

# April 21, 2008

## Boston Marathon

### Jack's Team a \$12,500 Success in Boston

Our six member Boston Team conquered the historic Boston Marathon on April 21, 2008. Together they also raised \$12,500 in support of Jack's Fund. Our deepest gratitude to these fine athletes and congratulations on your success!

112th Boston Marathon Report – April 21st, 2008

#### Patrick McCloskey

The Road to Hopkinton.

The Boston Marathon is a point-to-point race that starts in Hopkinton & ends 26.2 miles later in downtown Boston. The morning of the race all runners congregate at the Boston Common to be bussed to the starting line. Per instructions, I arrived at 7:00 am and took my place in line. Over 22,000 runners stood patiently in a line that wrapped around the entire Common. I had never seen anything like this. The good news was that the bus line moved quickly & I was soon on the way to Hopkinton.

On the bus I sat next to a guy from New Jersey who was running in his 5th Boston. He gave me a few tips on running the course. As the bus caravan approached the Hopkinton exit it came to an abrupt & complete stop. Did I mention that none of the buses had restrooms?? After 15 minutes of not moving, a single male runner asked the bus driver to open the door. This runner was soon followed by a conga line of tense looking runners headed off the bus. 5 minutes later, three brave female runners headed for the door. They were soon followed by a number of fast moving female runners. I wish I had a camera! The side of the highway was overrun with runners of both sexes doing their duty. After about 35 minutes the buses started to move. This led to runners sprinting down the exit ramp to catch up with their buses. Priceless!!

Upon arriving at Hopkinton, all runners were directed to the Runners Village. In actuality the "Village" was a couple of tents behind a middle school where you could hang out before the race. A short wait there until it was time to walk app. three blocks to the runner corrals for the start of the second wave of the race at 10:30 am. The start line is only 39 feet across & is the shortest start line in all of marathoning. The weather was absolutely perfect. 60+ degrees, sunny & a slight breeze. The large crowd at the start was boisterous, helicopters hovering overhead & TV camera crews everywhere. The gun is fired & we are off. Hopkinton-Ashland-Framingham-Natick

As the race starts you immediately run the first few miles down hill. It is an incredible view. All I could see ahead of me were thousands of heads bobbing up and down. At mile #2 you reach TJ's Food & Spirits. This biker bar was packed with hundreds of slightly inebriated cheering supporters. There were a couple of women dancing atop picnic tables & holding up signs of encouragement. Again, I wish I had my camera. At this point, you enter Framingham and the road switches from downhill to gentle hills with a net downhill angle. In Framingham, you run over a series of railroad tracks. On race day, the runners don't have to worry about being stopped by a train. However, back in 1907 the lead pack of runners became separated from the eventual winner due to a slow moving freight train at this spot.

Next up Natick. The route continues to be slightly undulating. The one thing that I learned in running this course is that it is rarely flat. Since the start, the course has been lined with spectators cheering you on. They have offered me orange slices, bananas, hard candy, ice cubes, wet sponges, chocolate, twizzlers, water, Gatorade & beer. This is in addition to the water & Gatorade provided every mile by the B.A.A. Best spectator sight in Natick was app. 20 mini-trampolines lined up together on the side of the road. Each trampoline had a woman or a child rhythmically jumping to music & holding up signs. Along the route I have already passed a man dressed as Santa with elves, a polka band, a Korean drum band, An Italian crooner singing "That's Amore" A blue grass band, a group of Scottish bag pipers & what seemed to be a trans gendered Tweety Bird. 15K down.

The Shriek Tunnel of Wellesley

After you leave Natick you run past Lake Couchituate in relative silence. Then, all of a sudden you start to hear the roar in the distance. You are approaching the women of Wellesley College! At the 12.5 mile mark, you turn a bend and enter the campus. All 2400 students line the route & scream encouragement to the

runners. The screaming is overpowering. Most of the girls are holding signs that say "Kiss Me!" or "I want a man who can go the distance!" I ran along the gauntlet high-fiving all & kissing a few along the way. Surprisingly, a lot of runners steer clear of this. Not me.

Once you past the college you enter the town of Wellesley. Again the streets are packed with vocal supporters. It is hear you pass the 13.1 mile mark. Halfway to go. Now the course starts to take a net uphill climb. It is at this point that I started to see runners cramping up, heading for the medical tents & dropping out.

#### Newton & Heart Break Hill

Around mile 15 you enter Newton Lower Falls. Here the course drops over 150 feet in app. a half mile. Immediately following this is a steep incline over a highway as you approach mile 16. About this time I started to experience quad cramps. The good news was that a quarter mile later I saw Becky, PJ & Emma. I was glad to see them. Kissed , hugged, pictures, two advil, two electrolyte tablets, water, tiger balm, a banana & off I went in less than 5 minutes.

At mile 17 you make a right turn past the fire station where the hills of Newton start. They are three hills with long solid inclines. They are spread out and end at mile 21. The real killer is not the size or incline but where they are located on the course. After running a hilly course for 17 miles these long inclines take a toll on your legs. After the first hill my quads were shot. I decided to take the walk/run approach for these hills. It worked. All along the route the crowds were huge & cheered you on no matter how slow you were moving. Just before the last hill I spotted a first aid tent. They were spraying a mist on the legs that numbed the cramping. This stuff temporarily worked. I continued to do this on & off through the remainder of the race. Finally, the top of the last hill. It is at this point that you can first see downtown Boston. 5.2 miles to go.

