

# MARATHONING 101: THE FINAL PREPARATIONS

By DON SIKORSKI  
*Special to the Bulletin*

"Why me," questioned Kevin Gallerani when he saw the weather forecast for Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup> calling for 46 degrees and rain showers. After all, the 52 year-old Uncasville resident has been training diligently for 16 weeks in preparation to run the 110<sup>th</sup> B.A.A. Boston Marathon on Patriot's Day. But weather conditions are one key factor that no competitor in Monday's race can control, and the forecast has Gallerani's full attention.

In this week's "Marathon Training 101", we follow Gallerani's final preparations for Boston, where he hopes to complete the 26.2 mile trek from Hopkinton to Boston in 3 hours and 20 minutes or better. The good news is that Gallerani seems to have rebounded from his fatigue-induced slump of two weeks ago. He ran 13 miles on his traditional "Boston course", tackling ½ mile uphill stretches in the late miles simulating the Heartbreak Hill section of the marathon, last Saturday. The results were promising. "I felt so good," Gallerani commented of that effort. "It was a progressive run (a training run which starts at a relaxed pace and gradually gets quicker) and the weather was comparable. He attributes his new-found energy to recharged batteries, thanks to plenty of quality rest. "I'm glad I took two weeks down and stocked up on sleep," reflects Gallerani.

As for his final preparations, Gallerani, with plenty of Boston experience under his belt, plans to stick with his routine that has worked well for him in past years. "I'll go up (to Boston) on Sunday morning, check in at the Sheraton, and take a quick walk to the expo," Gallerani explained. Kevin will also go for a brief, 3 mile run on Sunday afternoon "just to shake out the cobwebs". As for the pre-race meal, Gallerani plans to take a short walk over to Bertucci's in the Back Bay area for a traditional pasta dinner. One thing he does plan to steer clear of is caffeine. "My good friend Steve Hancock and I had a few espressos years ago," recalls Gallerani. "It was ugly". As for starting logistics, this year's race will also experiment with an earlier start time and a staggered "wave" start for the first time in it's 110 year history, with the women's elite field starting at 9:30am and the first wave (comprised of the elite field and top 10,000 runners based on qualifying time), following at 10:00am. The next wave will begin 30 minutes later. On a final note, Gallerani will also look to the late running legend Steve Prefontaine for inspiration by wearing a yellow University of Oregon singlet and green running shorts. "I'm running for my buddy Pre," laughed Gallerani. "I'm gonna need all the help I can get."

**COACH'S CORNER FEEDBACK:** Don Sikorski and Chris Hansen write "Coach's Corner", a running column that provides training recommendations to runners of all levels of ability. This week, former University of Connecticut standout Mike Whittlesey, now the head Cross-Country and Assistant Track Coach at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, also offers his insight on preparing to race the Boston Marathon. Whittlesey is certainly qualified to advise on this subject. The Durham, NC resident is also a former U.S. Olympic Trails qualifier in the marathon and was the top American finisher in the 1995 Boston Marathon (2:22:48).

**CHRIS:** Hansen advises Gallerani to be conservative during the final stage of his marathon preparations. "It's an old cliché, but in the final days before race day, you can't do anything to get faster but you could certainly do something to make you slower," Hansen warned. "It's important to stay rested." Hansen also feels that the crowded start would not be a hindrance for Gallerani in reaching his finish time goal. "He (Kevin) should plan on using the first 2 or 3 miles as a warm-up," recommends Hansen. "He should be looking forward to having a good time out there".

**SPECIAL GUEST COMMENTARY – MIKE WHITTLESEY:** Whittlesey recommends that runners gain knowledge of the course and get off to a conservative start for Boston Marathon success. "I ran the last part of the course (in training) about a week before the race," recalls Whittlesey of his preparation for that 1995 race. "I remembered what the hills would be like and tried to visualize the last few miles. Then again, training in Storrs (CT), I had run plenty of hills that were significantly more challenging, so I knew I was prepared." Whittlesey also avoided the common Boston mistake of hammering the downhill start in Hopkinton. "I knew too many people would go out too fast," said Whittlesey of the Boston start. "I really held myself back and was then able to get into a good running rhythm by not being too aggressive early."

**DON:** "Kevin is an experienced marathon runner who will have no problem getting to the starting line primed and ready to go. Having run marathons myself in temperatures ranging from a low of 11 degrees to a high of 83, I can attest to the fact that the weather conditions will have a significant impact but are out of his control. However, I think his goal time is very attainable and Kevin has done the work. I anticipate a good effort."

Kevin Gallerani has spent the past 16 weeks preparing for the race, and now it's time for his final exam. "I'm ready to roll," insures Gallerani. "I'm champing at the bit to run this thing". And is tomorrow's weather doesn't cooperate? "My body will probably tighten up like a piano wire," joked Gallerani. "You should start a pool to guess what mile mark I'll snap a hamstring at". My guess is that the worst pain Gallerani will feel is when he wakes up on Tuesday morning with stiff quadriceps and a headache from the post-race party. Let's wish him the best of luck Monday.

*Kevin Gallerani will be wearing race bib #9039. Track Kevin's progress and finish results on line at [www.bostonmarathon.org](http://www.bostonmarathon.org).*

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