

During a drought, it's hard to remember just how cold it can get here...like in 2001

Many veteran runners know and have read just how the Lake Benbrook Half Marathon in January seems to be an omen for inclement weather. Take 2001, for one of the more extreme examples. Please, as Rodney Daingerfield might have said.

The day before the race, which I was covering for the Star-Telegram, was a nice, sunny 68-degree day. Short-sleeves and golf were the order of the day for many. Some of those planning to run Benbrook might have been wondering if the next day might be a little warm to run 13.1 miles. Remembering the history of this race should have put those worries to rest. They definitely were when they awoke the next morning and saw that the temperature had plummeted into the 30s and there was a bone-chilling rain falling.



I was thankful that all I had to do was write about the race and had not registered to run it. Yet, when I pulled up at the race site, unbelievably there was a handful of people registering for the race, including my son-in-law. I was ready to administer an IQ test. He, as others, was training for Cowtown and this was an important race to judge his conditioning. I could already tell him. Cold and going to get colder. Others who had registered were gladly waiting inside their cars until it was almost time for the race to start. I grabbed my umbrella, trudged down to the start and was amazed by the diehards who did show up. The participants were dressed more like those in the Iditarod rather than a road race. After they started, I rushed back to the warmth of my car to wait for them to finish.

Unfortunately for the participants, they ran with the wind on the out-and-back course and many were discovering they had overdressed and started shedding jackets and shirts along the way. Eventual winner Agustin Hernandez didn't have that problem. This was before he had moved to Dallas and he had arrived from Mexico in an effort to win the \$150 bonus for besting the course record of 1:09:44. Agustin, who had won the Cowtown Marathon in 1999, had brought only shorts and a shirt. Once he warmed up on the outgoing leg, he was feeling OK. Then he and the others reached the halfway point and turned around to head back to the finish. Have you ever jumped into icy, cold water after being in a sauna? The feeling was about the same, according to many of the runners. The tailwind now was a very cold headwind. Where, or where were those jackets and shirts?

When Agustin finished, he never stopped. Rather he continued running to the comfort of his car. I've never seen such a miserably cold bunch of runners shivering through the finish line, including my son-in-law who had this blue hue about him.

Agustin had no chance for the record and finished in 1:13:59.

One of the runners who sort of shrugged off the cold was women's winner Gina Lubrano-Jaggers of Grand Prairie. She had shed a long-sleeved cotton shirt and a fleece jacket on the outward run. She had only a singlet to brave the cold on the way back.

“It didn't really matter,” she said with a shrug. “It was going to be cold anyway.” She finished in 1:34:13, well off the women's mark of 1:20:45.