

Cheering at a runDisney Event: A runDisney Event Article

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Not long after we booked our recent spring vacation, I realised that while we would be in Disney, one of the many runDisney events throughout the year would be taking place.

Immediately I knew that I wanted to do whatever I could to support the runners taking part. I considered going to watch the 10k, which would be at Epcot, and would be taking place the morning after we landed in Orlando. Certainly, getting up early enough wouldn't be a problem for us, with the jet lag from a nine-and-a-half hour transatlantic flight, and indeed we were up at 3:15 am. It was a very surreal experience to hear Disney buses at that hour! However, as we'd be moving from the Treehouse Villas, where we spent our first night, over to Bay Lake Tower, Epcot was a little bit out of the way. Instead, I figured we'd watch the runners in the half marathon the next morning.

Now the first thing I will say is that I didn't find the official runDisney website that much help to me as a spectator, when it came to planning for the day. Sure, it had some basic information, but it seemed to be mainly targeted at those who wanted to watch the runners from the theme parks, and predominantly the Magic Kingdom. I had no idea where a good place would be to spectate from, so I asked the question in the Running at Walt Disney World forum on the PassPorter message boards, and I got so much help and useful advice from there.

The first thing the runners told me was that, as I suspected, just about everyone heads for the theme parks. Well, that would explain why the runDisney website focuses on that. The runners also told me that they appreciate getting support the whole way around the route, so my mind was made up. I knew I wanted to be outside the parks. I asked about watching from somewhere near the Contemporary, and that met with resounding approval, with the runners explaining to me that they'll have just run up through the tunnel that goes underneath the waterway linking Bay Lake to the Seven Seas Lagoon. It's so vital to have little bits of information like that, as despite the fact we've driven it many, many times previously, I'd never really noticed the steep incline coming out from that tunnel, but of course when you're running 13.1 miles, things like that can really sap your energy. That's as far as we got before the big day. We did ask when people we knew would be coming through, but frustratingly, we had problems with our cell phone, so we couldn't monitor any runners to check on their progress. One of my friends told

me that she'd be a "yellow Belle," and gave me the rough time she thought she'd be through. Easy, I naively thought. I'll have no problems spotting her. Oh my goodness, how wrong could I be? I have never seen so many yellow Belles in my life, so that's my first piece of advice to anyone wanting to watch a race -- ensure that you can track your runners.

We ended up watching from the entrance to the Contemporary, and here's where we got a bit of a shock. We figured that we'd be able to get nice and close to the runners, so we could see people easily, but no such luck. We were held at the road that runs in front of the Contemporary, and the runners were on the other side of the road, with traffic passing in front of us. It was very frustrating not to be able to get closer, and it left one lonesome Disney security guy shouting for the runners, and supporting them. He did an admirable job, but the little group of us at the side of the road were, I think it's fair to say, disappointed not to be a bit nearer.

We did notice later on when we were watching the runners from our room at Bay Lake Tower that there were some people on the other side of the road, but we think they were all volunteers, and we noticed that, once they were there, they weren't going anywhere, with a constant stream of runners in front of them for hours. So I guess that's the second thing to be aware of--you need to plan ahead as to where you'll be located, and whether the race will actually cut you off from your chosen spot.

In fact, that morning, no-one could walk from the Contemporary over to the Magic Kingdom, and surprisingly for Disney, there was no warning of that whatsoever for those staying at the resort. Cars and buses could get in and out, albeit with delays, but I was expecting a note in our room, setting out how the race could affect us, and we had nothing, which was quite disappointing.

What I couldn't get over during the time we were down there watching the race was how many runners there were. I knew that thousands and thousands take part in runDisney events, but it's not until you see the endless stream of runners stretched out in front of you that you can actually start to take in what that number of people actually looks like. I had nothing but admiration for all of them, as there's no way I could ever run that distance.

The other thing I absolutely loved about being a spectator was seeing all the amazing outfits. It's amazing enough, to me anyway, to run a half marathon, but to see the work that had gone into what people were wearing, and in some cases, how difficult it must have been to run in

.....

those outfits, was mind blowing.

Every so often, one or more of the runners would yell 'thanks' in our direction or would applaud us, and I just found that to be incredibly moving. Here were people doing something I couldn't even dream of doing (I have chronic fatigue, so a 5k is about my limit), and they were thanking us for just standing there and cheering them on. Absolutely amazing.

It was a wonderful experience to be part of a runDisney event, and I'd do it again in a heartbeat. If you can't compete in a race, for whatever reason, then cheering on the runners is definitely the next best thing. You feel part of the wonderful carnival atmosphere that pervades all of Disney, and I was so excited to spot people later that day with their medals proudly on display around their necks.

It just goes to show that runDisney isn't just for the runners, it's for everyone who plays a part, be they the vital volunteers who help to support them, or the spectators on the sidelines who do their bit to cheer everyone on.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

Article last updated: 05-14-2015

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/cheering-rundisney.html>

Copyright by Cheryl Pendry. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>

.....