

DEAR PACER JIM: EMAILS FROM RUNNERS AT 2016 ILLINOIS Marathon

Hi! Just wanted to let you know that today was my first run with a pacer—it was great. I ran with the 2-hour / 9:09 mi group. Nice steady pace and lots of stories to listen to when I wanted, or just run and enjoy not needing to worry about my pace. Great pacer. He made my race. He even encouraged and positively pushed us to leave him so we could beat the pace if we wanted in those last few miles. Thanks!!!

Kate (Bib: Kathryn- lady decked out in Illini orange and blue)

Dear Marathon Pacing,

Pacer Ron was all that and a bag of chips at the Illinois Marathon as the 9:43 pacer. I only ran the half with him, but the 12 miles before the split were a rock steady 9:43. My splits, bib 5085, reflect that. He gave words of encouragement, knew everyone in the group's name, and thanked every volunteer. He even knew some of the local sights, even though he was not a local himself. I highly recommend him as a pacer again! Please pass this along to him.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gavril

Hi Jim,

I just wanted to email you to let you know that Ron did a great job with those of us shooting for 3:40 in the Illinois Marathon this past weekend. His pace was spot on, and he was really encouraging to all of us. I dropped back with about two miles to go as I couldn't hold the pace quite long enough, but still beat my prior best by nearly 15 minutes. I very much appreciate having pacers at the races. I've only done two marathons so far and am looking forward to many more. It's great having someone experienced to run with and provide the pace, wisdom, and encouragement to keep us reaching our goals.

Brian Wills

Jim,

I just wanted to send my thanks for Ryan, the 4-hour pacer, for the marathon on Saturday. I have been chasing my 4-hour marathon for 4 years now, and I just hadn't been able to pull it off. When I saw the weather reports for Saturday, I was thinking that it wasn't going to happen. My training partner and I started off with the 4-hour pace group in hopes that they would stay on pace for the whole marathon. Ryan was amazing. He was energetic, encouraging, interesting, and kept me motivated for the entire marathon. He was right on pace for every mile no matter what was going. When we got to mile 20, my entire body hurt and the pace seemed much harder than it was at the beginning of the race. Ryan kept talking to us, even though I was only able to grunt a little at that pace.

When we finally got to mile 26, I was able to run a little bit ahead at the very end but Ryan was right behind me yelling my name for the finish. My official time was 3:59:01. This was a PR for me by over 7 minutes. I know that I would not have been able to achieve it without the support and encouragement of Ryan. I will forever be grateful to Ryan for helping me get my first (but hopefully not last) 4-hour marathon.

Kara Reckrey

Dear Jim:

This was my second marathon, and my first one was 26-plus years ago. With the conditions being what they were, I wanted to run sub-4:30, and with Megan's help I was a few seconds under 4:26. She was like a metronome out there and did a tremendous job. Please tell her how much I appreciate her efforts!

Doug Carroll

Dear Jim,

I wanted to leave positive feedback about my experience running with pacer Megan at the Illinois Marathon just over a week ago. I smashed my previous PR by nearly 20 minutes, largely thanks to Megan. She kept us positive and right on pace even when it was cold and rainy. Around mile 18, she gave me advice and encouragement on how to race ahead and finish ahead of my time goal. With her strategic advice, I did finish faster than even my stretch goal. Thanks, Megan! I'm very appreciative of your pace team. Thanks for helping so many of us at the Illinois Marathon!

Cheers,

Kate