

***The  
Boston  
Marathon***



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***The Boston  
Marathon***

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**COVER PHOTO:** An uncluttered road to Boston stretches out in front of the leaders in the 1968 Marathon. It led to a victory for Amby Burfoot (No. 17).

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## FOREWORD

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The Boston Athletic Association Marathon is a 26-mile 385-yard road race between Hopkinton and Boston, Mass., held the third Monday of each April.

And it's much more than that. "The Boston" is more than one race on one day in one place. It's THE Marathon in the United States. Year-round, the Boston provides a dream that sustains training of runners from Massachusetts to California.

The Boston Marathon's influence on US distance running is impossible to calculate. It is immense. Without a doubt, Boston is the birthplace of road running in this country. Inspired by the Boston example, promoters have put together a hundred "little Boston," but none comes close to matching the big one. The Boston has age, a history and a reputation that no one will recreate.

Every other long race in the country traces its ancestry back to Boston. A race that has produced this many children, has survived for over 75 years, draws a thousand runners and 300,000 spectators deserves book-length praise.

The Boston rates a number of superlatives:

- *Oldest race in the United States.*
- *Biggest marathon in the US.*
- *Only road race in the country where spectators outnumber participants, 100-1 (at least).*
- *Only international long distance race in the US.*
- *Only one of its type that the general public and general sports media notice.*

The race has worked against odds to last this long and get this big. The Boston has struggled through two World Wars and a Depression, through 90-degree heatwaves and snowstorms, through the pains of overpopulation (both from runners on the course, and urbanization along it), and most recently through the wrath of women and "joggers."

The race scrapes by on a pitifully small budget, partially supported by the Boston A.A. indoor meet before it folded in 1972. Most of the money comes from the masses of runners themselves. (The masses of spectators are treated to a free show.)

In an era of huge travel budgets and rumors of undercover payoffs to athletes, the Boston draws international runners without offering a penny in expense money. Big man and little man alike have to hustle their own fare. They pay their way eagerly.

Hal Higdon was the top American finisher there in 1964. But he recognized slower runners have their place too. He says the great appeal of the Boston is "that of being the race where the world's best line up beside the world's worst. Boston without the plodders, and even the freaks, maybe isn't Boston."

For the man up front, the Boston Marathon is a significant proving ground. But for the man in the pack, it is arriving at Everest, Mecca, and the Olympics all in one April afternoon on the road to Boston.

**Chapter One**

***Up Through  
The Years***



**Chasing the leader through Natick.**

# THE BOSTON'S HISTORY

Jerry Nason, a sports writer for the Boston Globe, is the self-styled historian of the Boston Marathon. He has watched and covered the race for nearly 50 years. In 1966, Nason compiled a booklet of the Boston's history. Though *The Story of the Boston Marathon* is now out of print, the rare copies are a goldmine of factual information on the race. Nason's booklet provided invaluable background material for this historical summary. We acknowledge his work and thank him for his help.

Like most marathons, the Boston started casually. The early pace was relaxed, the early style informal.

Marathoning was in its infancy in 1897. The race had been part of the Olympics in Athens the previous summer. Later that year, a group of New Yorkers, apparently inspired by the Greek event, ran one of their own—the first in the United States.

Boston was the second. And needless to say, this less-than-year-old activity hadn't attracted much of a following yet. It hadn't landed at its now traditional distance of 26 miles 385 yards, either.

The 1897 race followed generally the same route that's still used, coming into Boston from the western suburbs. The first race occurred on April 19—the traditional date through most of the Boston's history. And April 19 that year was a Monday—the day all Bostons are now held.

Fifteen would-be marathoners gathered in Ashland, at Metcalfe's Hall, this Monday morning in April 1897. Among them was John J. McDermott, winner of the New York marathon the past fall.

Between Ashland and the track meet crowd waiting at the finish in the Irvington Street Oval was 24 miles 1232 yards of road. Not paved, traffic controlled roads as we now know them, but roads designed for horse and bicycle travel. Officials, handlers, friends and curiosity seekers far outnumbered the runners, and they created such a dust cloud that the marathoners all but choked before a few reached Boston.

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## COURSE DISTANCES

<b>1897 to 1923</b>	<b>24 miles 1232 yards</b>
<b>1924 to 1926</b>	<b>26 miles 209 yards</b>
<b>1927 to 1952</b>	<b>26 miles 385 yards</b>
<b>1953 to 1957</b>	<b>25 miles 938 yards</b>
<b>1957 to 1971</b>	<b>26 miles 385 yards*</b>

(\* See section on The Route)

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This was the start. Small, slow, informal. But rising from the dust of that first year were fields, times and legends that would build through the decades. If John McDermott and his small band of followers could see what they started...

**1897**—John McDermott's worst problem was his own fatigue. Despite walking three times in the last 10 miles, he won the first Boston by a comfortable margin: 1. John McDermott (NY) 2:55:10; 2. James Kiernan (NY) 3:02:—; 3. Edward Rhell (Mass) no time available.

**1898**—The field grew slightly, to 21, as Ronald McDonald whacked 13 minutes from the course record: 1. Ronald McDonald (Mass) 2:42:00; 2. Hamilton Gray (NY) 2:45:—; 3. Robert McLennon (Mass) 2:48:02.

**1899**—The heaviest man ever to win the race, 173-pound Lawrence Brignolia, powered into a strong headwind to win the third Boston: 1. Lawrence Brignolia (Mass) 2:54:38; 2. Dick Grant (NY) 2:57:—; 3. Bart Sullivan (Mass) 3:02:01.

**1900**—Canadians began a long tradition of success in the race when James Caffrey and Bill Sherring ran one-two, Caffrey breaking the course record: 1. James Caffrey (Canada) 2:39:44; 2. Bill Sherring (Canada) 2:41:—; 3. Dick Grant (NY) no time available.

**1901**—James Caffrey repeated as winner, the first man to do so, and broke his course record by over 10 minutes: 1. James Caffrey (Canada) 2:29:23; 2. Bill Davis (Canada) 2:34:45; 3. Sammy Mellor (NY) 2:44:34.

**1902**—The field had grown to 49 by this time. Americans regained the leadership when Sammy Mellor, third-placer the previous year, came home first: 1. Sammy Mellor (NY) 2:43:12; 2. J.J. Kenney (Mass) 2:45:—; 3. Jack Lorden (Mass) no time available.

**1903**—John Lorden, like Sammy Mellor before him, came from third to first in one year. Lorden held one of the biggest winning margins ever—about six minutes— as he beat the defending champion: 1. John Lorden (Mass) 2:41:29; 2. Sammy Mellor (NY) 2:47:—; 3. Mike Spring (NY) 2:53:—.

**1904**—The third-placer winning the following year was becoming traditional. Mike Spring did it this time, beating 1904 Olympic champion-to-be Tom Hicks: 1. Mike Spring (NY) 2:38:04; 2. Tom Hicks (Mass) 2:39:34; 3. Tom Cook (Mass) 2:42:35.

**1905**—The field kept growing, to 78 this time. Fred Lorz, who'd been accused (wrongly) of hitching a ride in the 1904 Olympic race, ran himself to exhaustion to win here: 1. Fred Lorz (NY) 2:38:25; 2. Louis Marks (NY) 2:39:50; 3. Bob Fowler (Mass) no time available.

**1906**—Tim Ford, a post-entry and the youngest allowed in the race, won the closest race to date. The 18-year-old beat Dave Kneeland by six seconds: 1. Tim Ford (Mass) 2:45:45; 2. Dave Kneeland (Mass) 2:45:51; 3. Sammy Mellor (NY) no time available.

**1907**—This race is remembered because it was the one where all but the first two runners got stopped by a long freight train. It should also be remembered as the debut of Canadian Indian Tom Longboat, who broke the course record by five minutes: 1. Tom Longboat (Canada) 2:24:24; 2. Bob Fowler 2:27:—; 3. John Hayes (NY) 2:30:38.

**1908**—Cold and snow flurries provided good running conditions for a superb duel between Tom Morrissey and John Hayes, the man who would win the Olympic title that year: 1. Tom Morrissey (NY) 2:25:43; 2. John Hayes



(NY) 2:26:04; 3. Bob Fowler, no time available.

**1909**—The biggest field ever, 164 runners, got a rude welcome—97-degree heat, the highest ever. Henri Renaud survived “The Inferno” for the victory, but 91 others dropped out: 1. Henri Renaud (NH) 2:53:36; 2. Harry Jensen (NY) 2:57:—; 3. Patrick Grant (NY) 2:58:—.

**1910**—Tiny (5'2½”) Fred Cameron won the race, but a real story here was the first appearance of the man who would become the biggest Boston Marathon legend of all—Clarence DeMar, who finished second: 1. Fred Cameron (Canada) 2:28:52; 2. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:29:52; 3. James Cockery (Canada) 2:34:—.

**1911**—Clarence DeMar was warned not to compete; doctors detected a heart murmur in the pre-race examination. Clarence ran anyway and blasted the record down by almost three minutes: 1. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:21:39; 2. Festus Madden (Mass) no time available; 3. Alexis Ahlgren (NY) no time.

**1912**—Mike Ryan, Olympic bound that year, raced through the mud and slush in a duel with Andrew Sockalexis to break DeMar’s course record: 1. Mike Ryan (NY) 2:21:18; 2. Andrew Sockalexis (Me) 2:21:52; 3. Festus Madden (Mass) no time available.

**1913**—Andrew Sockalexis lagged five minutes behind in the first half of the race, then charged on the leaders the rest of the way. He couldn’t make up the distance lost to Swedish-born Fritz Carlson: 1. Fritz Carlson (Minn) 2:25:14; 2. Andrew Sockalexis (Me) 2:27:12; 3. Harry Smith (NY) 2:28:24.

**1914**—Canadians James Duffy and Edouard Fabre staged one of the tightest duels in race history, Duffy winning by just 60 yards: 1. James Duffy (Canada) 2:25:01; 2. Edouard Fabre (Canada) 2:25:—; 3. Villar Kyronen (NY/Finland) no time available.

**1915**—With the temperature standing at 84, Edouard Fabre ran a cautious race that rewarded him with the title after finishing a close second the year before: 1. Edouard Fabre (Canada) 2:31:41; 2. Clif Horne (Mass) 2:33:01; 3. Sidney Hatch (Ill) 2:35:47.

**1916**—Arthur Roth made a clean break from the field at 10 miles, then tired towards the end. But he still held off Finnish-born New York Villar Kyronen, who set the style for Finnish excellence here: 1. Arthur Roth (Mass) 2:27:16; 2. Villar Kyronen (NY/Finland) 2:27:58; 3. Sidney Hatch (Ill) no time available.

**1917**—The Olympic hero of 1912, Hannes Kolehmainen, could only manage fourth place as Bill Kennedy won the title (at 35, he was the oldest winner yet), Sidney Hatch moved to second after two straight thirds, and Clarence DeMar returned: 1. Bill Kennedy (NY) 2:28:37; 2. Sidney Hatch (Ill) 2:30:10; 3. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:31:05.

**1918**—The race wasn’t held because of World War I. A military team race was held instead.

**1919**—Carl Linder and Willie Wick made a strange pair. Linder was an ex-javelin and decathlon champion; Wick was 4’10½” tall. They finished

one-two: 1. Carl Linder (Mass) 2:29:13; 2. Willie Wick (Mass) no time available; 3. Otto Laakso (NY) nt.

1920—Peter Trivoulidas, a Greek living in New York City, caught early pacesetter (and 1916 champion) Arthur Roth in the last half-mile and beat him by a full minute: 1. Peter Trivoulidas (NY/Greece) 2:29:31; 2. Arthur Roth (Mass) 2:30:31; 3. not available.

1921—One of those cool, made-for-running days that runners dream of, Frank Zuna dipped under one of Boston's early "natural barriers" as he broke 2:20 for the first time: 1. Frank Zuna (NJ) 2:18:57; 2. Chuck Mellor (Ill) 2:22:12; 3. Peter Trivoulidas (NY/Greece) no time available.

1922—Clarence DeMar earned not only his second victory here, but broke the course record and easily outran Finland's future Olympic hero Ville Ritola: 1. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:18:10; 2. Villa Ritola (Finland) 2:21:44; 3. Albert Smoke (Canada) 2:22:49.

1923—Clarence DeMar made it two in a row. Though not approaching his 1922 record, he did outrun 1921 champion (and the only other sub-2:20 man) Frank Zuna by a comfortable margin: 1. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:23:37; 2. Frank Zuna (NJ) 2:25:20; 3. Willie Carlson (Ill) no time available.

1924—Boston finally tried to come up to international standards, lengthening the course to the full 26 miles 385 yards. Trouble was, later measurements showed the course was only 26 miles 209 yards. At any rate, Clarence DeMar became the first three-time winner: 1. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:29:40; 2. Chuck Mellor (Ill) 2:35:04; 3. Frank Wendling 2:37:40.

1925—On one of the coldest days in Boston Marathon history, Chuck Mellor ended Clarence DeMar's streak. Mellor ran with a wad of tobacco in his cheek: 1. Chuck Mellor (Ill) 2:33:00; 2. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:33:37; 3. Frank Zuna (NJ) 2:35:35.

1926—This was to be a race between 1924 Olympic champion Albin Stenroos of Finland and Clarence DeMar. John Miles, 19, upstaged them convincingly when he both won by four minutes and broke the course record by that much: 1. John Miles (Canada) 2:25:40; 2. Albin Stenroos (Finland) 2:29:40; 3. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:32:15.

1927—The course error was discovered and corrected. For the first time, Boston was a full marathon in the international sense. On an 82-degree afternoon, durable Clarence DeMar won again, for the fifth time: 1. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:40:22; 2. Karl Koski (Finland) 2:44:41; 3. Bill Kennedy, no time available.