#### Boston College & Cleveland Circle

The course takes a big downhill slant to Boston College. Both sides of the streets are overflowing with students who have been drinking since around 10 am. The support I received here was crazy. I was wearing a Northwestern shirt & must have heard Hey Northwestern!, Looking good Northwestern ! & I'm from Chicago! at least a hundred times. Like Wellesley I ran over to the crowd & high fived as many students as I could. I also had to turn down many offers of free beer from the student body. The BC eagle mascot was also out on the course firing up the crowd. Once past BC you run through Cleveland Circle. It is in this area that you see a sign that says "Boston City Limits". Then a turn onto Commonwealth Avenue. 5K to go.

#### The CITGO Sign, Fenway Park & 1 Mile To Go

The CITGO sign has been in sight for the last few miles. When you pass it the streets are mobbed with thousands of fans who have just left the Boston Red Sox Patriot's Day game. A word of explanation, Patriot's Day is a Massachusetts holiday commemorating the Battle of Lexington & Concord. Schools and many businesses are closed. Every year, the Red Sox have a home game that starts at 10 am. The timing is such that when the game ends all the fans can step out onto the streets and watch the marathon. Both sides of the street were packed with happy cheering Red Sox fans (they won). The Boston Marathon is clearly a day long party. It is at this point that you see in the middle of the street in bright yellow letters the word "1 MILE TO GO".

#### Hereford Street, Boylston Street, The Finish!

On to the finish. It is here that the course throws you one more curve. There is a small decline/ incline ramp by an overpass. Not much really. Unless you have just run 25 hilly miles. Myself & every runner around me shuffled/walked down and up this ramp. With about 3/4's of a mile left you turn on to Hereford Street where the cheering is deafening. Then, a left turn onto Boylston Street. I finally see the finish line which is about a 1/2 mile away. I run down the middle of the street & try to finish strong. I figure that my family should be able to see me if I am right in the middle (I was wrong). Finally, I cross the finish line in 4+ hours.

#### **A Report from Michael Albrecht-**

As far as race day went, it was very entertaining to say the least, so I'll share my story.....

As you recall, I checked out of 1 hotel Marathon morning around 8:15 am and drove to my next hotel near Hopkinton. On the way to the hotel, I ran into a traffic jam with over 300 school buses transporting runners from downtown Boston to the start of the race, as well as hundreds of other vehicles blocking the 2 right lanes of the 3-lane highway. The first thing I thought was "I'm going to miss the start of the race". Because of the traffic, the buses were just sitting on the highway; so many runners began to jump off the buses and used the local woods as port-a-potties.

I decided to get into the left lane and made some good progress to my hotel. When I got off the exit ramp, I was greeted by state troopers who had blocked a few of the roads for the safety of the runners. They said I couldn't go past them and had to turn around and get back on the highway. I showed them my bib number and finally they allowed me to pass the police barricade and get to my new hotel. I arrived at the hotel and asked the front desk (who told me a shuttle would be taking me to the start of the race) where the bus was. She said the bus left an hour ago. I said, "I was told there would be multiple buses up until the start of the race." She said that 2 of the planned bus drivers called in sick and that she'd take me in her own car to the start of the race. So, to avoid all of the traffic, she took me on all of these back roads to get to the start of the race. I couldn't believe it.....

I got to Hopkinton on time and was in amazement of the 25,000 runners who had landed in this tiny suburban / country town. Picture 25,000 runners invading downtown Glen Ellyn, along with their family members, friends and the crowdrooting them on. The energy at the start was electric, the air was cool and most runners appeared to be nervous. For some reason, I wasn't one of them....I had this feeling of confidence and felt so fortunate to be participating in the event and proud that I raised the money again for Jack's Fund.

I met up with Carolyne and Patrick of Jack's team, in our start corral and we chatted as we waited for the race to begin. It was cloudy and cool at the beginning, but when the gun went off for our 10:30 wave, the sun popped out and the skies began to clear up. After the first block, I lost Carolyne....then after a half mile I lost Patrick....and I don't know how. The only thing that made sense was that the beginning of the course, which is a 2-lane road, caused us to get separated very quickly, amongst the masses.

I proceeded through these small towns and the spectators were so supportive. Bands played, radios were cranked up, kids passed out oranges, bananas, water, people held up signs, shouted well wishes all along the route. I felt very energetic and encouraged by their efforts. I didn't stop to walk until the 7-mile marker, which isn't normal for me. The adrenaline probably took me to that point and I started up again after a few steps. Those rolling hills seemed unending.

As I got closer to Wellesley College, I think around the 11-mile marker, my right ankle started to "bark at me". During the past 20 weeks of training, I didn't have a single pain or issue and here in Boston, the ankle started to hurt. However, I began to hear this loud roar, students at the College. The students lined the route for at least 4 - 5 blocks cheering on anyone and everyone. That was totally cool and helped me forget about the pain for a while.

The route zigzagged a bit and continued to roll up and down the hills as I got closer to Newton around the 16th mile. Then the marathon truly began for me. I had trained for hills and took these hills head on and didn't stop at all. I made it past Boston College and the energy there was phenomenal. Roars and huge crowds a plenty helped me get through that 6-mile stretch.

I ran a few more miles downhill to 24 and then saw the CITGO sign. I had previously been told the finish was 1 mile from there. All of a sudden, my legs got tight and I started to cramp, so I walked a few blocks. People saw me and cheered me on. The mind was willing and I was breathing very well, but the legs wanted to go home. I started up again and the crowds there, the last 2 miles, were huge and loud. We ran past Fenway Park, the CITGO Sign and then to the Finish Line. Such an overwhelming feeling when I passed the 26.2 marker. I jumped on the bus back to Hopkinton, met a runner who was born and raised in Hopkinton, and since I didn't have a way to get back to my hotel, she offered to drive me back. Such a kind act.

Well Amy.....thanks for organizing the festivities and the experience in general, as I'll never forget it. And to the rest of the team, it was a privilege to share that with you.

Cheers !!!