

# BOSTON PREPARATION RIGHT ON SCHEDULE

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The final weeks leading up to a marathon are often the most difficult. As race day approaches, thoughts of final preparations and self-doubt enter into the mind. Will the weather cooperate? Have I done enough long runs? I might be catching the virus my co-worker was spreading around the office last week. Staying focused and being patient are two key aspects of the final stages of marathon preparation. Let's look in our runners and see how they've progressed over the past two weeks leading up to the April 17<sup>th</sup> race.

George Adrian is finding his hectic schedule a challenge as he winds down towards the marathon. His children have had "the usual school coughs and colds" and his work schedule has continued to be hectic. Couple those issues with the typical day to day distractions, and Adrian has found it difficult to find the time to train properly. Right now, he is faced with the decision of either an early wake up call or late night running. However, Adrian and training partners Bob Walsh and Peter Weeden did manage to get in a long run of 22 miles, and Adrian also added longer mid-week runs of 12 and 15 miles and has mixed in some quicker-paced runs of 6 to 8 miles. Despite these quality efforts, Adrian still doesn't feel that he is going onto Boston as ready as he would like to be. "I am not running as well as I would like," said Adrian. "I feel stressed for time and have some nagging aches (tendonitis) which I am a little paranoid about because of my injury last year. I am thinking that I want to enjoy the Boston (Marathon) experience more than trying to get a fast time." Adrian's thinking is normal for most marathoners as they approach race day, especially for a race like Boston which requires the bulk of the running mileage to be completed in less than ideal weather conditions.

Bob Walsh hosts the long weekend training runs with Adrian and Weeden from his East Lyme home. Many of the training runs tackle hilly sections of town, ideal preparation for the rolling hills that will change the marathon runners in Newton. Walsh, a Physical Education teacher in Groton, is an ideal role model of physical fitness. Running the Boston Marathon only helps to emphasize the benefits of staying fit. "As a Physical Education teacher, I feel that it is very important to lead by example. My students can see that I just don't talk the talk but I also try to walk the walk." Adrian, Walsh, and Weeden have followed a solid schedule of long weekend runs, building up their mileage progressively. They have a 24 mile run planned for this weekend, and hopefully everyone's personal schedule will allow for the time to train.

Peter Weeden of Ashaway, RI has also accompanied Adrian and Walsh on the long weekend runs. They have been experimenting with different energy aids, a now common strategy for marathon runners. "Bob has been great about putting Gatorade out on the course for our long runs," said Weeden. "We've also been using GU (energy gel) and trying jelly beans that George had recommended. We finished our last long runs feeling strong and weren't glucose depleted." All tricks of the trade for the marathoner.

Sue Sucholet of Norwich has 10 marathons under her belt with a best of 3:37:13. But after undergoing major surgery almost a year ago, she is approaching this year's Boston Marathon with a different outlook. "My goal is to get to the finish line and not end up in the medical tent," says Sucholet. "I've ended up in the medical tent after finishing the Mystic Places Marathon with dehydration and hypothermia and it was pretty scary. Despite those concerns, Sucholet's running has been progressing right on schedule. "My training is going pretty well," said Sucholet of her Boston preparation. "I did a 17 miler on Sunday (March 19<sup>th</sup>) and felt OK. I have been trying to run in the afternoon because of the race start time. My longest run has been 18 miles with lots of hills and I'm averaging 35 to 45 miles a week." Sucholet admits that Boston's logistics, as compared to smaller marathons, will be her biggest challenge. "I'm used to running marathons that are smaller and you can get there an hour before they start," said Sucholet. "The thing about Boston that kind of scares me is the start time (12:00 Noon) and that I won't have my support team out on the course." In her past marathons, Sucholet has had friends and family out on the race course encouraging her. "My family and friends have helped me with my training, whether it is running with me or bringing me water or just seeing if I am OK." That luxury won't be available in Boston.

It appears that these four runners are right on track in their Boston marathon preparation. With only three weeks remaining until race day, the majority of the hard work has already been done. Next time we will look at how these runners are dealing with the final marathon training tapering and what they will need to do to get to the starting line in Hopkinton rested and ready.

## **Culpepper joins Boston Marathon field**

John Hancock Financial Services has announced that two-time Olympian Alan Culpepper of Colorado will compete in the 110<sup>th</sup> B.A.A. Boston Marathon on Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. Culpepper ran 2:09:41 at the 2002 Chicago Marathon, tying Alberto Salazar for the fastest American debut marathon ever. His 4<sup>th</sup> place finish in last year's Boston Marathon was the highest finish by an American since Dave Gordon finished 4<sup>th</sup> overall back in 1987. Culpepper also won the 2004 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials race in just his second attempt at the 26.2 mile distance. He will join fellow American and Olympic silver medalist Meb Keflezighi on the starting line in Hopkinton.

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His “Coach’s Corner” column can be accessed at [www.moheganstriders.org](http://www.moheganstriders.org). He can also be reached by e-mail at [kdcsikorski@netzero.net](mailto:kdcsikorski@netzero.net).