

Heading down out of town was fun because there were a lot of people there. The legs felt really good – I've never had a problem running off the bike and I didn't have a problem then. For the better part of the first three miles, it's downhill or flat. The downhill really forces you to get into a good rhythm. I got to mile one and there was a big party going on in a house on my right hand side. They were playing some Creedence Clearwater Revival and singing and shouting and as I was running by I sang the chorus to the song with them and of course they all freaked out and started cheering louder. I was even in tune – imagine that! I carried on with my 4:00 run, 1:00 walk plan – I'd found this to work good in training as it would help me to moderate my core temperature and allow my run intervals to be at a slightly faster pace (which felt much better on my knees). When I got to River Road (after the two big downhills), I was about 2.5 miles in and feeling pretty good. I continued to hammer away. At this point, I'd probably consumed part of a flask of gel, but I knew I was going to need something \*different\* to get this "furry animal" feeling out of my mouth. It wasn't the taste – just a strange sort of dryness. I drank some water and figured I would eventually try some Gatorade. It was all going pretty smoothly. It is a beautiful road – it rolls a bit from about miles 3 to 5 then levels out to the turn-around. The aid stations were absolutely awesome – people out there were wonderful. I got to the turn-around (which is at about 5.75 miles by my calculation) and started to head back. I had seen Richard – the differential was probably about 18 minutes. He was having a great race and smiling every step of the way. Hell, we both were!!

At that point I was walking a little more, but still doing ok. The legs felt good, tired but good. Everything was pretty uneventful. As I came back into town, I went up the hill at mile 9, walked the hill, and started running again on the flats. The people were very supportive at what is the hardest hill on the course – definitely something to walk! The Buffalo Triathlon Club was at the corner before you turn up towards the last piece of the course. They were very cool. I got back into town and headed out Mirror Lake Drive, and everything was feeling great. The out and back is pretty flat. I made the turn at 12ish miles and headed back. It's tough finishing the loop – and instead of heading to the right (towards the finish), you head to the left for lap number 2!!

I hit the end of the first loop around 7:37pm – a nice evening to run. My first half split was a 2:47:34, which put me on pace for a 5:34:00 marathon. I actually seriously thought ok, I am at 2:47ish, I know I can run the same pace (or close), I should be able to do 3:00, and if so, I was pretty darn close to my goal.