

BOSTON WAIVES QUALIFIER FOR CHARITY

By DON SIKORSKI
Special to the Bulletin

The Boston Marathon, now in its 107th running, has developed a rich and storied tradition of marathon racing. Boston features qualities in its marathon that are unique to the event: the weekday race date (Patriot's Day Monday, a Massachusetts state holiday), the noontime start as opposed to early morning, a point-to-point race course starting in the little community town of Hopkinton, coordination with a Red Sox 11:00am home game (a game in which the Sox have also historically been shelled for a dozen runs or so), and minimum qualifying times required for entry. Although Boston's time requirements have been in existence for years, recent restructuring efforts on the part of the B.A.A. now allows runners the opportunity to enter and compete in the Boston Marathon officially if the athlete is able to raise a specified amount of money for a designated charity. Many charitable organizations, such as the Run for Research Team or the Leukemia Team In Training, have stepped up to the plate and coordinated with Boston and other major marathon events in an effort to generate funds, support, and create awareness of their charitable causes. Since that time, millions of dollars have been raised by thousands of runners in what is truly a "win-win scenario" for all parties involved.

Although many runners will again toe the line for charity on April 21st for Boston's traditional 26.2-mile footrace, I know specifically of two local athletes who charitable runs are worth an extra mention. Dennis Main of Bozrah will be running in this year's Boston Marathon on behalf of the American Liver Foundation. He will compete in tribute of a close friend who had passed away last November from a liver-related illness. Main, 53, has been hitting the streets for long, weekend runs in preparation for what will be his first marathon in more than twenty years. You can support Main and his Run for Research cause by sending donations, made payable to the American Liver Foundation, to Dennis @ 4 Hough Road in Bozrah, CT 06334 or donate on line at www.liverteam.org/sponsor/html.

Jim Enderle of Groton is the Team Captain for "Ellen's Team", a marathon team formed to raise awareness and research money to find a cure for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Ellen Kaatz is a 27 year-old Navy nurse who was a 3-sport high school athlete. In February 2002, Ellen was diagnosed with ALS, a disease with no cure. Multiple drug therapies intended to preserve motor functions have proved successful for Ellen to date, allowing her the ability to walk, talk, and breathe. Enderle, a Navy co-worker and avid runner, approached Kaatz and offered to run the 2003 Boston Marathon for Kaatz and "Ellen's Team". Sponsorship donations, payable to Ellen's Team, can be sent to Jim Enderle at 164 Hornbeam Road in Groton, CT 06340. 75% of the funds raised with support ALS clinical trials in Boston, with the remaining 25% used for Ellen's medical expenses. Jim can be contacted at JREnderle@US.MED.NAVY.MIL, or check out their web site at www.ellenk.us for more information.

These two runners, along with hundreds of others, now have the opportunity to compete in the Boston Marathon while playing a major role in fundraising efforts for two very worthwhile causes. Best of luck to both of them (and to the Red Sox as well) on Patriot's Day.

Racing Roundup

Stonington's Tyler McCabe, a senior at Providence College, ran 14:31.87 for 5,000 meters at the Raleigh (NC) Relays on March 29th. McCabe finished 16th overall in the talented race field, which was lead by Nike's Alan Webb, who claimed victory in 14:06.56 in his first test at 5K as a professional. Yale's Lucas Meyer, also a former CT high school standout, finished 21st in 14:42.56.....Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele is now considered by many to be the possibly the greatest cross-country runner ever. Not bad for a runner who hasn't yet celebrated his 21st birthday. Bekele was the individual winner at the 31st IAAF World Cross-Country Championships in Avenches, Switzerland in both the long (12K) and short (4K) races in a span of less than 24 hours. Bekele's double marks the second consecutive year that he has won both titles. All the more impressive is the fact that Bekele had recently recovered from food poisoning and typhoid, Just one day after his short-course win, Bekele had enough left in the tank to outrun a fresh pack of Kenyan runners, finishing the 12,355 meter course in 35:56, 13 seconds better than runner-up Patrick Ivuti of Kenya. Bekele's teammate Gebregziabher Gebremariam, the XC junior champion in 2002, was third overall in 36.17. Meb Keflezighi led all U.S. runners with his 11th place finish. Despite Ethiopia's 1-3 finish, Kenya still had enough depth to win the team title, followed by Ethiopia and Morocco. The United States finished seventh overall as a team. Edith Masai of Kenya became the first woman to successfully defend her short-course title, outkicking long-course champion Werknesh Kidane of Ethiopia down the final stretch.

This Month in History

April 20th, 1985 – Olympic gold medalist Carlos Lopes of Portugal runs the world's fastest marathon in Rotterdam, shaving 54 seconds off the previous best time for the 26.2-mile distance. Lopes hit the finish line tape in 2 hours, 7 minutes, and 11 seconds to better Britain's Steve Jones' previous record time of 2:08:05, set at the 1984 Chicago Marathon. The 38 year-old Lopes had only the help of the estimated 600,000 spectators after outrunning his two Belgium pacesetters, Vincent Rousseau and Luc Waegeman, just after the halfway mark and went unchallenged the rest of the way, with 1981 Rotterdam champion John Graham a distant 2nd in 2:09:58.

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