

Bill Ledwell

Islanders make Boston classic

Four gritty and determined Islanders are off to Boston today and tomorrow on a kind of sacred pilgrimage—they are entered in the 83rd running of the Boston Marathon. For the ordinary distance runner, the Boston event is his version of Olympus, Mecca, Valhalla, or what have you.

Ewen Stewart, Parker Lund, and Lance Miron will represent P.E.I. in the "Masters" category, for runners 40 years of age and over. The other entry, Don Harley, will try to get into the race via the "bandit" category, but may not be allowed to run due to the congestion at the start line. Last year, they had 4,300 official entries, plus 3,000 "bandits" in the race. This year, they expect upwards of 10,000 official entries—a lot of bodies racing down one route in a pack.

The Islanders are well qualified to compete at Boston. The 40 years and over set have to run an official marathon in 3 hrs., 30 mins. to get in, and both Stewart and Miron have bettered three hours already this year, in a marathon last month at Montreal. Parker Lund, still bothered by leg trouble, came close to three hours when he qualified last fall at Oromocto, N.B.

The Boston Marathon, held each April continuously since 1898, has never been more popular in its long history, thanks to the jogging and long-distance running boom. But it has been a big event in sports, going back to the 1920's and 30's. Our first recollection of the famed Boston race dates back about 40 years, when the health text used in our schools in Grade Five included a picture of Johnny Miles, the Nova Scotia runner who won it in the early 1930's. The caption under the photo said Miles was a prime example of fitness, and avoided the use of alcohol and tobacco.

In later years, in the early 1940's, Gerard Cote from Quebec won the Boston race several times, and was a threat for many years. Participation by runners from P.E.I. is



obscurer, but Michael Thomas did compete at Boston many years ago, and John Paul told us several times he ran at Boston, but documentary evidence to John's experiences are not easy to locate. Anyway, we have three Islanders going this year, perhaps four, unofficially, and this is quite an achievement.

Runners like Ewen Stewart, Parker Lund, and Lance Miron, all past 40, might put the average 40-year-old Swede to shame when it comes to physical fitness. Stewart, for example, has been clocked in 2 hrs., 47 mins. for the marathon distance of 26 miles, 385 yards, and that time would have been good enough to win Stewart a gold medal at the Olympic Games in 1932 at Los Angeles, where Juan Zabala of Argentina won it in 2 hrs., 51 mins., or in most Olympic Games up to that date.

The Marathon goes Monday, and the Island runners will have their own cheering section on hand, as about a dozen friends and fellow runners are making the trip to lend help and support. Doubtless, there will be hundreds of former Islanders from the Boston area joining with them.

But for the participants, Ewen Stewart, Parker Lund, and Lance Miron, the experience of standing on the starting line, or close to it in the vast throng, on Monday at noon, will be an experience to treasure. The Boston marathon is very special for the distance runner, and just being there is a reward for years of hard work and sacrifice.

Rodgers' run a masterpiece

Island team takes on famed Boston Marathon

"Boston remains the classic. No matter how big the others may become, Boston remains the marathon that marathoners most want to run"—RUNNERS WORLD.

By DON FERNALD

This year, sprinkled among the 5,000 or so that will start the famed 26 mile, 385 yard course will be four members of the P.E.I. Roadrunners Club.

Lance Miron, 40, Ewen Stewart, 46, Parker Lund 40, and Don Harley 29, all members of the P.E.I. Roadrunners Club, will run the course that is the oldest in the world—this is the eighty-third running of the event.

Miron, Lund and Stewart are officially entered as starters, having qualified for the race in the masters category of a previous marathon. Harley will be running as a 'bandit'—a runner who has not qualified for the race, but will run the course when the starters have gone.

LATE START

This marks the first time any Island contingent has made the trip to Boston; not bad for a club who ran their first marathon ever in May of 1978, less than a year earlier!

The American marathon record was set in Boston by famed distance runner Bill Rodgers in a time of 2 hours, 9 minutes and 55 seconds. Another interesting note is that no Olympic champion has even won at Boston, although eight have tried.

The course starts in suburban Hopkinton, west of the city, and winds its way through several towns and cities before ending at the Prudential Center in downtown Boston. All along the course, the fans are everywhere. Everybody and their dogs come to watch the annual pace, whether it be at the finish or along the streets of their town, and the atmosphere is electric, even before the race

begins.

"I don't know what to expect", said a visibly excited Parker Lund. "The thought of that many runners, combined with thousands and thousands of fans, well it's too much to conceive."

Ewen Stewart, the elder statesman of the sport on P.E.I. added, "I think the crowd will have a big impact on me, because we are all used to running without anyone watching, much less with thousands of competitors."

"You don't run the Boston Marathon, you race it", says Lund, "of course our objective is to finish the course, that will be satisfying enough."

The four member team will depart early for the event, scheduled for a noontime start Monday, April 16, to get some ideas and tips from other runners and organizers for their inaugural marathon in September.

HEARTBREAK HILL

"We know nothing about the layout of the course, says Harley, except for what we have read, particularly Heartbreak Hill." Heartbreak Hill is a gently ascending slope that can kill, off the most experienced marathoner, simply because it comes at the 20 mile point, the most crucial make or break area for most runners.

"We better hope that it is fairly cool as well, adds Stewart, the temperature can vary greatly, and we definitely prefer it on the cool side."