1928—Incredible! Now 39 years old, Clarence DeMar won this thing again, with a course record to boot. The field by this time was bulging with 254 runners: 1. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:37:07; 2. James Henigan (Mass) no time available; 3. Joey Ray (Ill) 2:41:56.

1929—John Miles, already considered a veteran here though only 22, clipped four minutes from DeMar's course record: 1. John Miles (Canada) 2:33:08; 2. Karl Koski (Finland) 2:35:26; 3. Villar Kyronen (NY/Finland) 2:35:44.

**1930**—Clarence DeMar made it Number Seven. It was an emotional moment in Boston when the 41-year-old (oldest winner on record) strided in ahead of two Finns: 1. Clarence DeMar (Mass) 2:34:48; 2. Villar Kyronen (NY/Finland) 2:36:27; 3. Karl Koski (Finland) 2:38:—.

**1931**—James Henigan's persistence rewarded him with a Boston Marathon victory in his 10th try, at age 38. He'd dropped out eight of the previous nine times: Intense heat slowed all the runners: 1. James Henigan (Mass) 2:46:45; 2. Fred Ward 2:49:03; 3. Karl Koski (Finland) 2:53:27.

**1932**—German sailor Paul de Bruyn ended James Henigan's dream of two in a row when he caught the 39-year-old defending champion in the last three miles: 1. Paul de Bruyn (Germany) 2:33:36; 2. James Henigan (Mass) 2:34:32; 3. John McLeod (Canada) no time available.

**1933**—Leslie Pawson, who was destined to become one of the great runners in Boston history, sped into a headwind to break the course record by more than two minutes. Jerry Nason quoted Pawson as saying, "I don't know how many minutes the headwind cost me, but you'll some day see this course run in 2:24": 1. Leslie Pawson (RI) 2:31:01; 2. Dave Komonen (Canada) 2:36:—; 3. not available.

**1934**—This year marked the beginning of a big collection of second places for John A. Kelley. Finnish-Canadian Dave Komonen, wearing shoes of his own design, moved up from second place the year before to win: 1. Dave Komonen (Canada) 2:32:53; 2. John Kelley (Mass) 2:36:—; 3. not available.

**1935**—John Kelley, known at this point for his breakdowns in the final miles, held up well this time for his first victory. His worst problem was nausea. Kelley calmly stuck his finger down his throat, and regurgitated away the distress. 1. John Kelley (Mass) 2:32:07; 2. Pat Dengis (Md) 2:34:11; 3. not available.

**1936**—Ellison "Tarzan" Brown started at such a reckless pace that he outran the press cars. They stayed with the wrong "leaders" as Brown went his merry way. Johnny Kelley caught him near 20 miles, but had lost too much strength in the pursuit. Brown won easily; Kelley was fifth: 1. Ellison Brown (RI) 2:33:40; 2. Billy McMahon 2:35:27; 3. not available.

**1937**—Walter Young, a snowshoe racer from Canada, ran amazingly well on a hot day. He won by almost six minutes from John Kelley: 1. Walter Young (Canada) 2:33:20; 2. John Kelley 2:39:—; 3. Leslie Pawson (RI) 2:41:46.

**1938**—Five years after winning (in course record time that still stood), Leslie Pawson earned his second championship. This time he had to contend with 75-degree weather: 1. Leslie Pawson (RI) 2:35:34; 2. Pat Dengis (Md) 2:36:40; 3. John Kelley (Mass) 2:37:34.

**1939**—A wiser and more mature Tarzan Brown paced this race superbly and became the first Boston runner to dip under 2½ hours (and the first American ever to run that fast). The race was run in a cold drizzle: 1. Ellison Brown (RI) 2:28:51; 2. Don Heinicke (Md) 2:31:—; 3. Walter Young (Canada) 2:31:—.

**1940**—This race launched the Cote Era. The Canadian won the first of his four titles, breaking Brown's year-old course record: 1. Gerard Cote (Canada) 2:38:28; 2. John Kelley (Mass) 2:32:03; 3. Don Heinicke (Md) no time available.

**1941**—Les Pawson, now 36 years old, won his third Boston, with his fastest time under somewhat trying conditions. On the 72-degree day, Pawson beat out Johnny Kelley by less than a minute (Kelley also ran his fastest Boston to date): 1. Leslie Pawson (RI) 2:30:38; 2. John Kelley (Mass) 2:31:26; 3. Don Heinicke (Md) 2:35:—.

**1942**—The fastest Boston Marathon so far came unexpectedly. World War II was on. The eventual winner was ill the morning of the race, and had to be talked into competing. Joe Smith, at 6'2" the tallest winner ever, ran a Boston and American record this 44-degree day: 1. Joe Smith (Mass) 2:26:51; 2. Lou Gregory 2:28:03; 3. Carl Maroney 2:36:13.

**1943**—French Canadian Gerard Cote battled John Kelley for 21 miles before pulling away to his second Boston win: 1. Gerard Cote (Canada) 2:28:25; 2. John Kelley (Mass) 2:30:00; 3. Fred McGlone 2:30:41.

**1944**—This was a repeat of 1943, only much closer. Gerard Cote and John Kelley were together with 700 yards left. Cote spurred, and Kelley couldn't respond. The winning margin was 60 yards: 1. Gerard Cote (Canada) 2:31:50; 2. John Kelley (Mass) 2:31:—; 3. Charles Robbins (Conn) 2:38:31.

**1945**—Johnny Kelley had finished second a total of five times since winning this race in 1935. This was his year. Atypically, Kelley started slowly, not catching the leader until 23 miles: 1. John Kelley (Mass) 2:30:40; 2. Lloyd Bairstow 2:32:50; 3. not available.

**1946**—The trend was set. A Greek won this race, and from the first post-War marathon on it was to be a foreign dominated event. The Boston Marathon was becoming truly international. Stylianos Kyriakides, a victim of malnutrition, ran here to dramatize the plight of his starving countrymen: 1. Stylianos Kariakides (Greece) 2:29:27; 2. John Kelley (Mass) 2:31:27; 3. Gerard Cote (Canada) 2:36:34.

**1947**—Asians made their debut in the front ranks. Korean Yun Bok Suh, at 5'1" the smallest man ever to win the race, was knocked down by a dog at 20 miles. He bounced back up and went on to a world best time: 1. Yun Bok Suh (Korea) 2:25:39; 2. Mikko Heitanen (Finland) 2:29:—; 3. Ted Vogel (Mass) 2:30:10.

**1948**—In one of the ugliest duels in the race's history, Gerard Cote and Ted Vogel almost came to blows as they ran along together. Cote, now 34, finally moved on to his fourth victory: 1. Gerard Cote (Canada) 2:31:02; 2. Ted Vogel 2:31:46; 3. Jesse Van Zant (Mass) 2:36:—.

**1949**—Karl Gosta Leandersson wanted to make sure he was fit. He broke the course record in training 10 days before the Marathon... and hurt his achilles tendon. He still managed an easy win: 1. Gosta Leandersson (Sweden) 2:31:50; 2. Vic Dyrghall 2:34:58; 3. Louis White, no time available.

1950—Another first: the first time a foreign country had swept the top three places. The Koreans had the honor, with Kee Yong Ham winning. Reporters were quick to nickname his “Swift Premium”: 1. Kee Yong Ham (Korea) 2:32:39; 2. Kil Yoon Song (Korea) 2:35:58; 3. Yun Chil Choi (Korea) no time available.

1951—The Japanese, who were to be so prominent in years to come, won their first championship. Nineteen-year-old Shigeki Tanaka, supposedly the fourth man on a four-man team, led at the finish by 3½ minutes: 1. Shigeki Tanaka (Japan) 2:27:45; 2. John Lafferty 2:31:15; 3. Athanasios Razazos (Greece) 2:35:27.

1952—Guatemalan Doroteo Flores was one of the few runners who appreciated the 88-degree heat. The Central American won by the runaway margin of almost five minutes: 1. Doroteo Flores (Guatemala) 2:31:53; 2. Vic Dyrvall 2:36:41; 3. Luis Velasquez (Guatemala) 2:40:08.

1953—Due to construction along the route, the course accidentally dropped in length to 25 miles 938 yards. The error wasn’t discovered until times in following years began sounding suspicious. The short course, coupled with a 25 mile per hour tailwind, pushed several runners under 2:20—including Keizo Yamada, the lightest winner at 108 pounds: 1. Keizo Yamada (Japan) 2:18:51; 2. Veikko Karvonen (Finland) 2:19:19; 3. Gosta Leandersson (Sweden) 2:19:36;

1954—The field included 1948 Olympic champion Delfo Cabrera and world record holder Jim Peters. But after years of trying, the Finns finally won their first title as Veikko Karvonen reached Boston first. Cabrera finished sixth: 1. Veikko Karvonen (Finland) 2:20:39; 2. Jim Peters (Great Britain) 2:22:40; 3. Erkki Puolakka (Finland) 2:24:25.

1955—Hikeo Hamamura made up a nearly three-minute deficit in the last half of the race to give Japan its third champion in five years. 1. Hideo Hamamura (Japan) 2:18:22; 2. Eino Pulkkinen (Finland) no time available; 3. Nick Costes, nt.

1956—The course obviously had to be checked after this race. The times were *too* fast. But distance aside, it was a tremendous duel. Antti Viskari and young Johnny Kelley (no relation to the former winner) were together within a mile of the finish. Viskari drew away for a 75-yard win: 1. Antti Viskari (Finland) 2:14:14; 2. John Kelley (Conn) 2:14:33; 3. Eino Oksanen (Finland) 2:17:56.

1957—Eleven foreign winners had crossed the line since the last American had taken the Boston title. John J. Kelley became the first homebred champion since John A. Kelley had won in 1945. Young Kelley established a record for the full-length course: 1. John Kelley (Conn) 2:20:05; 2. Veikko Karvonen (Finland) 2:23:54; 3. Chung Woo Lim (South Korea) 2:24:59.

1958—Franjo Mihalic of Yugoslavia survived the 84-degree heat better than any of the others to become the first Eastern European champion at Boston. He won, over defending champion John Kelley, by nearly five minutes: 1. Franjo Mihalic (Yugoslavia) 2:25:54; 2. John Kelley (Conn) 2:30:51; 3. Eino Pulkkinen (Finland) 2:37:04.

**1959**—In distance runners' terms, the '59 race was run in delightful conditions—42 degrees and rain. Eino Oksanen, a powerfully-built Finn, won the first of his three titles in the fastest mass race yet: 1. Eino Oksanen (Finland) 2:22:42; 2. John Kelley (Conn) 2:23:43; 3. Gordon Dickson (Canada) 2:24:04.

**1960**—This was the US Olympic tryout, but the title went to another Finn, this time Paavo Kotila. Only Johnny Kelley's course record was faster than Kotila's winning mark: 1. Paavo Kotila (Finland) 2:20:54; 2. Gordon McKenzie (NY) 2:22:18; 3. Jim Green (Mass) 2:23:37.

**1961**—It can be said that a black dog beat John Kelley as surely as Eino Oksanen did. Kelley was knocked down and bloodied at 16 miles, but lost to the Finn by a matter of seconds: 1. Eino Oksanen (Finland) 2:23:39; 2. John Kelley (Conn) 2:23:54; 3. Fred Norris (Mass/Great Britain) 2:26:46.

**1962**—Eino Oksanen, the strong Finn nicknamed "The Ox," joined an elite group when he won his third championship. It was the easiest of Oksanen's victories as he beat countryman Paavo Pystynen by over a minute: 1. Eino Oksanen (Finland) 2:23:48; 2. Paavo Pystynen (Finland) 2:24:58; 3. Alex Breckenridge 2:27:17.

**1963**—The race was spectacular in several respects. Most widely reported were the "failures" of Ethiopian Olympic champions Abebe Bikila and Mamo Wolde, who cramped up in the late miles this cold, windy afternoon. Aurele Vandendriessche cracked through the 2:20 barrier. Johnny Kelley was runnerup for the fifth time: 1. Aurele Vandendriessche (Belgium) 2:18:58; 2. John Kelley (Conn) 2:21:09; 3. Brian Kilby (Great Britain) 2:21:43.

**1964**—The field pushed past 300 for the first time. Snow fell on the runners as Aurele Vandendriessche repeated as champion and again broke 2:20. Hal Higdon led American finishers with 2:21:55: 1. Aurele Vandendriessche (Belgium) 2:19:59; 2. Tenho Salakka (Finland) 2:20:48; 3. Ron Wallingford (Canada) 2:20:51.

**1965**—The Japanese began two years of extraordinary dominance. This time they went 1-2-3-5-6, with Morio Shigematsu breaking the course record by over two minutes. Shigematsu would set a world record of 2:12:00 later that year. The first six broke 2:20, and Ralph Buschmann was the leading American at 2:20:20. 1. Morio Shigematsu (Japan) 2:16:33; 2. Hideaki Shishido (Japan) 2:17:13; 3. Takayuke Nakao (Japan) 2:17:31.

**1966**—The Japanese won even more convincingly this year, sweeping the top four spots. Kenji Kimihara, silver medalist-to-be in the 1968 Olympics, took top honors by just 12 seconds from countryman Seiichiro Sasaki. Norm Higgins ran 2:18:26, fastest ever by an American at Boston, while placing fifth: 1. Kenji Kimihara (Japan) 2:17:11; 2. Seiichiro Sasaki (Japan) 2:17:24; 3. Toru Terasawa (Japan) 2:17:46.

**1967**—Growth continued. The field this time topped 600. And 35-degree rain set up the fastest mass race yet. New Zealander Dave McKenzie broke the course record, and Tom Laris followed him by about a minute with the best time yet by a US citizen in this race. 1. Dave McKenzie (New Zealand) 2:15:45; 2. Tom Laris (Cal) 2:16:48; 3. Yutaki Aoki (Japan) 2:17:17.

