

Says Marathon to Be Best Ever

Spectator at First Race 51 Years Ago, Arthur Duffey Claims Field Tops Them All

BY ARTHUR DUFFEY

Life, for the Marathon, begins at 51.

Now is the time that all good men look back into the past, to recall once again the majesty and the glory, and the heartaches too, which have been paced into the pavements from Hopkinton to Boston by the runners who have known the fame, or the sorrow, of the B. A. A. classics of bygone years.

HAS COLOR, APPEAL

I would prefer to look to the future. Never before in history have I known a Marathon to boast the color, the appeal and the prospect of tomorrow's race. Never before has such international flavor been poured upon Boston's most famed raceway. May I look back just for a moment to recall that I was present at the finish of the first Marathon those 51 years ago? With the exception of a few college years at Georgetown and the Aprils during World War I, I have seen every Boston Marathon from that day to this.

And tomorrow should be the greatest Patriots' Day race of them all. The world has progressed amazingly since the day when the runners dodged horses and buggies and trod over cobblestones to win their way to the finish line. And the Marathon has kept the pace. The airplane, among other modern wonders, has brought the tape stretched across Exeter st. into the sight alike of a pair of competitors from ancient Athens and of a trio of Koreans from Asia on the other side of the sun.

Olympic King Entered

The colors of Turkey, Finland and Hawaii also will fly tomorrow alongside the more familiar emblems on the breasts of the American and Canadian runners. The tradition, the flavor and the keen competition of the Olympic games themselves will be a part of the 1947 model of Boston's greatest free show in sports.

From far-away Korea has come the last Olympic champion, Kitei Son, who has de-Japanized his name and will be listed tomorrow as Ki Chung Sohn in the list of entries. With him today in Boston is Seong Yong Nam, who won third honors in that last Olympic Marathon before the war. A third Korean, given even a better chance to win by many than his elders, is Yun Bok Su. Just a few short days ago Boston was thousands of miles and one ocean distant from their homeland. At noon tomorrow Exeter st. and victory will be just 26 miles, 385 yards beyond their grasp. Seoki Koru has discovered that Hop-

kinton is now easily reached from Turkey, simply by flying the Atlantic and transferring to a bus at Park sq. He has come to Boston with a record that indicates he can add the B.A.A. race to his conquests. From Finland, rising out of the wastes of war, Mikko Hietanen and Vaino Muinonen have followed a trail blazed years ago by their countryman, Albin Stenroos. They hope to better his course by running to glory tomorrow.

Two Greeks Listed

Game Greece so enjoyed her taste of triumph last year that she has sent two Greeks to the starting line for 1947. Stylianos Kyriakides has returned, a far healthier and far stronger man than was the hungry champion who relied on courage to win a year ago, and he has shown the route to Athanaios Ragazos, one of the few runners ever to show him the way to a finishing line in Europe.

The Canadian contingent is on hand, stronger than any of the past. Headed by two former winners, Gerard Cote and Walter Young, the Maple Leaf will also be borne on the chests of such competent competitors as Lloyd Evans and Ab Morton.

But never forget, tomorrow is Patriots' Day, and there will be the full quota of modern-day American patriots ready to meet the challenge offered by the champions of these other countries and continents.

There is none in the world better than Johnny Kelley, the neighborly veteran from West Acton. Charley Robbins, who ordinarily does his best running in the autumn months, can win, if only he will run in April as he does in October. A definite new hope, with the prize of youth in his favor, is Ted Vogel, the Tufts College student from Watertown.

Unknown Can Do It

And, as ever, there is the possibility that an unknown, entered from any of the hamlets of the nation, may rise out of obscurity to the heights of the Newton hills and victory.

This is always the time of year when friends phone me with the plea that I write once again of the glories and the sorrows of the past. They tell me that I am the only writer still in business who can recall from personal experience the day those 51 years ago when J. J. McDermott of New York jogged to the finish line at the now deceased Irvington Oval to win the first B. A. A. Marathon in 2 hours, 65 minutes, 10 seconds time. They want to read again how John Graham brought the idea for the Marathon back to Boston from the 1896 Olympic games in Athens.

They tell me that they never tire of the oft-repeated stories of the day in 1911 when Clarence DeMar first won and began the process which lengthened his name to Clarence DeMarathon, or of the popular victories of Bill Kennedy, the bricklayer, in 1917, and smiling Jimmy Henigan in 1931. They say that there's still a laugh in the recollection of the day in 1907 when Tom Longboat and Bob Fowler were dueling at Framingham and a train crossed the road between them. The Indian was on the Boston side and went on to victory. Fowler couldn't have gotten through the train even if he'd had a ticket.



Finland's two representatives in the B. A. A. Marathon Saturday. Left to right they are Mikko Hietanen and Vaino Muinonen. They are highly rated and should be well up among the leaders and many experts are even predicting a Finnish victory.

Beef Stew Reward

There will be much of the familiar to the Marathon tomorrow. The course will be the same as it has been these many years. The Wellesly College girls will scream at the leaders, as their mothers did before them. Those Newton hills will be as mountainous as ever. The beef stew, the reward of the finishers, will be no warmer, no cooler, nor any more flavorful than ever before.

But in the face of this new international pageantry, I prefer today to look to the future.

Yesterday was glorious indeed, but a greater Marathon glory belongs to tomorrow and to the years to come.

SEVEN WINNERS NOW IN MARATHON

Seven B. A. A. Marathon winners of the past will start the 51st annual race tomorrow, as a result of the entry yesterday of Walter Young of Verdun, P. Q., Canada, the 1937 victor. He has not run since 1939, when he finished third.

In addition to Young, Stylianos Kyriakides, Johnny Kelley, Joe Smith, Clarence DeMar, Gerard Cote and Tarzan Brown will be seeking repeat triumphs at the starting gun. Other entries yesterday were Thomas J. Gilday, a chief carpenter's mate in the navy, and Iggy Rusczyk of Buffalo.

These last entries brought the total to 181 starters.