

Traffic jams only slowed, not stopped women's winner at Friends of the River Run

Fiona Green, 43, wasn't the only runner who was becoming frustrated as slow traffic from her home in Keller to the Friends of the River Run in University Park Village was threatening to make her late for the start on Thursday (Oct. 25). But she was going to defend her women's title and was becoming antsy about reaching there on time.

She and her husband, Mirek, left their home at 5 p.m., which they thought would give them plenty of time to reach the race that started at 6:30 p.m.

But not only was Hwy 377 bogged down because of faulty traffic lights, traffic wasn't any better the rest of the way. Then when they finally exited onto University Drive, traffic was slowed, she said, to a crawl because of construction. But she managed to make it with a whole two minutes to spare after she jumped out of their car near Botanic Garden while Mirek drove the rest of the way. She ran between cars on the medians to the event's site.

After obtaining her bib and chip, Fiona made a quick potty stop and arrived at the starting line with her heart rate already in race mode. So, when 3.4-mile race started, she was off and running and won the women's division for the second consecutive year.

Fiona said she was so stressed by the ordeal that she took off like a cannon. "I ended up having a great race, even winning first place female although, admittedly, many people were there just for the food...I was lined up with a woman wearing sandals and a headlamp, and with her bib number pinned to her back."

Fiona finished in 21:49.6, about 12 seconds slower than last year, but won by almost a minute over masters winner Ruthie Tate, who finished third overall in the women's division last year.

Mirek almost made it, but was still in a potty when the gun sounded. He dashed through the parking lot, leaped over a hedge, crossed the timing mat and passed about 500 participants in his quest for a PR. Fiona said he improved his time from last year by about a minute.

"I think he was afraid there would be no beer left," she said.

Fiona won her second Leddy's belt buckle, which she says are gorgeous, and said she probably set a PR of eating because of all the food available from different restaurants.

In the men's division, another 43-year-old won as Ken Hall also repeated.