

Mind the Ducks, May 12, 2012- Race Report- Kelly Nash
Beer at mile 50 All done! 60.78 miles!

Every morning I wake up before anyone else in the house, make my coffee, sit in my comfy chair and read a short devotion from my book "Grace for the Moment" by Max Lucado. On Saturday, May 12, the reading was "I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize for which God called me." Philippians 3:14.

May 12, 2012. Mind the Ducks- a 12 hour ultra marathon that goes around a ½ mile loop around a duck pond by the Seneca Park Zoo. I ran this race last year, and not unlike the experience of childbirth, I don't remember the pain and struggles of the day, only the good parts: The fun atmosphere, the super cool runners, the awesome volunteers, always near my stuff..... It was fun! I even won the women's masters division, finishing 62.97 miles! So when I was thinking about races for 2012, Mind the Ducks was a definite!

Race day morning, I'm sitting in my chair, eating oatmeal and reading my book thinking.... Wow.... Here it is, its time. I have been nursing a headache for a few days, the stress from work had my TMJ acting up, and then again? Really? A visit from the period fairy? So not fair!!! Whatever, been there, done that... hand over the Tylenol!

I'm NOT an organized person whatsoever!!! But for this year's race, I was soooooo good! I had 4 little drawers packed: one with gu, powerbars, little packs of almonds, and pretzels. Another drawer filled with fresh socks, shorts, shirts. Another one with first aide supplies, more Tylenol, band aides, body glide, antibacterial ointment, and another with all my feminine supplies. I was prepared!!

Chris came with me in the morning to set up my tent while I got my bib number- 45- and goody bag. I looked around at the other runners and recognized many of them from last year. I was getting excited and was ready to start.

As the race started, I found myself talking to a runner with a Sagahunda sweatshirt on. He had run the Letchworth trail marathon the year before and was registered to run it this year as well. I said to him, you realize that race is in 2 weeks, right? yep. Wow, that is a really tough course, I had done it 2 years ago and it is hard!!!! I ended up meeting 2 other runners that were also doing the Letchworth trail race. Couldn't believe it!

As I ran around the pond the first couple times I was talking to a runner about racing and music...we were both bass players! Very nice guy. Then I met Jim Miner. What an interesting man! He is 63 years old and just last year he ran 19 full marathons and 11 Ultra's!!!! He was running a 5k the next day even, and Segahunda! We chatted on about running, dating and traveling and it was great, though I found I was probably running a bit quicker than I should have been.

The sun was out and the air started to get VERY warm!!! It was really affecting me, and I think it was getting to many of the runners. Here we were, about 3 hours in and I saw my name at the top of the women's leader board. Well that can't be right, must be hallucinating! I choked down a gu pack and some Gatorade and thought that might help, but I wasn't very hungry at all.

I had some friends stop in to say hi and run a few laps with me. When Joe got there, it was perfect timing! I needed a distraction, it was getting so warm! He ran with me for a bit and the conversation was a perfect get-a-way for me. My fellow No Boundaries coaches, Sean and Jill also were there with a smile and lots of encouragement...meant so much to me.

As the day went on, my name moved to 2nd on the board. Very strange, but I felt so much better there. I've been running for 6 years and I still struggle with the mental part of running. I kept telling myself I wasn't good enough to be at the top of that board. Self sabotage.

My mother came and stayed for most of the rest of the day. It was so nice having her there!!! And my friend Jill, what a blessing she is!!! Between she and my mom, they helped bring me supplies to the potty, refilled my Gatorade, walked with me when I needed to walk, and pushed me to run when I needed to run. Jill even brought me IPA beer as my body was craving it!!!! I was so happy to have that

first glass!

