

# Admiration or jealousy?

By Charles Clines

There's no doubt one has to admire the stamina and zealousness of anyone who competed in the Too Hot To Handle 15K on Saturday (July 19) morning at White Rock Lake in Dallas, then went to Trinity Park in Fort Worth for the midnight start of the El Scorcho Dos and ran either a 25K or 50K. I'm not sure there's not even some jealousy because just making one of those events would have been enough for me.

Anyway, Kim Gray, 34, was one who ran the 15K and the 25K and she was among those quoted about the race in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. With a midnight start, the newspaper apparently decided it was unusual enough to send a reporter and photographer. Gray told the reporter that she had considered running the 50K, but then decided that might be too much running. For another perspective on the run, Lake Grapevine Runners and Walkers president Thomas "T.O." Okazaki submitted an article for this website and it's posted on the [Side Trips](#) page.

Of course, some might question the sanity of anyone who would do both. In fact, Disney has an award for such feats, appropriately called the Goofy award. One can "earn" that by competing in the Disney Half Marathon on one day and then competing in the Disney Marathon the next day. The Goofy award will go with the Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse awards earned for completed the two races. But then, that's a relatively small feat compared to some who do the Sunmart 50-miler one day, then come back to run the White Rock Marathon the next. Trust me, I'm not envious. I hurt just thinking about it.

Not everyone was happy on Saturday at the Too Hot to Handle. When an event runs out of water, that seems to upset participants on a hot morning when they're trying to complete a 9.3-mile run.

Race director Bob Wallace said there were numerous reasons for the lack of water and cups, and here is his response on the RunOn! website:

"Despite closing race day registration, the event had a record field (almost 2,500). Unfortunately, the event ran out of water and/or cups at the 3, 4.5, 6-mile points. These aid stations were restocked, but not quickly enough for all the participants. The reason for the shortages were numerous and included consumption by non-race participants, logistical problems restocking the stations due to construction on West Lawther, runners using multiple cups to dump water on themselves and poor planning by the race director. The event proceeds are donated to the Protective Animal League, a non-profit organization composed entirely of volunteers and committed to improving the health and welfare of cats, kittens, dogs, and puppies. To protect the donation to PAL, the event will not refund participants who feel dissatisfied by their Too Hot to Handle experience, but will offer a gift card to Run On! Runners should contact the event by emailing [toohotthandle@runontexas.com](mailto:toohotthandle@runontexas.com)."

Bob Wallace  
Race Director

If anyone knows Bob, you can be sure he is as upset as anyone (maybe more so) by the snafu.

To provide what it was like at the race, here is one e-mail that summarizes the situation:

``I have just returned from participating in the Too Hot To Handle 15K. I was going to e-mail the event coordinators to let them know how much fun the event was and thank them for registering me under my requested number (which I still appreciate and am very thankful for). The event was well organized in the morning and a festive announcer kept things going. The announcer kept urging participants to take advantage of the water stops because, as the event name implies, this is a hot event. He announced this over and over and said there were water stops every 1.5 miles and to take advantage of them because safety is a priority.

I am not a fast runner, I was probably rolling along at an 11-minute pace. The first water stop is always crowded, so I was going to skip that one anyway. At mile 3, I thought for safety's sake, I should get some water. There was no water in cups on the table like usual. There were people scrambling for cups, sticking their hands into the water jug and scooping out dirty water! I needed water, so I too grabbed a cup and put my hand in the bucket and scooped out dirty water.

Then at mile 4.5, it WAS UNACCEPTABLE! There was a small stack of cups and many hands reaching for cups and dipping into the last few inches of water in the last bucket of water!! Dirty water, dirty sweaty hands, and anyone after me probably didn't get any water!! And there were at least a 100 or so people behind me!! Then I hear one of the volunteers say "We're out of cups" then "We're out of clean cups" and as I walked past the table, I saw a young man with rubber gloves on getting the uncrushed cups OUT OF THE TRASH CAN!!! It appeared that these cups were going from the trash can back to the table and were being given to runners!!! This IS NOT ACCEPTABLE!! The water stop at mile 6 had NO CUPS and was pouring water into people's hands!!! The last 2 water stops had water and cups, but for some people, making it to mile 7.5 before they got any water was too late!

When people register and pay money to participate in an organized and supported event, it should be just that. Organized and Supported. I have not been a runner for long, but I have attended more than 100 events. I think this was my first Run On event. My friends told me that it was a fun run (they did the 5K last year), so I thought I would try it. As of right now, I don't think I will ever participate in this event again if this is how it is 'supported.' This was the worst water situation at any event I have attended. This event is touted as a HOT event. That is part of the novelty of the event. The coordinators know how many people sign up and know how many people will be there. They also know that this is a hot event and that people will need extra water. They named the event "Too Hot To Handle," so I'm assuming that they are aware that July in Texas is a rather warm month. And people running 9.3 miles around a lake in July are going to need water. Lots of water.

What happened? Where was the water? Where were the cups? Who dropped the ball? Is this the situation every year? The hundreds of sweaty hands in buckets of dirty water and the LACK OF WATER on the course were health hazards to those that participated in the event. I am very disappointed in the 'support' at this event. I hope that the coordinators apologize to runners, and volunteers left on the course with no water to give to thirsty, hot runners."

Sincerely Disappointed,

Amber Drake

Keller, TX

Other events have had their share of misfortunes, too. It's not easy putting on an event and there are many people to rely on. Stuff can happen, and does. Sometimes participants don't realize some of the goofs, and other times, unfortunately, they are glaring and turn an event into an unpleasant experience. Oftentimes, the slower participants get the raw end of mistakes on the course. Even at ``big" events, such as the Dublin Marathon. One year, some of the slower

participants I had coached and gone with as part of the Arthritis Foundation's Joints In Motion, complained about lack of water at some of the later stops. Not having water during a hot 15K is bad enough, but not having water in the latter stages of a marathon is even worse.

But stuff does happen, and I usually give an event a second chance before I write it off. Maybe that's what Amber and some other unhappy Too Hot To Handle runners will decide, too. I'd bet the water will be flowing next year.