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## PROGRESSION OF COURSE RECORD

(\* world's best time)

2:40:22	Clarence DeMar (US/Mass)	1927
2:37:07	Clarence DeMar (US/Mass)	1928
2:33:08	John Miles (Canada)	1929
2:31:01	Leslie Pawson (RI)	1933
2:28:51	Ellison Brown (RI)	1939
2:28:28	Gerard Cote (Canada)	1940
2:26:51	Joe Smith (Mass)	1942
2:25:39*	Yun Bok Suh (South Korea)	1947
2:20:05	John Kelley (Conn)	1957
2:18:58	Aurele Vandeniessche (Bel)	1963
2:16:33	Morio Shigematsu (Japan)	1965
2:15:45	Dave McKenzie (New Zealand)	1967
2:13:49	Yoshiaki Unetani (Japan)	1969
2:10:30	Ron Hill (Great Britain)	1970

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**1968**—Another 10 years had passed since an American runner had won here. Twenty-one-year-old Amby Burfoot put an end to that streak in a hard-fought victory over Bill Clark. Burfoot was coached by Johnny Kelley, the 1957 champion. Over 900 runners started in 72-degree sunshine: 1. Amby Burfoot (Conn) 2:22:17; 2. Bill Clark (Va) 2:22:49; 3. Alfredo Penaloza (Mexico) 2:25:06.

**1969**—This was the last “unlimited” Boston field. It had grown to a peak of 1150 starters. Yoshiaki Unetani of Japan left them all panting in his wake as he clipped almost two minutes from the course record. Ron Daws led the Americans with fourth place in 2:20:23: 1. Yoshiaki Unetani (Japan) 2:13:49; 2. Pablo Garrido (Mexico) 2:17:30; 3. Alfredo Penaloza (Mexico) 2:19:56.

**1970**—An entry limit of four hours (or its equivalent at shorter distances) was imposed. It succeeded only in cutting the field to 1011 starters. Perfect conditions (43 degrees, rain) led to near-total destruction of the record lists. Ron Hill set a course mark. Eamon O'Reilly ran an American record. Ed Walkwitz set a junior record (under age 20) of 2:23:26; Virgil Yehnert got a US senior (over-40) mark of 2:28:27. And Sara Berman ran a women's best of 3:05:07. 1. Ron Hill (Great Britain) 2:10:30; 2. Eamon O'Reilly (DC) 2:11:12; 3. Pat McMahon (Mass/Ireland) 2:14:53.

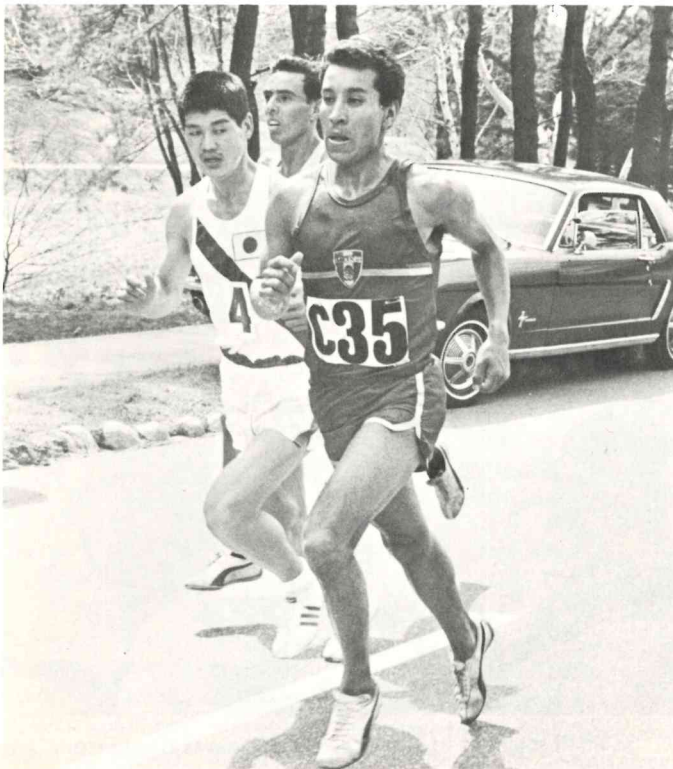
**1971**—The entry limit dropped to 3½ hours; the field fell to 887. Colombian Alvaro Mejia and Irishman Pat McMahon ran together all the way to the Prudential Center Plaza—150 yards from the end. Trackman Mejia then sprinted to a five-second victory—closest in the race's history. John Vitale, running his first marathon, led Americans with fourth place in 2:22:45: 1. Alvaro Mejia (Colombia) 2:18:45; 2. Pat McMahon (Mass/Ireland) 2:18:50; 3. Johnny Halberstadt (Okla/South Africa) 2:22:23.

# BOSTON MARATHON CHAMPIONS

Year	Name (State or Nation)	Age	Ht.	Wt.	Occupation
1897	John McDermott (NY)	25	5-6	124	unknown
1898	Ronald McDonald (Mass)	22	5-7	142	Student
1899	Lawrence Brignolia (Mass)	23	5-10	173	Blacksmith
1900	James Caffrey (Ont/Can)	23	5-8	128	Carpenter
1901	James Caffrey (Ont/Can)	24	5-8	130	Carpenter
1902	Sammy Mellor (NY)	23	5-6	128	unknown
1903	John Lorden (Mass)	28	5-7	136	unknown
1904	Michael Spring (NY)	21	5-6	118	Clerk
1905	Fred Lorz (NY)	25	5-8	153	unknown
1906	Timothy Ford (Mass)	18	5-6	113	Plumber
1907	Tom Longboat (Ont/Can)	19	5-8	146	Farmer
1908	Thomas Morrisey (NY)	20	5-7	133	unknown
1909	Henri Renaud (NH)	19	5-8	143	Mill hand
1910	Fred Cameron (NS/Can)	23	5-2½	120	Clerk
1911	Clarence DeMar (Mass)	21	5-8	127	Printer
1912	Mike Ryan (NY)	23	5-7½	132	unknown
1913	Fritz Carlson (Minn)	29	5-7	142	Lumberman
1914	James Duffy (Ont/Can)	24	5-8	145	Stone cutter
1915	Edouard Fabre (Que/Can)	28	5-7	147	Steel worker
1916	Arthur Roth (Mass)	23	5-6	120	Draftsman
1917	Bill Kennedy (NY)	35	5-6½	135	Bricklayer
1919	Carl Linder (Mass)	29	5-9	147	Shipyard
1920	Peter Trivoulidas (NY/Greece)	29	5-6	132	Busboy
1921	Frank Zuna (NJ)	28	5-9	151	Plumber
1922	Clarence DeMar (Mass)	32	5-8	137	Printer
1923	Clarence DeMar (Mass)	33	5-8	137	Printer
1924	Clarence DeMar (Mass)	34	5-8	137	Printer
1925	Charles Mellor (Ill)	31	5-9	145	Freight handler
1926	John Miles (NS/Can)	19	5-6½	133	Delivery clerk
1927	Clarence DeMar	38	5-8	140	Printer
1928	Clarence DeMar (Mass)	39	5-8	140	Printer
1929	John Miles (Ont/Can)	22	5-6½	136	Clerk
1930	Clarence DeMar (Mass)	41	5-8	142	Teacher
1931	James Henigan (Mass)	38	5-6½	136	Milkman
1932	Paul de Bruyn (Germany)	24	5-9	149	Fireman
1933	Leslie Pawson (RI)	29	5-8	138	Mill weaver
1934	Dave Komonen (Ont/Can)	35	5-5½	131	Cobbler
1935	John A. Kelley (Mass)	27	5-6	124	Florist
1936	Ellison Brown (RI)	22	5-7	139	Stone mason
1937	Walter Young (Que/Can)	24	5-11	145	Unemployed
1938	Leslie Pawson (RI)	33	5-9	141	Recreation
1939	Ellison Brown (RI)	25	5-7	138	Unemployed
1940	Gerard Cote (Que/Can)	26	5-6	133	Newsboy
1941	Leslie Pawson (RI)	36	5-9	143	Recreation
1942	Joseph Smith (Mass)	27	6-2	160	Milkman
1943	Gerard Cote (Que/Can)	29	5-6	135	Soldier
1944	Gerard Cote (Que/Can)	30	5-6	135	Soldier
1945	John A. Kelley (Mass)	37	5-6	123	Soldier
1946	Stylianios Kyriakides (Greece)	36	5-7	134	Bill collector
1947	Yun Bok Suh (South Korea)	24	5-1	115	Student



1948	Gerard Cote (Que/Can)	34	5-6	135	Distributor
1949	Gosta Leandersson (Sweden)	31	5-10	139	Woodsmen
1950	Kee Yong Ham (South Korea)	19	5-6	128	Student
1951	Shigeki Tanaka (Japan)	19	5-4½	120	Student
1952	Doroteo Flores (Guatemala)	30	5-7	131	Mill hand
1953	Keizo Yamada (Japan)	24	5-2	108	Clerk
1954	Veikko Karvonen (Finland)	28	5-6	124	Postal clerk
1955	Hideo Hamamura (Japan)	25	5-6½	132	Clerk
1956	Antti Viskari (Finland)	27	5-7	134	Soldier
1957	John J. Kelley (Conn)	26	5-6	128	Teacher
1958	Franjo Mihalic (Yugoslavia)	36	5-7	125	Printer
1959	Eino Oksanen (Finland)	27	5-7	154	Detective
1960	Paavo Kotila (Finland)	32	5-7	140	Farmer
1961	Eino Oksanen (Finland)	29	5-7	154	Detective
1962	Eino Oksanen (Finland)	50	5-7	154	Detective
1964	Aurele Vandendriessche (Bel)	28	5-7	132	Bookkeeper
1965	Aurele Vandendriessche (Bel)	29	5-7	132	Bookkeeper
1966	Kenji Kimihara (Japan)	25	5-5	130	Clerk
1967	Dave McKenzie (New Zealand)	24	5-4	123	Printer
1968	Amby Burfoot (Conn)	21	6-0	140	Student
1969	Yoshiaki Unetani (Japan)	24	5-9	140	Student
1970	Ron Hill (Great Britain)	31	5-6½	126	Chemist
1971	Alvaro Mejia (Colombia)	30	5-10	145	Unemployed



Pablo Garrido (C35) and '69 winner Yoshiaki Unetani (4).

**Chapter Two**

***Profile Of  
The Classic***



A small segment of the Boston field leaves Hopkinton.

# THE ROUTE

The Boston Marathon originally started in Ashland. Distance additions and course alterations pushed it back to the present starting point near the town green in Hopkinton.

From Hopkinton, the course winds through eight more suburbs before reaching downtown Boston. It passes through Ashland, Framingham, Natick, Wellesley, Auburndale, Newton, Brighton and Brookline.

Charts in this section give details on distances and elevations along the way. Generally the course's early profile is like this: a drop of over 300 feet in the first four miles, a slight rise to five, then generally down again—with only a couple of bumps for variety—all the way to Newton Lower Falls at 16 miles.

Once runners reach the level of the Charles River (50 feet) a long climb to Boston College begins. There is a series of hills—four in all, the first three followed by smaller downhill breaks.

The last climb is the legendary one—"Heartbreak Hill." It starts just after 20 miles, and peaks a mile later overlooking Boston College. The hill itself is small as hills go. It rises only 90 feet. But its positioning makes it particularly sadistic. It is at a point where 20 miles and three previous hills have extracted their toll.

Almost without exception, the course is flat or down from there. It drops over 200 feet in four miles. The race winds up at the Prudential Center Plaza, Boston's filled-in Back Bay section, once salt water and today not much above sea level.

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The Boston is the most run, most discussed and most thoroughly dissected course in the world. And yet there are two facts not more than a handful of runners have known until now.

- *The course goes downhill faster than has been advertised.*
- *It probably is longer than the official 26 miles 385 yards.*

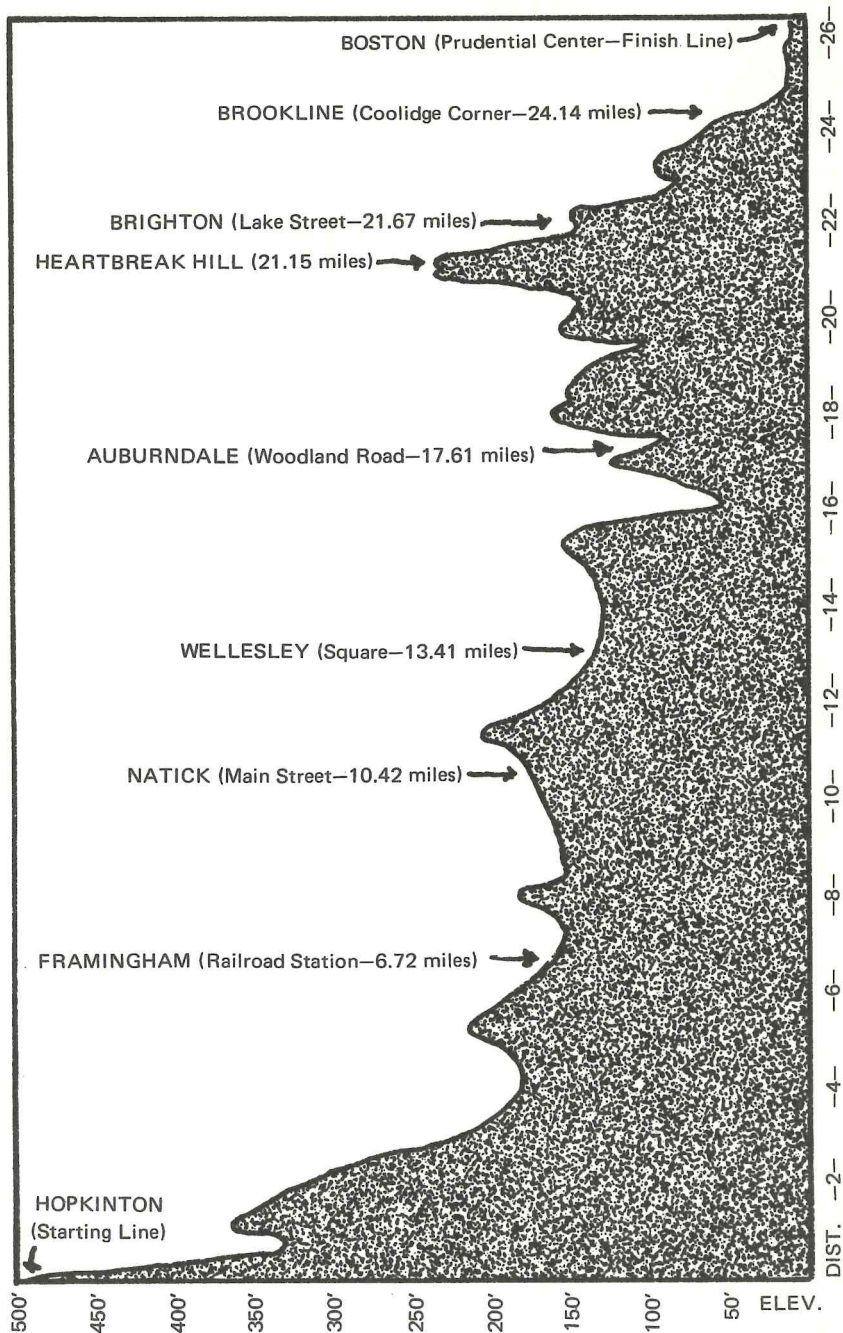
A group of Boston-area runners, John Booras, Larry and Sara Mae Ber- man, and Rick Levy, have gone over the course foot by foot—both vertically and horizontally. They've come up with the following findings.