Whatever the outcome for these hardy souls, the mere fact of competing in the marathon is justification enough for the long trip. The Boston Marathon is a marathon runners dream, simply because of the tradition and prestige that surrounds it, and the bright orange Roadrunner t-shirts will be running with the worlds best—quite an accomplishment.

You can see the pain

at Heartbreak Hill



For Bill Rodgers, his sweetest victory

*He's now
a 3-time
champion*

By Joe Concannon
Globe Staff

The light, chilling rain splattered down on the pavement as Bill Rodgers and his wife, Ellen, eased their way through the lingering Boston Marathon crowd in Cleveland Circle at 3:45 yesterday afternoon. Out on the course a steady stream of runners turned down Beacon street for the final four miles of the race.

"Jack," shouted Rodgers as he spotted newscaster Jack Hynes amid the group, but there was no response as Hynes kept going, onward to the finish. His mission accomplished with a record Boston run, Rodgers was walking slowly up Chestnut Hill Avenue toward his store.

First, a few runners noticed him, all but stopping and shouting out, "Great race, Bill." By now, the word was out and before he reached the entrance to his basement store, the spectators had turned their backs on the runners, applauding the Marathon Man on his journey home.

Up above in a balcony, a cluster of young people with beer bottles in hand saluted, "Boston Billy." A couple under an umbrella stopped to shake his hand. "It's embarrassing," said Rodgers as he finally disappeared behind a locked door of his store, leaving the stage, once again, to the masses.

If Frank Shorter Americanized the marathon with his gold medal run in the 1972 Munich Olympics, Rodgers has personalized it for the record numbers of Americans who are now running the 26-mile, 385-yard race; a commanding, romanticized presence who runs alone and walks and talks with Everyman.

When he devastated one of the greatest Marathon fields ever assembled with a gutsy and overpowering 2:09:27 run (28 seconds under his previous American record set in the 1975 Boston Marathon), Rodgers held the four fastest marathon by an American citizen and eight under 2:12,



Benoit breaks women's mark

★ WOMEN

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"I've been running 85 miles a week," said Benoit, a Red Sox cap on her head with the laurel wreath around it, "but I didn't run this course in preparation. They say there's Heartbreak Hill, but I felt a number of hills. My legs got really sore and hurt the last four miles."

There was no hot water in the makeshift shower. And no towel when she finished. Globe photographer Janet Knott gave the champion her sweatshirt; someone else offered a jacket. "This isn't quite what I expected," said Benoit.

Her time wasn't something anybody expected. Winner Bill Rodgers could only shake his head in disbelief. "It's incredible," he said. "They've demolished the winning times in only five years."

Since 1972, the first year women were allowed to compete in the Boston Marathon, women have dropped the winning time from 3:08.58 (Nina Kuscsik) to Benoit's 2:35.15. Last year Gayle Barron won the race in 2:44.52. Better athletes are getting into running and the times are plummeting. Benoit's time this year would have won the BAA in 1938. In 1927 and 1928, she would have beaten the great Clarence DeMar to take the whole thing.

"The first 15 miles were effortless," Benoit said. "Then I had to start concentrating. This race is fun at the start. But these were ideal conditions for me. I was comfortable the whole time."

Benoit expected competition from Lyons, who has run a 2:41.30, as well as from last year's second-place finisher, Penny DeMoss; from Gillian File of New Zealand and from a trimmer Kim Merritt, who was fourth last year after winning in 1976.

"Women are getting tougher all the time," Benoit said, an orange parka covering her legs. "I love to run, we all do. I hope I can run for a long time, maybe even develop it the way Bill Rodgers has. It teaches you to be strong."

There were 517 women who qualified for this race. They average 110 pounds and pack power and strength into every ounce. Their ability to improve on time and performance is remarkable. Benoit finished 477th in this race, out of a total 7300 people. In 1966 only one woman ran at all. Roberta Gibb, the sole woman then, would barely qualify today.

Joan Benoit, her Red Sox cap askew, crosses Marathon finish line in record time of 2:35.15.

(Globe photo by Janet Knott)

The top 20 women

1. Joan Benoit, Brunswick, Maine..... 2:35.15
2. Patti Lyons, Boston..... 2:38.22
3. Susan C. Krenn, San Diego..... 2:38.50
4. Elizabeth A. Hassell, Australia..... 2:39.48
5. Sue J. Petersen, Laguna Beach, Calif..... 2:43.02
6. Kim Merritt, Racine, Wis..... 2:44.28
7. Cynthia A. Dalrymple, Seattle..... 2:45.30
8. Karen S. Doppes, Cincinnati..... 2:45.45
9. Gayle Olinek, Fort Lauderdale, Fla..... 2:47.30
10. Lauri McBride, New York City..... 2:47.37
11. Derrie Lewis, Solana Beach, Calif..... 2:48.00
12. Susan Hughes, Wellesley..... 2:48.26
13. Laura Bindel, San Diego..... 2:48.35
14. Judy A. Gumes-Leydig, San Mateo, Calif..... 2:48.44
15. Marilyn T. Bevans, Baltimore..... 2:49.56
16. Deborah L. Butterfield, Bermuda..... 2:50.13
17. Beth C. Guerin, Wyomissing, Pa..... 2:50.25
18. Patricia A. Robinson, Brighton..... 2:51.03
19. Carolyn M. Bravakis, Windsor Locks, Ct. 2:52.33
20. Sharon Barban, Yonkers, N.Y..... 2:53.27