

From the Other Side

This weekend I was able to go the Berryman Marathon and 50 miler not as a runner but as a crew for my wife Stacey. Stacey did not just have me as her only person crewing for her. The crew also included Ryder (5 ½) and Ella (almost 3). We started our adventure on Friday with a 5+ hour drive from Kansas City to the middle of nowhere Missouri. The kids fell asleep in the car and we were lucky to move them into the cabin around 10:30 still sleeping. Now time for Stacey and me to get a little sleep before our 5:00 wakeup call. Stacey was nervous in the morning, but knew she would finish. We were out the door with both kids dressed and ready to go by 5:45. They were excited to go and see Mommy race. Stacey is usually my crew with kids during races but now it was my turn to return the favor. If Stacey is not crewing for me she is usually running an aid station at one of the Trail Nerd races and if you have been through her aid stations you know I was going to have to provide top notch care to match her.



The before photo

We pulled into the parking lot around 6:00 and were able to see some of the Nerds and familiar faces and then they were off at 6:30. Ryder and Ella were cheering “go Mommy” and Ryder was asking if she was going to win the race. I had to tell him probably not but she was going to do her best. She came back by the start/finish area after 1 ½ miles and we cheered some more. Then the crew was off to the 9.33 mile aid station. We had all of our crewing supplies in the back of the Element ready for anything the day could throw at us:

1. chairs
2. snacks
3. drinks
4. patience
5. more snacks
6. bubbles
7. buckets for collecting rocks and other activities shown below in photos
8. camera to document the fun
9. 2 light sabers for epic duels
10. and last but not least, all of Stacey’s supplies to get her to the finish line

We set up our chairs on the side of the road with our breakfast and OJ to hurry up and wait for Mommy. It was fun seeing all of the runners going through the aid station. Some would blast through in 30 seconds and others seemed to treat the aid stations like mini parties, having some drinks, food, and joking around. Stacey came through a little sooner

than I expected and was looking and feeling great. The kids were so excited to see her, I had to hold them back to let her get her food and drink from the tables. I was happy to see that she was running with Christy, a Trail Nerd from Lawrence. We cheered a little more as they ran down the trail and now we are off to the next aid station at 16+ miles.

We spent a lot of our time at this aid station at the water crossing playing with the sand, throwing rocks, watching runners charge through the water, and watching some unsuccessfully trying to keeping their feet dry. Ryder made up a fun game of telling the runners to watch out for alligators, crocodiles, giant squid, sharks, and jelly fish. We had a longer wait at this aid station so we played bubbles, catch, light sabers and Ella ate her weight in grapes. Stacey and Christy came into the aid station together again and still running strong. I filled up her waist pack with water and Cliff Blocks while the kids jumped all around her. Ryder pretended to change her tires just like he does at my races and Ella just wanted to jump up and down yelling “Mommy-Mommy- Mommy”.

Playing in the sand and helping Mommy at the aid station



This is the point where I started to worry about Stacey, not if she would finish but how she would feel over the next 10 miles. Stacey does not get many miles in each week because of kids, work and my own little running habit. She just enjoys being on the trails in places like the Berryman and competing with herself and completing the distance without worrying about place or time. This is something I need to do more often while training and racing, to enjoy myself and relax.

At the 20+ mile aid station the runners, aid station workers, and kids are getting a little slap happy. I think the photo says it all.



Bucket heads and racing Mommy into the aid station

What a proud father I am of my bucket head kids. We played in the rocks, car, walked a little on the trail, and were starting to get a little tired and crabby. The kids were tired and crabby, not me, of course. Christy came through alone this time with Stacey about 10 minutes back. The day was getting a little warm and Stacey went through 5+ cups of Coke and Gatorade while I filled her waist pack to get her through the last 6 miles. This was the point where I knew Ella was getting tired because she did not want her Mommy to go. Stacey tricked her with a little go team cheer and she was off with Ella happy. Stacey was still having fun even after 20 miles and so were the kids and I.

The journey between this aid station and the start/finish was my favorite. The gas light was on so we took the 10 minute drive to the only gas station around and both kids fell asleep 2 minutes out of the aid station. We pulled up to the pump and we have to pre-pay inside. So I tried to pull them both out sleeping on my shoulders and pay but that was a joke. Now after an 8 minute power nap, they were refreshed and ready to go. Gas, turkey sandwich, and Red Bull and we are off to the finish line.

Now I know how Stacey feels when she has to wait for me, not fun. You just wait and have no control over the situation. The kids were still having fun and we were able to see some familiar faces like Ben, Vicki, Greg, and Pat. Ryder and Ella had a little more space to play at the finish line and Ella played with Vicki and Ryder played with Pat's son T-bone.



Ella using the force

I think Vicki fed Ella about 2 pounds worth of gummy bears which made her very happy and T-bone and Ryder learned that when you are at a trail run you just pull your pants down and pee where ever you want.

Stacey finished in a little over 7 hours with a wild sprint finish fending off another runner. The competitive side of her is something I do not get to see very often. Ryder thought it was cool because she beat a boy.

DONE!!!!!!!



We hung out for a while and watched Tony and Rick finish with two great times in the 50 miler. I thought seeing them finish would have made me wish I was racing today, but no. I really enjoyed my day of crewing for Stacey with my kids. Later in the day we went back to the cabin and all Ryder and Ella wanted to do was race and pretend they were running marathons. Ryder, Ella, and I are already making plans for next year as the crew for Stacey at Berryman.

Future trail runners and the crew