Available literature states that the course starts at 220 feet elevation, drops to 50, goes back to 220 again at the crest of Heartbreak Hill, then descends to near sea level at the finish.

Levy refutes this. His study of topographic maps and his own altimeter readings indicate the net drop in elevation isn't 210 feet; it's over twice that, or about 480 feet.

"What I did," Levy says, "was consult US Geological Survey maps of the entire course. My altimeter readings cover the last 10 miles. The starting line is at 491 feet, the finish 10-15 feet. The course then has a downward tendency that would help account for fast times to the first checkpoint (6.72 miles), if not all the way. Sorry if this contributes to the de-mystification of the Boston Marathon!"

Booras and the Bermans measured the course in 1967 for AAU certifi-



cation. Levy reports this team found the total course distance to be 26.27 miles, not the standard 26.22. They used the calibrated bicycle method of measurement. Levy notes, "This method is regarded as having an accuracy of one yard per mile, or better, so when the course measured 90 yards long, this means it very likely is between 60 and 120 yards long. This is apparently regarded as being within acceptable tolerances. It is only one-fifth of 1% off. Still, that's 15 seconds at 5:00 pace, 24 seconds at 8:00 pace. The down-hills are probably worth a lot more in time gained, of course."

## MILE-BY-MILE ELEVATIONS

This chart, the work of Rick Levy, lists the elevations at each mile point along the Boston course. They are rounded to the nearest five feet. The exact elevation of the start is 491 feet; finish is about 12 feet. Numbers in the right column indicate the elevation changes in each mile.

Mileage	City or Town	Elevation	Net Change
Start	Hopkinton	490 feet	
1.0	Hopkinton	360 feet	-130
2.0	Hopkinton	320 feet	-40
3.0	Ashland	265 feet	-55
4.0	Ashland	180 feet	-85
5.0	Ashland	205 feet	+25
6.0	Framingham	180 feet	-25
7.0	Framingham	155 feet	-25
8.0	Natick	180 feet	+25
9.0	Natick	150 feet	-30
10.0	Natick	170 feet	+20
11.0	Natick	180 feet	+10
12.0	Wellesley	165 feet	-15
13.0	Wellesley	145 feet	-20
14.0	Wellesley	130 feet	-15
15.0	Wellesley	160 feet	+30
16.0	Wellesley	60 feet	-100
17.0	Auburndale	115 feet	+55
18.0	Newton	145 feet	+30
19.0	Newton	130 feet	-15
20.0	Newton	150 feet	+20
21.0	Newton	230 feet	+80
22.0	Brighton	150 feet	-80
23.0	Brookline	95 feet	-55
24.0	Brookline	60 feet	-35
25.0	Boston	15 feet	-45
26.0	Boston	10 feet	-5
Finish	Boston	10 feet	

# OFFICIAL BOSTON CHECKPOINTS

Checkpoints are sore points with many Boston runners. Officials insist on sticking with traditional checking stations at such points as 6.72 and 21.67 miles. To tired runners without historical appreciation and intimate knowledge of Boston's environs, the checkpoints in Framingham, Natick, etc., are meaningless.

Rick Levy adds this footnote on the official checkpoints. "Some of these points are slightly migratory from year to year, in that they wander about in the vicinity of the locations tabulated, apparently according to traffic, whim and happenstance. It should be pointed out, too, that not only do the checkpoints sometimes wander, but the distances displayed at these checkpoints are only estimates. And hundreds of runners never see the later checkpoints at all as the points are struck early enough to permit officials to reach the Prudential for at least part of the finish line action."

The logical solution would be to paint a large white "5," "10," "15," and "20" on the road at appropriate points. Communities which halt their traffic for the race surely would allow this small act. This has been suggested, with no luck so far. When a race has the Boston's tradition, it yields to change grudgingly.

Clandestinely spray-painted mileage figures—somewhat approximate—have sometimes appeared on trees and poles, but it takes a really sharp, watchful eye to spot them.

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**Here's how Ron Hill's record race in 1970 broke down at the various checkpoints. Listed are the distances and times—both cumulative and since the previous timing stations—and the average pace for each segment.**

Checkpoint	Distance (Split)	Time (Split)	Pace
Framingham	6.72 miles	31:36	4:41
Natick	10.42 miles (3.70)	49:46 (18:20)	4:57
Wellesley	13.41 miles (2.99)	1:04:29 (14:43)	4:55
Auburndale	17.61 miles (4.20)	1:25:06 (20:37)	4:55
Brighton	21.67 miles (4.06)	1:46:46 (21:40)	5:20
Brookline	24.14 miles (2.47)	1:59:27 (12:41)	5:08
Boston	26.27 miles (2.13)	2:10:30 (11:03)	5:11

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**NEXT PAGE:** With his fishnet shirt offering scant protection against the 40-degree rain, Ron Hill finishes his record run in 1970.



# THE RUNNERS

The imposing, official-looking packet of instructions—an entry blank and three pages of instructions—comes from the “Boston Athletic Association, Boston Garden, Boston, Mass. 02114.” It’s like a letter from Mecca.

The words are there, in harsh simple terms. “*This is not a jogging race.*” And then there are three statements explaining entry requirements:

- “All competitors must be AAU registered *male* athletes... Minimum age is 18.”

- “A runner must have completed any previous BAA or other sanctioned marathon within  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours, or in the past year have completed an AAU sanctioned long distance race of at least 20 kilometers ( $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles) within the following time limits: 1:25 for 20 kilometers, 1:45 for 15 miles, and 2:30 for 20 miles; comparable times will be accepted for races at metric distances.”

- “The record for the course is 2:10:30... In 1971, 592 runners finished within  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Please do not enter unless you have a reasonable chance of finishing within that time. No times or places will be recorded after 3:30 p.m.”

Entries close April 1. Entry fee is \$2.00, etc., etc.

John D. Semple works in a small and ever-hectic office in Boston Garden. “Jock” is a physiotherapist, and a busy one. He doesn’t get paid for his work on the Marathon. The work he does on the race, in fact, drains time and energy away from his occupation.

Semple sits in the storm center. Incoming mail and calls about the Marathon are directed to him. Most of the burden of the race’s growth has fallen on him.

Seldom a diplomatic person, the much-misunderstood Jock was instrumental in imposing the above restrictions. He loves the race, as he says later in this booklet. And he thinks the limits are absolutely essential to save the race from overpopulation and to rescue the small working staff (essentially Semple, his wife, Tony Nota and Will Cloney) from an impossible work load.

The restrictions haven’t made Semple many friends, nor have his vigorous efforts to police the rules and statements regarding them. Two disputes have been particularly heated.

The colorful Mr. Semple once remarked, “I don’t discriminate against women; they’re just not allowed to run in my race.” Jock received an embarrassing flood of publicity in 1967 when he tried to remove a young woman from the course, bodily.

He has mellowed since, however. (“My bark is worse than my bite,” he says.) By 1972, there was serious talk that women meeting the  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -hour qualifying standard would be allowed to run the race *officially*. The only stipulation would be that men’s and women’s results listings be separate.

But while Semple has mellowed toward women, he has perhaps come down harder on the so-called “clowns.” He’s stubborn about keeping it a race for “serious marathoners.”



"Some of these people we've had come out like ground hogs, once a year," he said of the entry limits. "From now on, maybe they can hold their own race—on Ground Hog's Day."

By "serious marathoners," Semple and the rest of the Boston officials aren't talking about the very fastest ones. "Our aim," race director Will Cloney notes, "is not to discourage joggers. But primarily it is not to discourage legitimate runners from coming to our race."

Regardless of how it may appear, Semple, Cloney and Company are intensely interested in marathoning and marathoners—the Boston Marathon and Boston Marathoner in particular. They want to keep their race a manageable race for the runner, not let it degenerate into a Woodstock-like happening. This isn't easy when they have the most popular race in the country on their hands. They had to draw a line at four hours in 1970, redraw it at 3:30 in 1971, and may have to draw it again even lower.

In an uncharacteristic understatement, Semple says, "I think our race has helped marathoning..." He's right. The Boston has helped marathoning so much that this one race can no longer hold all the country's marathoners. Not even all the "serious" ones.

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Boston's tremendous popularity among runners is a recent phenomenon, right? Wrong. Look back into the race's history. A field of 164 competed in 1909. Considering the population at the time, travel difficulties and the newness of this sport of marathoning, that's an incredible figure.

So is the fact that 254 runners raced the Boston in 1928. It wasn't until three and a half decades later that the race got any bigger than that.

The real surge, though, occurred in the mid-1960s. The number of entrants shot up at the following rate from 1962 until 1969, the last of the unrestricted races (\* approximate):

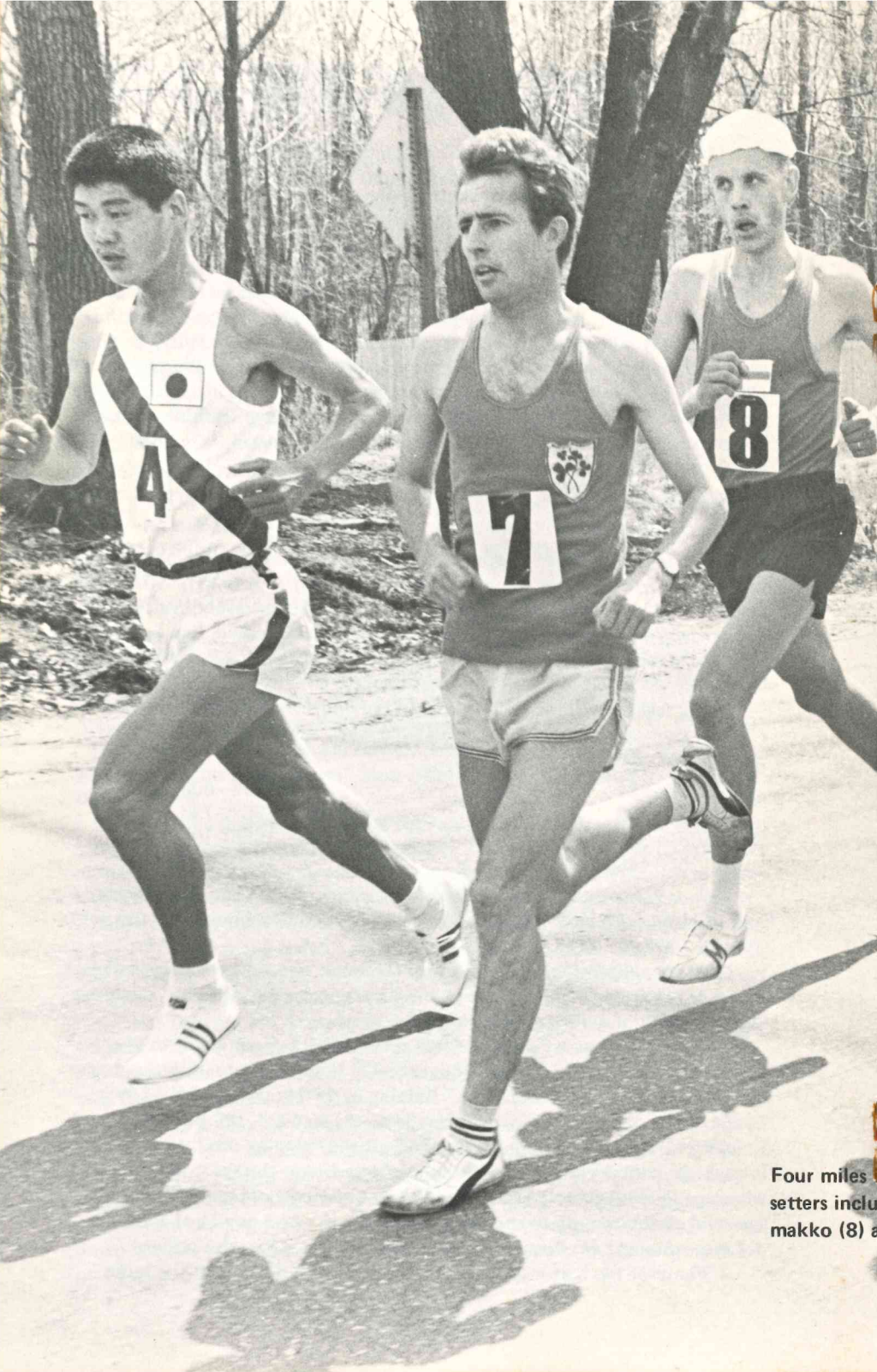
1962—231	1966—600*
1963—282	1967—733
1964—391	1968—1013
1965—443	1969—1335

Then came the year of the four-hour standard; 1175 runners entered. And in 1971, with another half-hour's worth of runners eliminated, the field still had 1098.

