

Friday, February 27, 2009

Ghat, Libya

Still no Internet availability. Video and images will probably be sent when we hit Paris. Thank you AT&T for this incredible “desert” cell phone service. It really gives new meaning to the word “roaming.”

Received messages from all my friends. You are all part of this race and are with us every step of the way. From the first Checkpoint on I was on an Odyssey. We talked with Tuaregs in a camel caravan, spoke with Lintans who had never met Americans before and surprised a European tourist who had come to see the rock paintings.

We took tons of footage and thought our lives were over when the Libyan tourist police zoomed up behind us with blaring lights – but they were just cheering us on and followed us to the next Check Point!

JB and I separated for awhile at Checkpoint 2 and I learned how to use my GPS alone in Libya on an all night walk through the Sahara desert. The stars were my company and I have never felt more alive and to be totally dependent on my own navigation skills.

Arrived at the next Checkpoint three hours behind the other runners. The Aid Station was a wreck of runners needing medical assistance. When the doctor asked if I needed help, my reply was "Yeah, fix my camera!" It was busted from falling down a rock face on the night hike.

I did not sleep and learned that Bob and Isabella were only an hour ahead. So I bolted out of the Aid Station just as the sun was rising over the dunes. Mile after mile of mesmerizing sand dunes. Running down the dunes, with the lack of sleep, plus taking video and pics all suddenly hit me and I collapsed under a rock face (no damages). Woke up a little bewildered just as another runner who was in bad shape was passing. Though I'd only slept 45 minutes, I felt refreshed and not distressed when he told me we would never make the cut off (72 hour race limit) – which obviously he was off base as I crossed the finish line I just over 58 hours!

Rebecca Byerly

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