

Race Report: My 18th Bolder Boulder (2019)

This past Memorial Day I ran my 18th Bolder Boulder and set a PR on the course (my only faster 10K was a downhill race I did last year).

Goal and results

Goal	Notes	Success?
43:05	My 2008 Bolder Boulder PR	Yes! ☐
41:00	Based on recent 5K	No ☐

This Spring I ran a [sub-20:00 5K](#) for the first time. That made a sub-40:00 BolderBoulder feel realistic for the first time, but I didn't think I was quite there yet and decided to pace myself for a sub 41:00 finish instead.

The BolderBoulder course is mostly up hill for the first four kilometers, but then the 8th and 9th kilometers are fast down hill, and then the last kilometer climbs back up to the finish in Folsom Field stadium. It is a net up-hill course by a bit (less than 100 meters).



Elevation profile

Making it to 5K without giving up is the hardest part of the race for me every year, so I came up with the following pacing plan which would get me to the top of Casey Hill at about 41:00 pace and then hopefully allow me to speed up for the last 4K finishing around 40:30:

Kilometer	Goal split	Actual split
1	4:06	4:06
2	4:06	4:01
3	4:06	4:10
4	4:06	4:07
5	4:06	4:08
6	4:06	4:17
7	4:00	4:01
8	3:50	4:00
9	4:00	4:10
10	4:00	4:12
Total	40:26	41:12

Obviously I was unable to accelerate on the last 4K like I had hoped, but it's still my best BolderBoulder by almost 2 minutes! The official race splits were in miles:

Mile	Time
1	6:34
2	6:34
3	6:43
4	6:44
5	6:29
6	6:42
Finish	41:12.68

(That's an average of 6:38/mile.)

Race

The weather was very nice. Sunny, but not too warm (to the point that it was a bit too chilly after the race).

- **Start:** In the starting corral a regular from Parkrun in the same wave found me which was nice. He was recovering from a cold and was planning on going out a bit slower than me — I figured if I wasn't feeling up to my goal pace and saw him pass me I'd be able to hang with him for a 42:00 finish which would still soundly beat my PR.
- **KM 1:** I normally run this kilometer much too fast. This year I started intentionally slow and stayed comfortable which put me at the Kilometer 1 banner right on my 4:06 target.
- **KM 2:** Just try to maintain the same comfortable pace. I must be warmed up because I finished a few seconds fast and it feels easy.

- KM 3: Noticeably up hill at first. This is where I think I get myself into trouble on this course — I end up redlining here and not being able to recover until the sixth kilometer. This year I allowed myself to slow down a bit instead.
- KM 4: This is steadily up hill, but I'm not nearly as tired as I usually am here! I'm very close to my target pace.
- KM 5: Even though this is downhill I have to concentrate to maintain the pace that felt so easy 10 minutes ago. But I manage to not slow down and also feel fairly comfortable at the point on the course where I had to walk to catch my breath last year (when I finished in 43:4x).
- KM 6: Back up hill a bit and I'm struggling. Again I allow myself to slow down rather than push too hard — if I can make it to the down hill that starts on the next km in good shape then I'm pretty sure I can make up quite a bit of time.
- KM 7: First a down hill to get my spirits up. Then up Casey Hill, but I know that begins the long and fast down hill section so it doesn't even bother me.
- KM 8: I didn't bomb down Casey Hill as fast as I thought I would. I was tired. But I got to this kilometer only a few seconds behind schedule and thought I could catch up. I tried to stay relaxed and let myself go with gravity. Unfortunately every time I looked at my watch I was not moving as fast as I felt I was.
- KM 9: It's sometimes a real struggle to maintain the pace once the down hill levels out. Luckily here my body switched to its autopilot mode. With no conscious effort my legs kept moving at race pace, and I was just along for the ride. I don't know exactly what conditions bring on this flow state, but it has happened during all of my best races. If I could learn to

accept it then I think I could become a faster runner — but instead I start to think and worry that I'm going to get tired too quickly if I don't slow down and otherwise let my conscious mind interrupt a beautiful thing. Story of my life.

- KM 10: During this kilometer I experienced bowel discomfort which is something that doesn't happen to me often during running. I've never had to stop during a race before, but it got to the point that I slowed down and started scanning for emergency port-o-potties. Once I made it up the hill and almost to the stadium I decided the best option was just to finish as quickly as possible. During my kick around the turn to the finish I looked up and saw myself being followed on the stadium's jumbotron. That was fun but also would have made any sort of incident more embarrassing.

Afterward I jogged down to where my mom was watching the race and used the restroom at the coffee shop there. It would have been nice if that happened *before* the race. Oh well, new Boulder Boulder PR!



At the finish line