The conclusion that comes out of these last two or three years is that Boston's qualifying standards are barely managing to stay ahead of the growing popularity of and improvement in the sport.

Lots of reasons are given for this growth and corresponding improvement. The most logical explanations are: (1) runners returned to the roads for long distance, "marathon-type" training in the 1960s following Arthur Lydiard's success with the New Zealanders; (2) Lydiard, Bill Bowerman and Kenneth Cooper, among others, touched off the "jogging revolution" that brought an entirely new group of "non-athletes" into the sport, many of whom graduated to the marathon; (3) Great numbers of men over college age—and all the way up to their 50s and 60s—got active or stayed active in distance running; (4) Boston's good publicity hit a responsive group.

Whatever the reasons, the Boston got bigger and better at the same



Four miles  
setters inclu  
makko (8) a



into the 1969 Boston, passing through Ashland, the pace-  
de Yoshiaki Unetani (4), Pat McMahon (7), Pentti Rum-  
and Bob Deines (6).

time. The time limits may have kept a few runners out. But they encouraged just as many to push for new levels. The 1971 race had the toughest group of marathoners ever assembled in the US.

Statistics don't tell half the story, but these figures are revealing: 887 runners started, of whom 807 (or 91%, an extremely high completion rate) finished; 29% of them broke three hours, 73% were under 3½ hours, and 94% of them made the finish in four hours.

The Boston brings out the best marathoners, and it brings the best out of them.

The Boston attracts all types. It attracts the runners going for the big prize, of course. You've read about them already. But they're the very tip of the iceberg. Not more than 10% of the runners *think* they have a chance of winning; not more than 1% really do. The rest of the field makes the Boston what it is.

John Cantwell, a medical doctor-marathoner, writes, "The Boston Marathon is the only race in the world where a man can be happy about merely finishing, delighted at being beaten by only 300 other runners, and ecstatic about placing in the top 100."

That's part of the attraction. But there's more.

"In our ever-more-mechanized, programmed society," novelist Erich Segal wrote before running the 1971 Boston, "marathoners want to assert their independence, affirm their individuality. . . Call it humanism, call it health, call it folly. Whatever it is, our ailing world could use a lot more of it."

George Sheehan, another M.D.-marathoner, comments on Segal's observation: "But is this an escape to independence, to individuality? To be a number among a sea of numbers; a tiny wave in an ocean of surf, following the tide from the west toward Massachusetts Bay. Segal says yes. I agree.

"There are, you see, over one thousand Boston Marathons—one for each entrant, each alone in his own world making his own decision, knowing that the result is clearly his to live with and no one else's; knowing also that his goal is to fulfill his potential, to complete himself as a human being. So no marathon is ever a failure."

Nor is any Boston marathoner who finishes ever a failure.

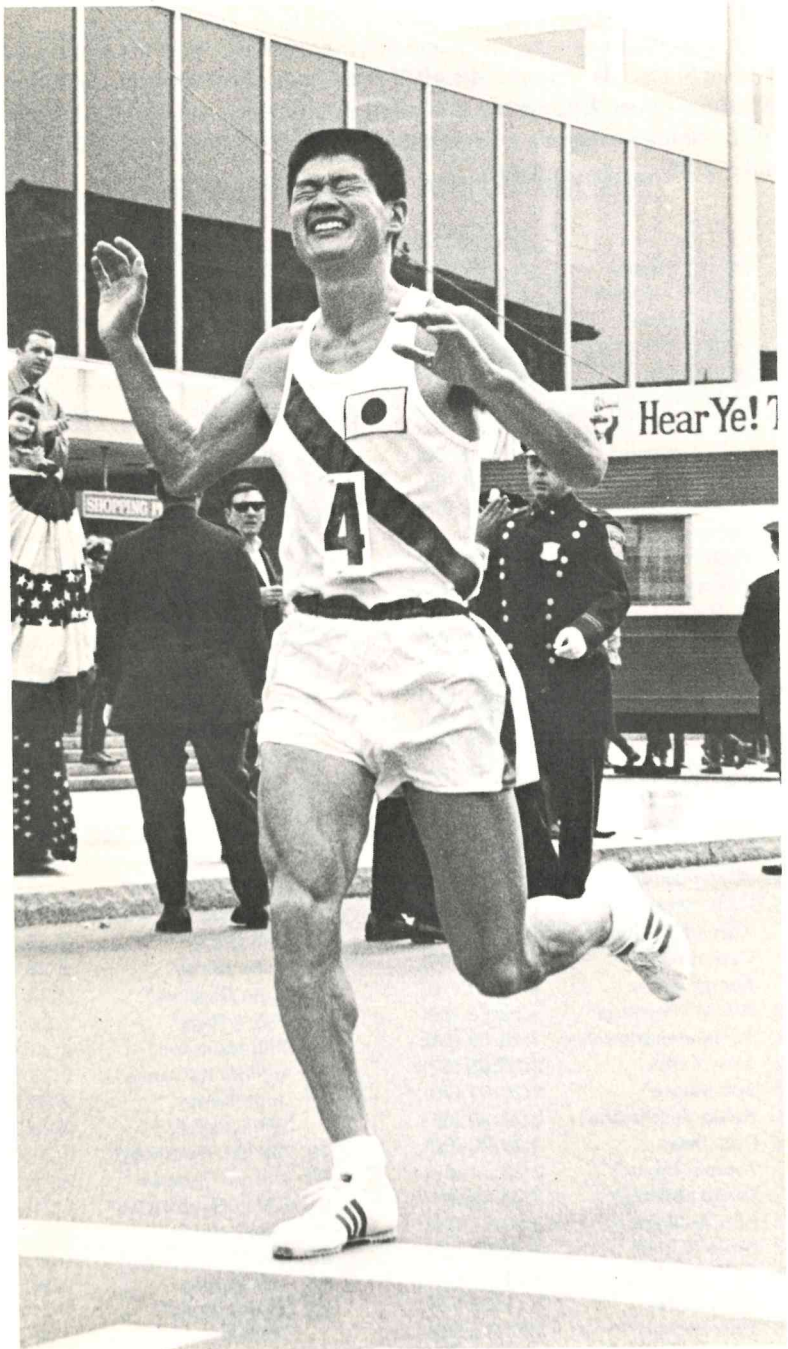
Segal wrote, "Hail Boston! Nearly two centuries after Paul Revere traversed you on horseback, runners take the roads. Nearly a thousand strong—and a few hundred weak... Some are Lancelots, most are Don Quixotes. All are noble."

A spectator shouted to Segal as he completed the 1971 race, "Finishing means never having to say you're sorry."

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## BOSTON MARATHON RECORDS

All-Time	2:10:30	Ron Hill (Great Britain)	1970
American	2:11:12	Eamon O'Reilly (DC)	1970
Junior (Under 20)	2:23:26	Ed Walkwitz (19, Mass)	1970
Senior (Over 40)	2:23:05	Erik Ostbye (44, Swe)	1965
U.S. Senior	2:28:27	Virgil Yehnert (41, Ohio)	1970
Women	3:05:07	Sara Berman (Mass)	1970



YOSHIAKI UNETANI IN 1969

# HUNDRED FASTEST TIMES

This list should eliminate any lingering doubts about the Boston being a "class" race. By the time the 1972 race is run, there probably will have been 100 times under 2:25 on the full-length course. Here are the top 100 through 1971. Non-Americans are listed with an \*. The remaining US runners' times under 2:30 are also included.

1. Ron Hill*	2:10:30 (70)	45. Brian Kilby*	2:21:43 (63)
2. Eamon O'Reilly	2:11:12 (70)	46. Tom Laris	2:21:44 (66)
3. Yoshiaki Unetani*	2:13:49 (69)	47. E. Valle*	2:21:52 (65)
4. Pat McMahon*	2:14:53 (70)	48. Hal Higdon	2:21:55 (64)
5. Pentti Rummakko*	2:14:59 (70)	49. Danny McFadzean*	2:22:06 (67)
6. Dave McKenzie*	2:15:45 (67)	50. Kalevi Ihashi*	2:22:07 (67)
7. Morio Shigematsu*	2:16:33 (66)	51. Bob Scharf	2:22:15 (66)
8. Tom Laris	2:16:48 (67)	52. Amby Burfoot	2:22:17 (68)
9. Kenji Kimihara*	2:17:11 (66)	Bill Clark	2:22:17 (70)
10. Hideaki Shishido*	2:17:13 (65)	54. Gordon McKenzie	2:22:18 (60)
11. Yutaki Aoki*	2:17:18 (67)	55. Eino Oksanen*	2:22:23 (63)
12. Seiichiro Sasaki*	2:17:24 (66)	Johnny Halberstadt*	2:22:23 (71)
13. Pablo Garrido*	2:17:30 (69)	57. Wayne Yetman*	2:22:32 (70)
14. Takayuke Nakao*	2:17:31 (65)	58. Eino Oksanen*	2:22:42 (59)
15. A. Vandendriessche*	2:17:44 (65)	59. John Vitale	2:22:45 (71)
16. Toru Terasawa*	2:17:46 (66)	60. Dave Ellis*	2:22:49 (64)
17. Lou Castagnola	2:17:48 (67)	Bill Clark	2:22:49 (68)
18. Antonio Ambu*	2:18:04 (67)	Bob Deines	2:22:49 (69)
19. Hirokazu Okabe*	2:18:11 (66)	63. Erik Ostbye*	2:23:05 (65)
20. Andy Boychuk*	2:18:17 (67)	64. Jose Garcia*	2:23:16 (69)
21. Yoshikozy Funasako*	2:18:18 (65)	65. Garry Harrison*	2:23:18 (70)
22. Norm Higgins	2:18:26 (66)	66. Byron Lowry	2:23:20 (71)
23. Alvaro Mejia*	2:18:45 (71)	67. Art Coolidge	2:23:23 (71)
24. Pat McMahon*	2:18:50 (71)	68. Pat McMahon*	2:23:24 (69)
25. A. Vandendriessche*	2:18:58 (63)	69. Ron Wallingford*	2:23:26 (65)
26. Kalle Hakarainen*	2:19:42 (70)	Ed Walkwitz	2:23:26 (70)
27. Kazuo Matsubara*	2:19:47 (65)	71. Jim Green	2:23:37 (60)
Dave Ellis*	2:19:47 (66)	72. John Kelley	2:23:43 (59)
Kenny Moore	2:19:47 (70)	Eino Oksanen*	2:23:43 (62)
30. Alfredo Penalozza*	2:19:56 (69)	74. Kerry Ragg*	2:23:45 (70)
31. A. Vandendriessche*	2:19:59 (64)	Phil Hampton*	2:23:46 (69)
32. John Kelley	2:20:05 (57)	76. Veikko Karvonen*	2:23:54 (57)
33. Bob Moore*	2:20:07 (70)	John Kelley	2:23:54 (61)
34. Ralph Buschmann	2:20:20 (65)	Willie Speck	2:23:54 (71)
35. Ron Daws	2:20:23 (69)	79. Markku Salminen*	2:24:02 (71)
36. Takashi Inoue*	2:20:41 (67)	80. Gordon Dickson*	2:24:04 (59)
37. Tenho Salakka*	2:20:48 (64)	81. Pentti Rummakko*	2:24:14 (69)
38. Ron Wallingford*	2:20:51 (64)	82. Ron Daws	2:24:27 (66)
39. Paavo Kotila*	2:20:54 (60)	83. Veikko Karvonen*	2:24:37 (59)
40. Andy Boychuk*	2:21:06 (70)	84. Jeff Reneau	2:24:42 (69)
41. John Kelley	2:21:09 (63)	85. Abebe Bikila*	2:24:43 (63)
42. Eino Oksanen*	2:21:13 (65)	Willie Speck	2:24:43 (70)
43. Toru Terasawa*	2:21:17 (67)	87. Kim*	2:24:44 (66)
44. Bob Moore*	2:21:28 (69)		

88. Bob Deines	2:24:50 (70)	95. Gene Comroe	2:25:16 (67)
89. Paavo Pystynen*	2:24:58 (62)	96. O. Manninen*	2:25:19 (57)
90. Chong Woo Lim*	2:24:59 (57)	Tenho Salakka*	2:25:19 (66)
91. Gar Williams	2:25:06 (65)	98. Ron Wallingford*	2:25:21 (71)
Alfredo Penaloza*	2:25:06 (65)	99. John Kelley	2:25:23 (65)
93. Pablo Garrido*	2:25:07 (68)	100. John Kelley	2:25:25 (67)
94. Lou Castagnola	2:25:12 (65)		

## ADDITIONAL AMERICANS UNDER 2:30

### 2:25:27 to 2:26:59

Amby Burfoot	2:25:27 (70)
Bill Clark	2:26:19 (71)
Mike Kimball	2:26:26 (67)
Al Confalone	2:26:30 (60)
Jeff Galloway	2:26:35 (71)
Joe Smith	2:26:51.2 (42)
Gar Williams	2:26:54 (66)

