!  
2238 days ago



**ALICIA363**

   
Way to make the most of an opportunity!  on your personal worst finish, and I hope the ankle continues to feel okay and get back to 100% quickly.  
2238 days ago



**JANETRW50**

WOW!  
2238 days ago

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