

DEARY RACE A LONG STANDING PUTNAM TRADITION

By DON SIKORSKI
Special to the Bulletin

The Quiet Corner will become a bit louder next weekend when 300 or more runners join another 300 + walkers and hit the streets of Putnam for the 19th Annual Deary 5 Mile Road Race on Saturday, August 9th.

The Deary race is a long standing tradition in Putnam. The event was originally named in memory of Cathy Deary, an inspiration to the entire Putnam-Danielson community who passed away from cancer at the age of 23. The race was later renamed the Deary Memorial after Cathy's brother Tom died. This year's race will be in memory of Linda Ann Allard DeMarco, a former Day Kimball employee. Tom Deary, Jr. will also be memorialized as he died this past year. It is this ability to blend both a successful fundraising event and provide a quality road race that makes the Deary race special. Created by long-time runners Jim Gothreau and Martin Fey back in 1990, the Deary Road Race has strived to be one of the very best summer races on the schedule of both serious and casual runners alike. In anticipation of the warm weather that an August day in New England can sometimes deliver, Gothreau and company take pride in an "overdone" number of water stations and hoses along the gently rolling course. "At almost every stride, runners can choose how much relief they want," claims Gothreau of the strategic placement of water stations. "And our post-race refreshments begin in the finish shoot. About 15 feet after you cross the line, a race volunteer is handing out water to every runner!"

The Deary Road Race has also been known to attract some top level talent with an international flair. England's Geralt Owen, a sub 4 minute miler, is a former course record-holder in Putnam. Current record holder Keith Kelly of Ireland (24:11) earned his victory in 2002 at the Deary race following his NCAA Cross-Country title and later went on to earn the Irish National XC championship trophy. Gideon Mutisya of Kenya has also competed twice in Putnam, earning the victory in his second try. There is also plenty of quality age-group competition that takes place. Killingly's Megan Owen, a high school All-America who would later go on to compete at Providence College, held two age-group records simultaneously (both erased in 2004). Chaplin's Rebecca Stockdale-Wooley, a Putnam native, still holds two course records (29:43 in 40-49 division and 32:32 in the 50-59 division). And the oldest record on the books dates back to 1993, when Norwich Free Academy standout Chad Johnson clocked in at 26:28 to set a new mark in the 13-17 age division. Johnson would go on to win his second consecutive Connecticut State Open Cross-Country Championship that November. In 2007, race organizers also added a new category for males and females in the 70+ age division. The course accuracy and deep field of quality runners makes the Deary race an attractive option for the more casual local and regional runners who want to gauge their training progress. And many high school and collegiate runners have traditionally used the race to measure their level of fitness for the fast-approaching cross-country season.

The venue for the race is another aspect that appeals to runners. "J.D. Cooper's Restaurant has been a great supporter," said Ron Coderre, an area Sportswriter that has been involved with the Deary Race since his days at Day Kimball Hospital. "Owner Dave Landry literally gives over the entire property to the race for the entire morning. He's a terrific community individual." Coderre also praises Gothreau's efforts with the race. "Jim has been the mainstay behind the event from the technical aspect of running," says Coderre of Gothreau's contributions. "He has done yeoman's work in promoting it to other runners." According to Coderre, there is value in building long-term relationships with the running community as a result of providing them with a quality event. "From a personal point of view, I think it's been rewarding to see the number of runners who are coming out each year," says Coderre. "I believe the race is growing in popularity because it's well organized with water stations, mile markers, money prizes and a great post-race get together."

Walkers will begin at 8:00am with the road race starting promptly at 9:05am. There's even an "Early Birds Walk" that takes place informally at 6:00am for walkers that wish to participate but aren't able to fit a mid-morning event in their busy schedules. Race entry is \$25 and will be accepted on race morning. Runners and walkers gathering \$50 or more in pledges receive a free race entry. All proceeds stay local to help pay for cancer screening exams and cancer treatment for those unable to afford them.

Race applications and pledge sheets can be downloaded at http://www.daykimball.org/philanthropy/events/deary_race.shtml or contact the Day Kimball Hospital Development Office at (860) 928-7141 during business hours. The certified 5 mile race (each mile marker has also been officially measured and certified) features professional timing by SNERRO, prize money of \$250, \$150, and \$100 for the first 3 males and female finishers, awards for all new age-group records in 16 division categories, a \$200 team award, and the famous post-race party at J.D. Cooper's. The Deary Race is also one of the few races broadcast live on the radio (listen for Gary O and the crew at WINY on 1350 AM), and with three camera stations set up along the course, runners can later review their form by watching the broadcast in J.D. Cooper's during the post race festivities. Organized by veteran runners, the Deary Road Race has all of the features you could ask for in a road race and then some, with every penny raised used to fight cancer right here in Connecticut. Follow 395 North to Exit 95 in Putnam and head to J.D. Cooper's Restaurant & Sports Bar on Saturday and be a part of one of the summer's best events.

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