### 2:27:00 to 2:27:59

Jack Fultz	2:27:12 (71)
Alex Breckenridge	2:27:17 (62)
John Kelley	2:27:23 (64)
Grif Balthis	2:27:29 (70)
Steve Dean	2:27:37 (70)
Rick Bayko	2:27:37 (71)
Steve Matthews	2:27:52 (67)
Gary Muhrcke	2:27:53 (69)

### 2:28:00 to 2:28:59

Lou Gregory	2:28:03 (42)
Justin Gubbins	2:28:03 (71)
Amby Burfoot	2:28:05 (67)
Jim Colvin	2:28:09 (70)
Moses Mayfield	2:28:14 (70)
Fred Best	2:28:20 (70)
Fred Best	2:28:24 (71)
Virgil Yehnert	2:28:27 (70)

Peter Stipe	2:28:31 (70)
Nick Kitt	2:28:32 (66)
Danny Cole	2:28:35 (70)
John Kelley	2:28:37 (62)
Gary Muhrcke	2:28:37 (70)
Gordon McKenzie	2:28:40 (61)
Ron Daws	2:28:42 (67)
Alex Breckenridge	2:28:44 (60)
Jim McDonagh	2:28:49 (70)
John Lesch	2:28:50 (71)
Ellison Brown	2:28:51.8 (39)

### 2:29:00 to 2:29:55

Tom Osler	2:29:04 (67)
Bob Carman	2:29:06 (60)
Jim McDonagh	2:29:07 (69)
Marshall Adams	2:29:09 (70)
Bob Fitts	2:29:15 (71)
Ron Daws	2:29:17 (68)
Jim Green	2:29:21 (64)
Bill Harvey	2:29:22 (67)
Ron Daws	2:29:31 (65)
Bill Clark	2:29:44 (67)
Amby Burfoot	2:29:50 (69)
Jim McDonagh	2:29:55 (67)
Tom Derderian	2:29:57 (70)
Jim Green	2:29:58 (59)
Jim Colvin	2:29:58 (69)

# THE RACE

"Patriot's Day," Erich Segal has written, "is a religious holiday in Boston. More people attend its rites than go to church on Easter Sunday. The civil holiday, the anniversary of Paul Revere's ride, is merely a pretext. The real occasion is the running of the Boston Marathon."

The amount of dreaming, scheming and plain grinding work that goes into this one April afternoon is staggering. The foundation is laid now, and nothing much is going to change it. The rehearsals are behind. Today is the performance. This is the day all the separate elements—the runners, the organization, the crowd and the course—come together to re-enact Boston's annual rites of marathon worship.

It's a strange and exciting time for marathoners. They accept their usual role as the invisible, lonely men of sports. They're used to being ignored, if not intimidated. Now, suddenly, they're thrown onto center stage—or on the altar, if you care to continue the religious analogy.

The runners gobble this up. They wallow in the atmosphere, the attention, all the rest of it.

Pre-race activity centers in the Hotel Lenox, in the shadow of the Prudential Tower. Marathoners stay here, and eat here, and above all talk here. The air from Saturday on is alive with shouted times, training styles and pre-arranged excuses.

Monday morning, early, the runner trudges up the street to the "Pru" to board a bus headed for Hopkinton. There, at 8 a.m., he likely comes face to face with Jock Semple for the first time. Semple claims he's relaxed on race day. "It has become a smooth thing on the day of the race," he says. "All the volunteers make it easy."

Semple looks anything but relaxed. His rough-edged Scottish voice hollers instructions, warnings and a few obscenities. He blocks the bus door and checks the runners like a customs agent before letting them on.

In all, there are 10 buses. Jock sees to it that none is filled beyond capacity. "I'm not having anyone stand all the way to Hopkinton," he says. That's the concerned side of Semple that his critics don't see.

The road to Hopkinton seems awfully long. Thoughts of coming back that distance on foot pass through more than a few minds as runners gaze out on streets. At this early hour of a holiday morning, the streets are still empty. They don't look different than streets anywhere else.

The last hours before the race drag. The mob in the Hopkinton Gym creates a sense of urgency. Runners hurry to get their clothes changed; they hurry to wait in line for their physicals; they hurry to wait in line at the rest rooms. The closeness and jostling begin getting on their nerves. They grow impatient for the open road.

But the road isn't very open. When the race finally starts at noon, the

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**NEXT PAGE:** Erich Segal (799) was a Boston Marathoner long before he was a best-selling novelist. He had run 14 of them by the time "Love Story" took the world by storm in 1970-71.





1000 runners break from the starting line at about the pace of oozing molasses. In recent years, a common complaint has been, "It was 30 seconds after the gun went off before I crossed the *starting* line."

You're a mile down the road before you're free enough of traffic snarls to realize, "Hey, I'm really running the Boston Marathon!"

The men on the press bus and the flatbed truck carrying photographers have eyes only for the leaders. Often the press vehicles get balled up in human traffic. The drivers honk frantically as they weave through these obstructions and race to the front.

By the time most of these runners finish, the writers and photographers will have dashed off to their typewriters and darkrooms to process the news of the Boston Marathon, while missing half the story. Special editions will be on the streets before the story is completed.

The Boston spectators aren't so short-sighted. They watch the whole thing. Not only do they watch, but in their own way they participate. Children offer drinks and orange slices, and look dejected when there are few takers. Their parents strain to see the number on a passing runner's chest. Then they look down at the full-page list of entrants clipped from the morning newspaper, hoping to find the runner's name in time to shout encouragement. It makes them both feel good.

Who knows how many Boston people watch the Marathon? Estimates range from tens of thousands to a half-million, depending on who's estimating. Nearly every foot of roadside space for 26 miles 385 yards is occupied.

Peter Burkhart says he "grew up in the shadow of the Boston course" and he has run it countless times. He has seen the race from both the spectator's and the competitor's angles. He describes the scene:

"The spectators at Boston are not the usual run. They know about the great marathons of the past because they have seen them or their parents have. Each individual effort is appreciated because they know the course, and everyone knows someone in the race.

"Kids in the Boston area dream about running the big race while they are growing up. Some eventually make it, but most don't. However, each year they return to watch the race and 'run' it in their own special way. It is sort of a mystical involvement. That is why the B.A.A. is the greatest race of all—and I include the Olympic marathons in this roll."

One Boston Marathon is never enough. Run one, and you're hungry for more. Some runners never lose their appetites. Clarence DeMar kept running here until shortly before his death at age 70. Neither of the John Kelleys comes close to the leaders any longer, but both return to celebrate the Boston rites each year. "Old John" is in his 60s; "Young John" is in his 40s. Former front-runners Jim Green, Alex Breckenridge and Don Heinicke still run it, along with dozens who never were famous.

Hal Higdon wrote in *On the Run from Dogs and People*:

"There is something about the Boston Marathon that brings runners back year after year. Maybe it is the tradition. Maybe it is the competition. Maybe it is the spectators lining the course. More likely it is all this plus the

fact that the runner who trains in anonymity 364 days in the year finally can mount the central stage.

“John Ekkens, a physical education instructor from Grand Rapids, Mich., discovered this in 1970. He had covered about 23 miles and was feeling numb and with little energy left. Suddenly a woman stepped in front of him at a busy intersection. Ekkens found himself unable to change pace and ran into the woman, knocking her down.

“He staggered on, barely aware of what had happened, debating whether or not to run back and offer help. Suddenly he heard the voice of a policeman, shouting angrily—but not at him. ‘Get out of the road, lady,’ said the officer. ‘It’s a runner’s world today.’”



With Eamon O'Reilly only dimly visible in the background, Ron Hill races the press bus at the 16-mile point in the 1970 Marathon. Hill set a course record of 2:10:30; O'Reilly ran an American best of 2:11:12.

**Chapter Three**

***Jock Semple's  
Stormy Affair***



**JOCK SEMPLE**

# MAN IN THE MIDDLE

BY JOHN SEMPLE

John D. Semple is not the director of the Boston Marathon. Will Cloney has that title. But it's Semple, generally known by friends and critics alike as "Jock", who truly sits in the race's storm center. He handles many of the controversies that swirl around the event, and he creates a few himself.

The Boston Marathon isn't a one-day-a-year thing with Jock. It's a year-long affair that has lasted most of his adult life. It started when he ran the race in 1929, continued as a runner and coach for the next two decades, and led in 1950 to his involvement on the organizational end. In recent years it has been an emotional love-hate struggle for the outspoken Scotsman.

Two months before the 1972 race, Semple was already answering 20-25 letters a day from prospective marathoners. "It's the heaviest yet," he moaned in a mixture of pride, anger and resignation. The phone calls were coming in at an almost equal rate. All the calls and letters go through his physiotherapy office in Boston Garden.

Despite the work load, Semple was more than happy to provide material for this article. He freely offered an hour-long tape recording, supplemented it with five hand-written pages and dug up old Boston programs to send along with the package.

He talks of the headaches of the Boston Marathon: these gripes have been published before. But he also talks of the work load he willingly shoulders, and the reasons he does it; this is the side of him most Boston runners never see or appreciate.

Jock was 68 years old when he put together this story. "Sometimes I get peeved and say, 'This is the last year,'" he says. "But it never will be. As long as they want me, I'll keep going."

My first race personally in the Boston was 1929. I came to Philadelphia from Scotland in 1923, and I went back to the Old Country in '28 to try and make the British Olympic team. On the way back, I stopped off in Boston. I finished 29th that year. And then in 1930 I hitchhiked up from Philadelphia and placed seventh.

I got involved with the organizational part of the Marathon in 1950, but it wasn't hard then. The fields were under 200 and the correspondence was nothing. The foreign entry was also small. There weren't as many problems.

Will Cloney was director then, as now, and even his headaches were not so large or so many. Then the race grew...

I'm just on the committee that puts on the Marathon. But I've always seemed to fall into situations where I'm a one-man show. All my life I've been forming clubs. Running's been good to me, and I want to help all I can. I don't know how men can run for years and then suddenly drop out and not even go to the races any more. I can't be inactive. I've got to work with the kids. I get pleasure out of seeing them winning, or even doing their best. It's just in my blood.

Any of these kids get injuries, I take care of them. The coaches send their kids down. I never charge them anything, even if they run for other clubs. Sometimes they just come in to cry on my shoulder and ask my advice.

Will Cloney, Tony Nota and I do most of the Marathon work. On the day of the race we have lots of volunteer helpers. They get a lot of thanks and appreciation. But it's once a year that they do that. Mine is a 365-day-a-year job. I have less to do the day of the race. It's a pleasure that day.

It is only really the last five years that the load has bordered on the impossible. There are plenty of people involved in this race, but it has become so smooth on the day of the race with all the volunteers that it seems easy, and it seems like we have a big organization. We don't.

These are things people don't know about—even in my organization. They don't know the half of it. So is it any wonder when I get a call from someone who has never run, doesn't know what AAU means, that I cut him off abruptly?

Some people sympathize to a certain extent. But nobody—*nobody*—can conceive the mail we get. I'm getting 20-25 letters a day, and 25-30% of them have never done any running. They don't even know what the AAU is. These are the ones who are discouraging, and they give you the most work. They never send stamped envelopes. They think the B.A.A. is a rich organization.

The phone calls are what hurt me the most. The Boston A.A. is in the phone book. Calls go through the Garden switchboard, and of course everything for the B.A.A. is shoved onto me. I can be massaging a man, with another on the table getting diathermy. The phone rings, and I have to interrupt my work. I've cut it down some now by just saying, "Send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Boston Marathon, care of the Boston Garden, and I'll send you the rules." If they keep asking questions, I say, "Look, just send a self-addressed envelope." And I hang up.

Too many runners think I'm just sitting there answering the telephone. I'm trying to make a living. One man made a joke, "For every phone call on the marathon, deduct 25 cents from the cost of my massage." I'm always getting interrupted. It gets wicked. But I shrug my shoulders and forget it. I keep doing it.

All the entries come through me. Tony Nota helps an awful lot. Tony takes care of the entry list, sees that the program gets printed, puts the number and pins in the envelopes—lots of things. That's just a thank-you job, and he's not even an ex-runner. He's an employee of the Boston Garden, and he just loves athletics. Tony and I gripe to each other all the time, but we'll probably always be working on the Marathon.

Rules are rules. And the man that lays down and enforces the rules is always the bad guy. Of course, sometimes I do answer snappy, too, and sometimes I do blow my top, even when I say something on the phone they know who's talking. I can't disguise my voice. I make enemies. Who doesn't? The more you do, the more enemies you're going to make, because you've got to step on somebody's toes. I'm happy to say, though, that I have more friends than enemies.

The 3:33 and 3:35 guys, I'll let in. They have a fair shot at 3:30. But you have to set a limit. I honestly think that setting that 3:30 time limit has

improved marathoning the country over, despite the cries from the five-hour men.

Boston has helped develop more marathons and it has improved the caliber. I remember in my day when someone did 2:35 he was a good man. Heavens, that doesn't get you anywhere today in any race. Why? Because runners have higher aims.

When I started marathon running, my aim was to finish. The next objective was to do 3:15. The next objective was to do 3:00, the next 2:45. Today these times are nothing. The ordinary runner today is far, far ahead of the good runner of the 30s, when I was running.

In all respect to the runners of the two eras, though, I think it's easier to run today. The runners can all get to races easier now. No one cares whether they've got five cents in the bank; if they have a credit card they go. We're living in a more affluent society today. In my day, you had to hitchhike. I hitchhiked to every race during the Depression years. But now a man just gets on a plane.

I think the size of the field will keep spiraling. I've never seen so much mail so early as this year. I just don't know what we're going to do. The roads are only so wide. The school in Hopkinton is only so big, and there's no other place to dress.

