

## Jacksonville Bank Marathon 2014



It has been a while since I had a really great race, but Jacksonville was one of them! Since I had been on the road for a week, living in a hotel and eating in restaurants, I did not have high hopes for a great finish, but I knew it would be fun with lots of fellow Marathon Maniacs and it was my 20th lifetime race of marathon or longer distance.



Pouring rain, but beautiful  
Photo credit: Jurgen Englerth

A few days before the race, my husband checked the weather forecast and told me, in a very grave tone, that it would be in the upper 60's (F) and raining. Clearly he is not a runner because that is an awesome forecast for a marathon! Near the beginning of the race it was a bit warm, but I never felt over heated or cold, just excited, it was awesome! Several times we got a full on Florida downpour, but once you are soaked with sweat, rain water, or both, it hardly makes a difference to get soaked again when you are warm. I did have a bit more chafing than usual in some pretty unpredictable places, but nothing that was

a problem during the race. The one down side being the weight added to our shoes from running through ankle deep water.

Jacksonville is a truly beautiful city and the race course did not disappoint. We ran through gorgeous residential areas of multi-million dollar homes, lined with ancient trees that were hanging with Spanish moss. Often, I am so focused in races that I hardly look at where I am, but this time I enjoyed the views immensely. Although there were quite a few turns, it was a pancake flat course and is a Boston Qualifier so a good one for folks with an eye on qualifying.



Photo credit: Jurgen Englerth

Of course, one of the best parts of the race for me was the Marathon Maniacs! Being able to look ahead and see 3 MM singlets at once was such fun! When you see that shirt, you know you will find a good attitude, a smile, and all the encouragement you need.



Jurgen himself! It was awesome to meet him in person finally, but better to beat him to the finish line :-D

Once again, I used my Galloway style run/walk with a 4 minute run and 1 minute walk. I spotted a couple of official Galloway pace groups, but when they run they run too fast for me so I stuck to my own pace and intervals and it worked really well. Jacksonville was my 4<sup>th</sup> fastest marathon to date and my second fastest for the year (my all-time personal record having been set in March.) I have tried dropping to a 3/1 interval, which is closer to the interval recommend by Jeff Galloway, but it just slows me down and does not help me recover any faster.

My last couple of marathons have been plagued with a weird soreness on the top of my ankle, but I seem to have resolved it as there was no tenderness there at all this time. Matter of fact, I was only a little sore from the race and the soreness was spread evenly over my body, including my core muscles. That is my next focus area, abs and back! I have been terrible with my training the last few months, particularly my core training, so it is time to get my plank time back up and start hitting the stability ball more often.



Loads of MM's and HF's on the course  
Photo credit: Jurgen Englerth

The main reason this race went particularly well was my mental state. I was happy to be there, happy with all the people around me, rested, and excited to be running. Normally, miles 13-20 are brutal and it is all I can do to keep myself moving, but this time I hit mile 15 and realized that I still felt great physically *and* I was still in a really positive place mentally. That is highly unusual for me! The second half went so well I almost managed my first negative split for the halves (missed it by 8 seconds, LOL.)



Ahhhh, warm rain!

It was a ton of fun and I'm primed and excited for my next marathon in Malta. I was supposed to run a January marathon in England, but life got in the way and I am taking a pass. As much as I hate to miss a scheduled race, it will allow me the time to build my paces back up for Malta and maybe hit a new PR. More important is my need to focus for Two Oceans in April. I have a lot of running to do!



Jacksonville loves it's runners!  
Photo credit: Jurgen Englerth