

MARATHONING 101: THE STRUCTURE

By **DON SIKORSKI**
Special to the Bulletin

Kevin Gallerani believes that after many years of trial and error, he has finally derived the ideal marathon training plan. Unfortunately for Gallerani, just when he thought he had found all the answers, Father Time has changed the questions. The 51 year-old Uncasville resident is a long time runner with over 35 marathon finishes to his credit. He has run the prestigious B.A.A. Boston Marathon 20 times, finishing as fast as 2:50:13. He has a personal best marathon time of 2:44:14 in the 1984 East Lyme Marathon. And he teaches a marathon training class, conducted at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital each fall, designed to assist runners reach their marathon running goals. So when the Bulletin asked that the column track the progress of an area runner training for this year's Boston Marathon, Kevin Gallerani was the ideal test subject.

If you've ever wondered what type of training commitment is required to complete a marathon or even contemplated running in a marathon yourself sometime in the future, keep reading. For those who have a marathon finish on their resume but hope to improve on their previous finish time, a review of Mr. Gallerani's training methods should also prove beneficial. We'll also evaluate Kevin's progress and also critique his plan from a coach's aspect, hoping to guide our subject to a successful marathon run on Patriots Day in Boston.

Kevin's first step was to design a 16 week training schedule leading up to the April 16th Boston Marathon race. That puts his start date at Christmas Day, so for the initial week, Gallerani's plan was to simply reintroduce his body to consistent running after the holiday break. His plan includes a long run scheduled each weekend, beginning at 10 miles and building progressively in four week blocks, up to a maximum long run of 20 miles (i.e. 10-13-14-16-13-14-16-18). He has scheduled the long runs for Saturday mornings, but will move the workout to Sunday in the event of inclement weather. For the first eight weeks, Gallerani will also incorporate hill workouts into his training regime, increasing the number of repetitions each week. He will also train with a heart rate monitor, which is especially beneficial on his easy, recovery running days. And he has scheduled one day off from training each week, usually Fridays. "Friday seems to work best for me," explained Gallerani of his logic. "I'm usually tired from working all week and tired from training all week".

Kevin is approaching this year's marathon with a more conservative approach than he has in past years. Last fall, Gallerani made a late decision to jump into the Mystic Places Marathon and pace some of his students through the early portion of the race. He finished in a time of 3 hours, 22 minutes, and 52 seconds, an average pace of 7:46 per mile and good enough for 53rd place overall in the field of 529 finishers. At Boston, Gallerani is looking only to finish in this same ballpark. He is also quick to point out his body's physical limitations and has made the necessary adjustments to his plan. He no longer logs the 70+ miles per week that he did 20 years ago, instead maxing out somewhere near the 50 mark. He has also made other adjustments. "I used to do two hard workouts per week, but age and Father Time have changed things a bit", joked Gallerani. Because he has struggled with some injuries in recent years, Gallerani maintains that the trick for him is to establish the volume of mileage that will best suite his needs. "It's all relative to what my body is going to give me," says Gallerani. "I'm not out there racing at a 6:30 pace anymore". Gallerani also tries to eat healthy and incorporates weight work into his program, focusing on improving core strength, legs, and lower back. "Boston is too much of a downhill course to ignore weight work," claims Gallerani. Overall, Kevin has all the basis covered in his marathon training plan. "I would love to run comfortably," explained Gallerani of his marathon goal. "Now I have to get mentally prepared for Boston".

COACH'S CORNER FEEDBACK: Don Sikorski and Chris Hansen have written "Coach's Corner", a running column that provides training recommendations to runners of all levels of ability. They will evaluate Kevin's training plan and progress and offer feedback of his marathon training progress over the 16 week period.

DON: "Kevin is an experienced runner who knows the dedication and discipline that is required to run a good marathon. I like how he has outlined a schedule that spells out what type of workout he intends to do each day, yet still allows for the flexibility that is necessary for anyone with a busy schedule, especially when training through a New England winter".

CHRIS: "Kevin has no trouble being able to cover the (26.2 mile) marathon distance, so it's more about developing his anaerobic threshold. A lot of people might run a ton of mileage at a very slow pace, and then when they try to run their marathon at a faster pace, they struggle. I like the fact that he has scheduled a day off from training each week. I think that is a very smart thing to do".

In the next column, we'll take a look at Kevin's plan to gradually build his weekend long run mileage at a gradual pace and the importance of base mileage in any marathon training plan.

MARATHON SUMMARY POINTS:

- Make a commitment
- Establish a reasonable finish time goal
- Design a specific training plan
- Be flexible

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