We cannot open it up. As it is, we have too many, even without the hundred at the start with the fancy pants, the homemade numbers and the silly hats. We can't keep them away. It wouldn't be so bad if it weren't for those and the liars we get. How can I peruse every entry blank? How can I know if a man's telling a lie? I'd need 30 hours a day to check the results of every race, seeing if Joe Blow really did what he said.

There are so many marathons today. Why do they all want to run here? Why can't they run the Paavo Nurmi, or one in Texas, or another one if they just want to satisfy themselves?

The women still can't run. They'll come out of the woods, yeah, but Will Cloney can't give them permission because AAU rules say they can't run in it. What the heck. I have no objection if a woman puts on a uniform and mingles with the guys; they never give us any trouble. The only ones that give us trouble are the newsmen. To them it's a story, but even that's beginning to wear a little thin now. If Will wants to give women numbers and let them run among themselves, that's up to him, but they still can't run officially.

Personally, though, I'd rather have a hundred women who can run under 3:30 than the pot-bellied guys we do have. If it were declared legal for women to run, I'd be the first to welcome them. I don't have anything against women.

I'll tell you this. The Nina Kuscsiks and Sara Bermans are an asset to the race. I can't say that about some of the men who try to run.

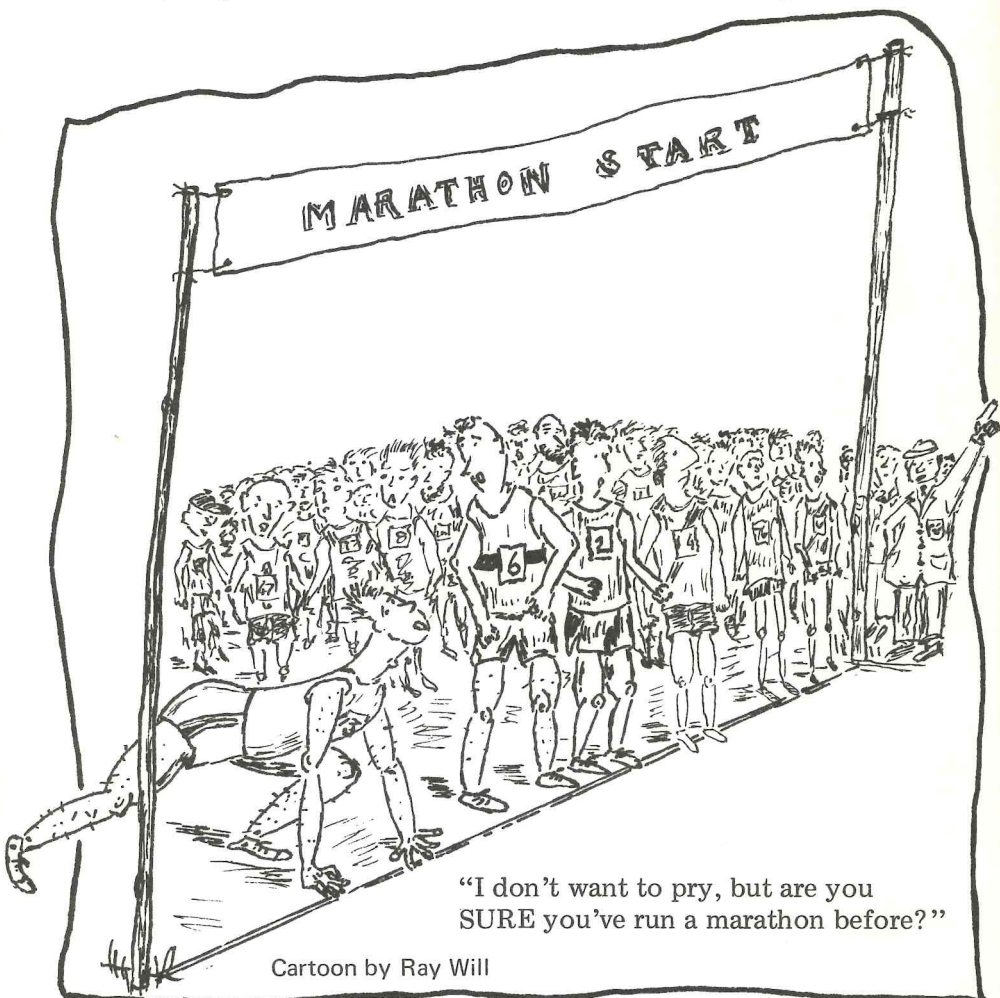
And then there are the high school boys. We've made an age limit of 18 and can't lower it. There are some exceptional boys who are 17 or 16. But if you lowered it, you'd be flooded by local schoolboys who can't run across the street and can't make their own school track teams. I want this age limit raised to 19, but Will won't do it. He likes the big fields.

I don't want it to be just a race of "class" runners. It will never be that. It'll always be open for legitimate marathoners, but must be limited to them.

This would be a lot easier if it weren't a point-to-point race. Starting and finishing in one place is easy. We have the terrific transportation problem of getting the runners to Hopkinton and bringing all their clothes back. We now charge a dollar apiece for the bus. But the buses cost \$60 or \$70 each, and we only put 30 runners on them. I won't have any runner standing that long before his race.

The big problem in Hopkinton is the toilet facilities. What can you do? The people in Hopkinton, some of them have an awful lot of damage done to their lawns and bushes. Runners aren't the last bit shy about what they do there.

I've also had some snitty remarks about the special dressing rooms we have for the "stars." When young Johnny Kelley was at his best, newspaper men used to pester him something terrible, asking things like, "What did you have for breakfast, Johnny?" I got the girls locker room off the main gymnasium, and put the stars there. We don't want a Ron Hill coming over here





and sitting among that mob, getting photographed and interviewed. Isn't that fair?

We would be lost without the Prudential. Not only do they let us use their building, but they put on a terrific feed after the race. They're not the least bit stingy. They're very tolerant with the runners, allowing the basement of the building to become the most cluttered up place in the country.

Free Gatorade is a godsend, too. I know for a fact that since the use of Gatorade there hasn't been as much sickness in the locker room. Runners used to come in and drink crap. Now they gulp down Gatorade. It doesn't nauseate them.

Despite this generosity and the volunteer help, something has to be done regarding financing. Postage alone is close to \$100. And the 10 trophies and diamond studded, solid gold medals don't go for a song, to say nothing of the 10 buses at \$60 or \$70 apiece.

We used to get help from the Boston A.A. indoor track meet, but that folded in 1972. The Boston Garden is underwriting the race this year. When the indoor meet was cancelled, the first thing the Garden manager told Will Cloney was, "Don't worry about the marathon. It'll be taken care of." But I don't know what we're going to do next year.

I wish we could get donations. The Chamber of Commerce should give trophies. This is the best publicity Boston has. You hear about it all over the world. When I went to Czechoslovakia as a hockey trainer, they didn't receive me with open arms because I was a hockey trainer. I was associated with the Boston Marathon. The city should realize what it has here, and help finance it.

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But I don't mean to paint an entirely gloomy picture. Some of the most memorable moments of my life have been at the Boston Marathon. I must list two as the most memorable because it is hard to separate them.

In 1930, a year after the Depression started, I was in Philadelphia and out of work, so I hitchhiked to Boston. I came to run the Marathon, and also meet my mother, who I was visiting here. I was up with the leaders most of the way, and then started picking them off. In those days, it was solid gold medals for the first eight, elaborate ones they were with unicorns and crossed US flags on them. When I got to eighth at two miles to go, I had a lump in my throat. I picked up one more place and my mother was there at the finish line. Believe me, that was a thrill.

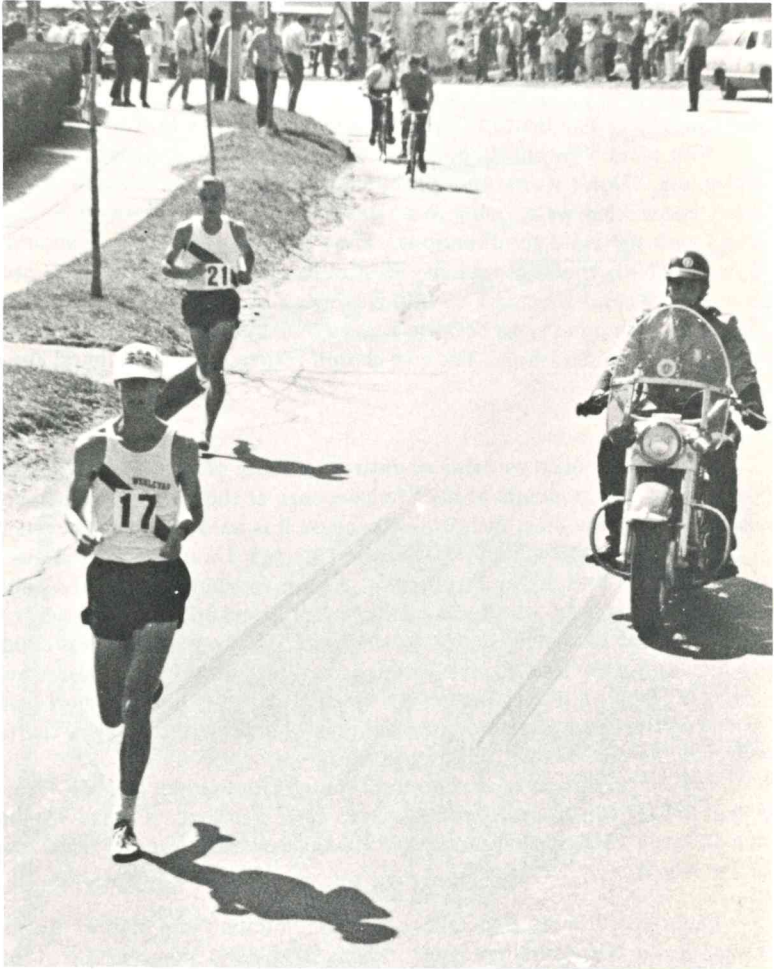
The other, of course, was young Johnny Kelley's win in 1957. He ran the legs off the Finns and everybody else. That was great. I'd had Johnny since he was a 16-year-old schoolboy. He had never run for any other club but the B.A.A.

Each year, I dread December, January, February and March. But I look forward to the Marathon day itself. That's the biggest thing for me. I look forward to that race more than I do my breakfast.

Then the inquiries start the next day. By the 30th of April, I'll have 10 letters. I have letters right now for 1973. "I can't run this year, but I'd like to train between now and 1973."

**Chapter Four**

***A Race to Remember***



**Amby Burfoot leading Bill Clark in 1968.**

# MARATHON MYTHOLOGY

This isn't really mythology. It is fact. But the legends of the Boston Marathon have been told and retold so many times they *sound* like myths. The stories sound like fiction and the characters bigger than life.

The characters in the Boston Marathon story are real-life runners, struggling with the problems that all runners face in this race that has been called the "great leveler." The men upfront get scared, sick, blistered and tired, just like the ones an hour behind. That's part of the Boston's appeal.

Ron Hill, the only Britisher to win this race on a day that commemorates resistance to the British, set a record in the 1970 Marathon. To the crowd, he appeared to be in perfect control, calm as could be.

Hill had a different version. "I wasn't certain of winning until I made the last turn about 200 yards from the finish... Before that I was just busting like hell, worrying like hell all the way. But this is a good thing to develop, you know: that fear. It keeps you moving."

The man Hill feared was Eamon O'Reilly. O'Reilly appeared to be pushing all the way, trying to catch Hill. Eamon set an American record in that race, but said, "I was oblivious to time. I didn't know what time I was running. I just chased Hill all the way." That was Eamon's best marathon ever. The year before, while recovering from injuries, he was so far back in the field that no one noticed him. Within months after the 1970 Boston, he got hurt again.

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The 1971 race between Alvaro Mejia and Pat McMahon was the closest ever—very exciting for the Boston fans because McMahon lived in the area and is Irish (as are a large percentage of the spectators). McMahon ran shoulder to shoulder nearly all the way. McMahon got all the cheers, but Mejia shrugged this off. "Boston is an Irish town, and they cheer McMahon," said the Colombian. "If we run in Bogota, they cheer for me."

Unknown to the crowd, or even to each other, was the fact that both Mejia and McMahon had raised spectacular blisters. The question wasn't who would run the fastest in the last mile, but whose blisters would cause him to slow down the most. McMahon cracked with 150 yards left. Mejia ripped off his shoes as soon as he finished and plunged his burning feet into a nearby fountain.

The year before, though, Pat had set an Irish record and had taken third place in this same final 150 yards through the Prudential Center Plaza. He approached the finish line beside Pentti Rummakko of Finland. The Finn stumbled and tumbled to the wet concrete.

Clarence DeMar is perhaps the greatest legend in Boston Marathon history. He won seven times between 1930—the last victory coming when he was 42 years old. In 1911, however, DeMar was warned by a doctor at the pre-race examination that he shouldn't run. "Heart murmur," the physician said. DeMar ran and won, but didn't return for a half-dozen years after that.

“Mr. DeMarathon” continued to run until he was well into his 60s. He died in 1958 at age 70—of cancer. A medical examination showed his heart was as strong and functional as a 35-year-old’s.

Another “heart murmur” controversy arose in 1958. Overly cautious doctors turned down three top Americans—Ted Corbitt, John Lafferty and Al Confalone—all veterans of marathoning. They lined up a discreet distance behind the pack and raced unofficially. They finished sixth, seventh and ninth.

The two Johnny Kelleys have been the hard-luck men as well as the heroes at Boston. “Old John” won twice, it’s true. But one of those years he got so sick that he threw up in mid-run. He finished second an incredible total of seven times. Then, years later when he had a streak of something like 40 straight Bostons going, the 60-year-old Kelley missed a race because of a hernia operation.