It was at about the 8th hour I came around the bend (funny, the entire race is a 'bend') and one of the volunteers looked at me and said "your first female." That's impossible, I thought. I know I'm not at the top. I was going to take a walking break at that point, but I decided to keep running....came back around again and there I was, back up at the top of the leaderboard! What a scary place to be! I just knew I wouldn't stay there, I couldn't, I'm not that good of a runner. I started to cry, but no tears were coming out. I tried to eat, but I could only choke down 2 almonds. My skin was white with salt and I was feeling a bit out of it. I even went to the porta potty and sat right down. I thought to myself, there is a nice cool breeze coming from the hole here, and I kinda like it. Yeah, I'm gross and I'm out of it! I was happy to see my bandmates come. Jeff, Scott and Justin came and set up the keyboard, cajon and guitar and the music was invigorating. I smiled Then running with my good friend Jill, I tried crying again, but nothing, no tears. When I came back around the medical/food tent, the volunteers called me in and said I needed to eat a Twinkie and take 2 salt tablets, and when I come back around again, take 2 more salt tabs. What? No, thanks, I don't eat Twinkies and I don't take salt tablets. Oh yes, you need them. This scared me...I must have looked really bad! Jill assured me that yes, I needed the salt tabs and I needed the calories, so I put my faith in those around me and ate ½ the treat and had the salt tabs. I felt much better after that!

I still didn't feel I deserved to be at the top of the board. I noticed at the 9th hour there was one woman named Deb just one lap behind me. I wondered who she was. Then I saw Rebecca's name creeping up too. I knew she was about 18 years younger than me and I knew she had more left in the tank than I did, so at that point, I decided I'd be third female in. During one of these many laps, I came up upon a woman who looked fresh. I asked how she was doing. She felt great and was happy she'd be making her goal of completing the distance of 2 marathons. I shared that there was someone creeping up on the board behind me and wondered who it was. She just said "Its me." Ahhhhh... This is Deb! She said she was going to stop after hitting her goal. I thought...great! But I knew that wouldn't happen. It would be really stupid of her to stop if she makes it to the top! She said she and her friends were wondering who this "Kelly" was ...and as we came around the food tent, she yelled out "Its ok, we're friends now!" I laughed and then told her it was time for my beer break. Really? Does that help? Yes it helps!!! I'll see you around And I did it. I actually stepped off the course for my 50 mile beer break. This is where she lapped me and took the lead. Self sabotage all right! In hindsight? Really stupid! After that 10th hour, I was then 2nd on the board. But I knew Rebecca. I saw her run last year and remembered how strong she stayed at the end. And here she was again this year, a big comeback, looking so strong and getting those laps in. She looked great! I on the other hand, did not!

It was into the 11th hour, I knew I'd never break my record from last year, but I knew I'd make it to 60 miles. Chris and the kids, my father in law and my nephew came back and their company was awesome! Chris ran and walked a couple laps with me and the kids were spraying me with their water fans. Then Andy, another fellow No Bo coach came. Was so happy to see him! Here I was.... Coming up on my 60th mile.... Mom joined me, I was tired and decided I had plenty of time, I could walk this one. So we walked, and then the kids met us at about ¾ around the pond and we all ran in together. I was so happy!!! But everyone at the finish said I had enough time for one more!!! Ok, fine, so there was Andy, in his bare feet ready to run the last lap with me. We ran around together and I felt good. I think just knowing it was going to be my last lap made the pain and crazies in my head go away.

Running through the finish was awesome!!! I had completed 124 laps and was done!

We went in the lodge area for some post race food and awards. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that Deb, who was in my age group, won the overall female award, completing 3 laps more than me. And Rebecca won her age group completing 2 laps more than me. That left me winning the masters group! So I still won a trophy and a certificate to receive a free pair of Newton Running Shoes! YEAH! Lesson learned.... Believe! I need to believe in my friends and family when they tell me they love and support me. I need to believe in strangers when they tell me I look like.... Well.... Crap and need to

take salt tabs. But most of all, I need to believe in myself. I need to know that yes, I am a good runner and yes, I deserve to give it all I have. Bring on Mind the Ducks 2013!