

GREENSBORO - Reid Bolinger and Marie Underhill of Greensboro represent all that is essential and necessary about running marathons.

Especially for those of us who don't populate the elite ranks, who must mix work and family with our long training runs.

Bolinger gained entry into Monday's **Boston Marathon** as part of its charity program, having raised money to support Red Dog Farm, a nonprofit animal rescue network.

"I probably wouldn't qualify for it," Bolinger, a good runner, said of the exacting requirements for entering the world's most famous foot race.

Underhill, his wife and a runner herself, sat in the bleachers at the finish line on Boylston Street, this time as the spouse patiently waiting for the other to finish his 26.2 miles of an achievement of a lifetime.

"All of a sudden, bam, out of nowhere on a clear blue day. It was quite a shock," Underhill said.

Two explosions rocked buildings on the other side of the street.

"The bleachers are just before the finish line," Underhill said. "The first **explosion** was right across the street and slightly catty-corner to the right. The second one was slightly to the left."

Triad runners, family and friends, by all accounts, escaped unharmed. Most of those runners had finished, although a handful were stopped short of their goal. They shared stories of shock and of momentary confusion and talked about their attempts to notify relatives or reconnect with family in the city.

Bolinger was among those not allowed by officials to race past mile 25. And on a day when a running community banded even further together, so did a city. A stranger along the course invited Bolinger into her house so that he could try to contact Underhill and his family.

"I got on Facebook and told everybody I was OK, but I had not contacted my wife at that time," Bolinger said. "My phone was in a bag at the finish line. She was nice enough to let me go into her house and get onto Facebook."

Family members told him that Underhill was OK, so he sent her a message: "Meet me back at the hotel."

Another runner who didn't finish, Winston-Salem's Angi Linville, appeared to be the Triad runner on the course closest to the explosions.

Linville approached mile 26 on Boylston when the street shook. Her friend, Bill Gibbs, was waiting nearby.

"As soon as it happened, I went to try and find Angi," Gibbs told the Winston-Salem Journal. "There were a lot of people running around after the explosions trying to get out of that area."

Linville wasn't allowed to finish the race and was ushered into a hotel, where she had to wait.

"It took me about a half-hour to find her, but she was OK and that's all that matters," Gibbs said. "There are a lot of other people who were hurt bad."

Asheboro physician Bob Scott finished the course in a tidy three hours and nine minutes and returned to his hotel, the Fairmont Copley Plaza, just up the street from the finish line.

"I was in the shower. I had a good day and had gotten back to the room," Scott said. "I heard something; it

wasn't quite like a car crash. It was a big, loud metal noise. The best thing I could figure was it was a whole stack of scaffolding that came down."

Martha Davis, a runner from Madison, Miss., whose brother, Kernersville's Ed Shirley, also ran the race, finished minutes before the **explosion**.

"I was just listening and trying to get a report," Davis said. "Of course, we didn't have our cellphones because they were in our gear-check bags. The very first thing I heard was a lady who thought it was a car bomb.

"I was pretty calm. ... After you've run 26.2 miles, you're emotionally and physically exhausted. It would have been hard for us to immediately react. You're physically pretty exhausted."

And so was the family of Summerfield's Clark Doggett, running his first **Boston Marathon** at age 70. Family members walked seven miles before finding him after he was stopped at mile 25.

"Luckily he was slow," Jane Doggett said of her husband. "We weren't where we were supposed to be, which is at the finish line."

Before the race, runners honored the victims of the shootings at the elementary school in Newtown, Conn. That made Oak Ridge veterinarian Karyn Waterman think.

"We had a moment of silence for the Sandy Hook victims," Waterman said. "One of the charity groups was running for them. I honestly thought that with 30,000 runners here, and not to mention all the other people, if somebody was sick enough, it was an opportunity to have a lot of people in one area at one time."

And now it has happened. You'll see runners all over the country today, wearing their race T-shirts in memory of those killed and in honor of those injured. Some of the victims were runners trying to reach the finish line of the **Boston Marathon**, but most were family and friends waiting to celebrate with them. The explosions will alter the course of history for a race that began in 1897.

"It sure changes the day," Scott said. "It was a beautiful day. The race was nice and was run flawlessly. ... It's such a beautiful city. It just doesn't deserve to have that happen to it."

And the day will alter the lives of many who participated and more who watched.

"I'm so thankful that my wife was OK," Bolinger said. "I'm sad about it. I could care less that I couldn't finish the race. That didn't even cross my mind.

"I'm just sad for the people that were injured and the victims. There will always be another marathon to do. But some of those people are not going to get their loved ones back. I just can't help but feel sad."

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