“Young John’s” career followed a similar pattern. He won the race in 1958—the first American in a dozen years to do so. But he also finished second a total of five times in eight years—usually a close second. One year, 1961, a losing battle with a dog probably cost him the victory. In the 1960 race (the US Olympic trial), severe blisters forced him to drop out. This Kelley also kept running through the years. At age 39, he almost missed the race that obviously means the most to him. While training a few days before, he cracked a rib while rushing to escape a rampaging bull.

While the Boston has always been dominated by the best runners in the world, the very best of them—the Olympic champions—had drawn a complete blank in the first 75 races. Seven had competed, either before or after winning the Games. None had won here. Jerry Nason, in his *Story of the Boston Marathon*, called this the “graveyard of Olympic champions.” Here’s why:

**Tom Hicks (1904 Olympic champ):** ran four Bostons; best effort was his second place in 1904.

**Johnny Hayes (1908):** finished fifth, third and second at Boston in the years 1906-08.

**Hannes Kolehmainen (1920):** the Finn was fourth in the 1917 Boston.

**Albin Stenroos (1924):** another of the great Finns, he ran second here in 1926.

**Delfo Cabrera (1948):** the champion from Argentina placed sixth in 1954.

**Abebe Bikila (1960-64):** the Ethiopian set out at record pace but cramped in the late miles, ending up fifth in 1963.

**Mamo Wolde (1968):** Bikila’s Ethiopian teammate was 12th in the 1963 race.

Perhaps the streak will be broken in 1972, with Ron Hill having a good shot at the gold medal in Munich, and Alvaro Mejia having an outside chance. But if long tradition is any clue...

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**NEXT PAGE: Yoshiaki Unetani races through the Newton Hills in 1969, en route to a course record.**



Yes, all marathons are “great levelers,” and Boston more than most. It has its agonies as well as its ecstasies, for everyone. But perhaps that’s one of the things that makes it great. Without the former, runners couldn’t fully appreciate the latter.

At any rate, the prospect of bad times doesn’t seem to scare anyone off. Witness the runs of DeMar, Corbitt, etc., despite warnings from doctors that their hearts might give out; or the fact that Joe Pardo and Harry Cordellos—both blind—have run and finished; or that Gene Roberts—who lost both legs in Vietnam—scouted through the race in a wheelchair.

Attempts at limiting the field, even when those limits may be in the best interests of the race and the individuals concerned, are met with outcries and resistance. Roberta Bingay quietly integrated the race in 1966 when she ran unofficially, the first woman to do so. Kathy Switzer ran with a number in 1967 and raised an infamous fuss. Women have turned out in growing numbers since.

Threats of a “mass boycott” were uttered in 1970 and ’71 when time limits were slapped on the race. But nothing came of it, and probably never will, for the same reasons a limit is necessary in the first place. The race is too appealing to pass up.



Amby Burfoot (right, No. 17), only the second American winner since World War II, shares the pace with Bob Deines (39) in 1968.

# FAMOUS RUN OF '71

BY WILLIAM INDEK

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*"It was the 19th of April in '71.  
Hardly a man (or woman) there will forget  
that famous run.  
It went from Hopkinton and down  
through Wellesley,  
Newton, Boston College, and then to the  
Prudential Center.  
Two, four, six, eight, who could count  
all the stew you ate?"*

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"Look out, you're stepping on my tape."

"Wow, that's strong smelling stuff!"

"My knee is giving me trouble."

"How many miles have you been doing?"

"Look at that line at the john."

These trite comments can be heard in any locker room prior to any long distance race. But at Boston they seem to take on a special aura and lend the Hopkinton gym an atmosphere that sets it apart. A famous spectacle, a semi-religious ceremony, is slowly evolving before me.

"Everyone down to starting line!" Oh, my God, the journey to Mecca is about to begin. "Bang!" Five, 10, 30 seconds later, I cross the starting line and am off at a hot seven-minute mile pace.

Turning the corner on to Route 135 a sea of disciples spreads out, seemingly absorbing the road as far as the eye can see.

"Yea number 620; come on 223; let's go X27." Holy smokes, look at all the spectators; they're even applauding me.

"Oranges, water, Gatorade." These are the organic reinforcements that are offered by the multitude of onlookers. *Caveat emptor*—buyer beware! Take too many oranges and you start to feel like a mammoth piece of citrus fruit fleeing from a blender.

Seventeen-mile point. "So this is Heartbreak Hill; it doesn't seem so tough." One mile later: "So this is Heartbreak Hill; it doesn't seem so tough." A little farther on: "This is Heartbreak Hill—damn!"

Three miles to go and a passerby has the Red Sox game on radio. Oh, why did I give up coaching that Little League team.

Look up there in the distance—the Citgo sign. That means only one mile to go. Only one mile; it seems like 10. I'll never make it. My legs are turning to concrete memorials to the Lactic Acid Foundation.

Turn the corner—a finish line does exist; I can see it. Sprint, sprint—amoeba-like, I pass three fading images and cross athletic Armegegedon.

As I lay inside the Prudential Center, I think how ironic it is that I will be expiring in a place where I don't even have a life insurance policy.

# APRIL AND THE HILLS

BY GEORGE SHEEHAN

What makes the Boston Marathon great? Is it, perhaps, April?

The Boston has pre-empted April, leaving other and lesser months to other and lesser marathons. It has taken the April of Chaucer's gentle showers, when people "long to go on pilgrimages." It has seized the April of T.S. Eliot: "The cruelest month breeding/Lilacs out of the dead land mixing/Memory and desire."

The poets tell it all. Scatter-brained April, so unpredictable but still our best hope. Behind lies the long, hard and possibly futile winter. Ahead, a perfect day and a perfect marathon?

What makes the Boston great? Part of the answer is April. The rest, if the runner in me is right, is the course.

Runners have spent their lifetimes observing, analyzing, dissecting and running marathons. They should know what makes a great marathon course. They have made Boston "the mother of marathons."

Wind, heat and humidity add to the natural contours, which make the course a continually changing challenge. Boston has that quality of real greatness. It is a course that may be beaten but never defeated.

Challenge the Boston and you must be at your peak. Accept your limitations and, with care, the thinking runner will have a comfortable, creditable race. But go for broke and prepare to be broken.

The key to all of this is the hills. They are an ever-present consideration. The first slope is downhill. It comes immediately, stretches for over a mile and lures both veteran and tyro into an abnormally fast pace. Even should one recognize the danger to his pace, he is powerless to prevent the attrition on his previously unused (in practice) checking muscles as downhill follows downhill during the first two-thirds of the race.

But these are merely banderillas. The death blow, if it is to be struck, comes at the 20-mile mark—Heartbreak Hill. Heartbreak is fourth and longest and steepest of a series of long, steep grades which begin at 17 miles. Heartbreak is not only fearsome in itself, but it comes at the very moment when the body reaches the physiological (and probably psychological) make-or-break point. Here is, if it is anywhere, the moment of truth.

"Anyone," says Percy Cerutti, the great Australian coach, "can run 20 miles. But few can run a marathon." When you discover the truth of Cerutti's statement simultaneous with starting up Heartbreak Hill, you have experienced one of life's memorable revelations.

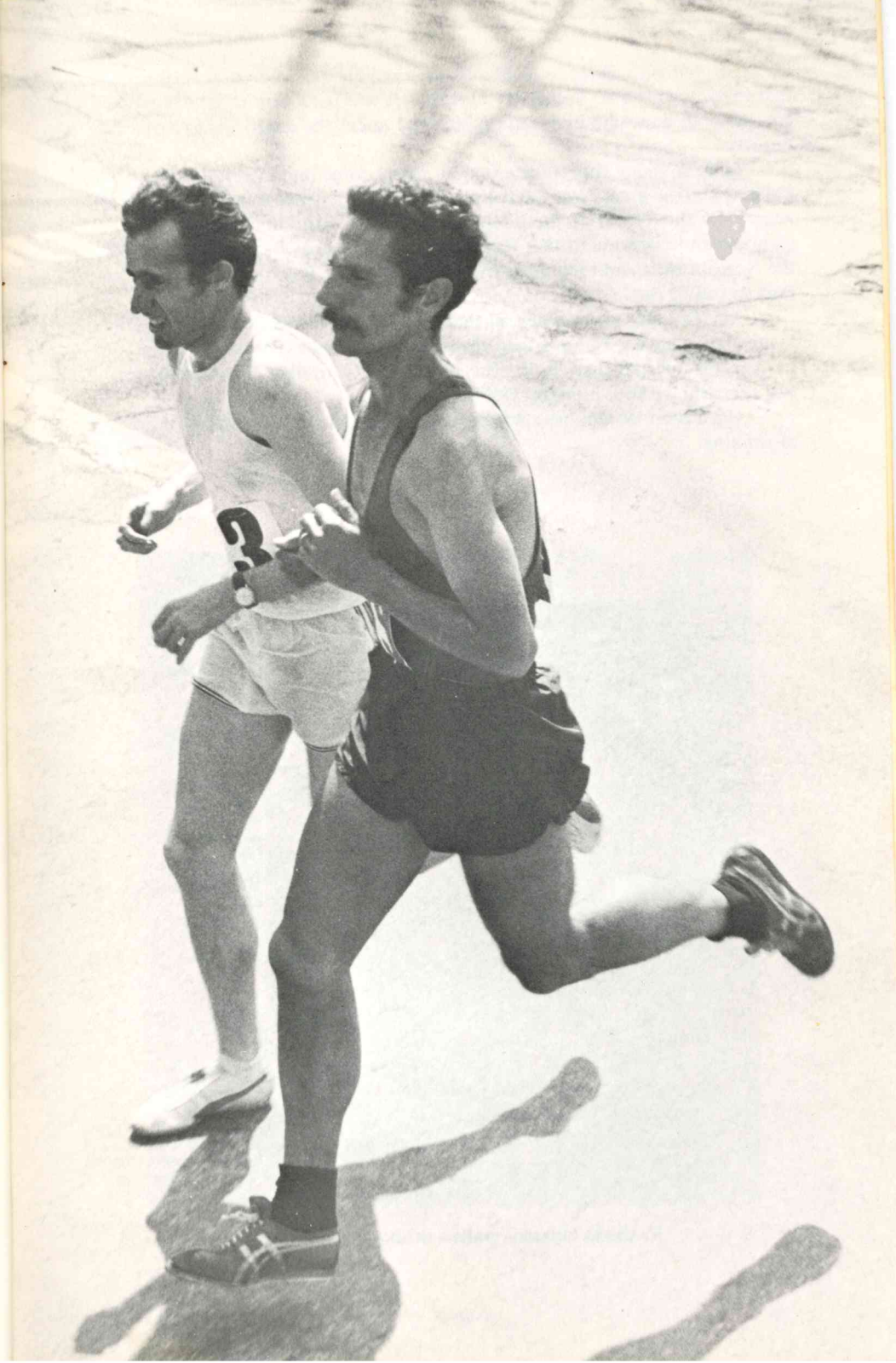
Tragedy, which is man wanting to be more than he is and failing at it, is upon you, and Heartbreak magnifies it to heroic proportions. April is indeed the cruelest month.

But if hills can be your downfall, cannot hills be your salvation? Those who saw "The Games" will remember Harry Hayes, the British marathoner,

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**NEXT PAGE:** Pat McMahon (left) and Alvaro Mejia ran the closest Boston race ever in 1971, Mejia winning by just five seconds.



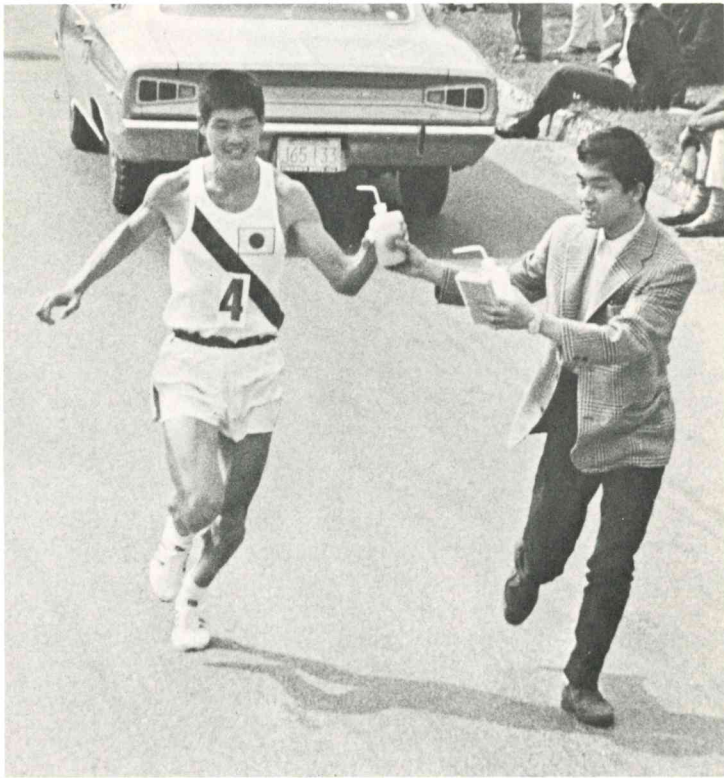


his face filled with agony and exhaustion, carrying his coach piggy-back up that interminable hill. A real-life hill-climber was Herb Elliott, whose weekend hours of dune-climbing were performed under the approving eye of Cerutti.

Hills do many things for a runner. They force him into the most economical style, a great asset for the distances. They strengthen the muscles needed for the assault on these obstacles in a race. And they allow him the grandeur and euphoria of that finest hour when he goes floating through the Newton Hills and then takes the last downhill at Boston College, entering Boston full of run.

The day may come when all that will be past—when marathons are uniform and we have a Tartan track, absolutely level and extending 13 miles 192½ yards out and then back. The statisticians who like their records neat and tidy and without asterisks will take over.

Until then we will have Boston and April, and a race worth a lifetime of running.



**Yoshiaki Unetani grabs a drink on the run.**



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