

# MARATHONING 101: THE SHARPENING

By **DON SIKORSKI**  
*Special to the Bulletin*

Some of Kevin Gallerani's friends have accused him of whining. A review of Gallerani's responses to questions about his weekly training regime en route to the 111<sup>th</sup> B.A.A. Boston Marathon on April 16<sup>th</sup> detects some truth in these friendly accusations. Kevin's outlook has see-sawed between optimism and pessimism, depending on the circumstances. Running a great number of miles will do that to a person. But aside from a minor complaint about losing an hour of sleep to Daylight Savings Time, Gallerani's mood is positive in anticipation of the big day.

In this week's "Marathon Training 101", we follow our test subject approaching a level of improved fitness, a justified reward for plenty of steady mileage logged during the cold and darkness of the previous two months. Kevin Gallerani is about 11 weeks into his training plan to compete in this year's Boston Marathon, aiming to run near 3 hours and 20 minutes or better. This week, Gallerani seemed to have a bit more spring in his step and he approaches the final stages of his marathon preparation. "I can see the light at the end of the tunnel," says Gallerani with five weeks remaining until race day. "The last week in February was still real cold," Gallerani recalled. "I didn't push anything during the week." March was a different story for the 52 year-old Uncasville resident. Intent on getting in his longest training run of his program to date, Gallerani tackled 2 hours and 28 minutes worth of mileage two weeks ago, the majority of the run on State Forest trails. "We were running a pretty good pace," said Gallerani of that particular effort. "I was tired when we were finished. But the weather cooperated. I'll take the effort. It was a very good effort," said Gallerani. No whining there.

Three days later, Gallerani had recovered enough to attempt a 7 mile tempo run (usually around 30 seconds per mile slower than 5K race pace, 15-20 slower than 10K pace, or 30 seconds faster than marathon race pace). Despite chilling 18 degree temperatures, Gallerani was pleasantly surprised with the ease in which he completed this challenging workout. "I got into a groove," said Gallerani of the run. "It almost seemed effortless". By the weekend, he was greeted with more accommodating weather conditions in logging a solid, 15 mile run. "The weather was gorgeous, but the first 5 miles of the run were awful," said Gallerani. "I felt like garbage. But then I felt good for the rest of the run". Gallerani also incorporated some race-paced efforts at the conclusion of that run, clicking off 3 x 1 mile repeats with minimal recovery. Everything seemed to be clicking.

Despite being an experienced marathon runner, Gallerani admits to making adjustments to his schedule to will hopefully benefit him in the long run. "I have learned a few things along the way," admits Gallerani. "I learned that I just can't do three hard workouts per week. I'm better off with one midweek workout and a long run on the weekend." Gallerani will also alter his training plan this weekend, postponing a scheduled 20 mile run to compete in a 5K road race in Somerville, MA today. And he continues to keep an open ear to his friends and fellow runners who have followed his progress through this column. "I was told 'if you're crying, you're not trying,'" laughs Gallerani in reference to his whining accusation.

**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.

**CHRIS:** Hansen praised Gallerani's decision to alter his training plan as he progresses. "It's smart that he (Gallerani) has adapted," said Hansen. "He noticed a recovery issue in his training and he changed. That's better than stubbornly sticking with a written plan." Hansen, who logs a majority of his running mileage on trails, also feels that Gallerani benefited from the change in terrain. "The trails work other muscles and require more knee lift than a 20 mile shuffle," Hansen claims. As far as meeting his Boston goals, Hansen is 100% confident that Gallerani will get it done. "I don't think he will have a problem," predicts Hansen.

**DON:** "Kevin is now beginning to recognize improved fitness as a result of his hard work. The key is to harness the efforts and avoid running workouts that are faster that predicted targeted paces. With a solid mileage base under his belt, he can focus on sharpening his fitness to be ready on race day."

In the next column, we'll track Kevin's training and he enters into the final tapering period of his 16 week training plan for the Boston Marathon.

## MARATHON SUMMARY POINTS:

- Focus on quality training efforts
- Incorporate trails or other terrain into your training plan
- Be flexible and make adjustments to your schedule when necessary

**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@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kdcsikorski@sbcglobal.net).**