

Foreign Entries Color 51st Boston Marathon

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About 180 runners will line up at Hopkinton tomorrow noon for the start of the 51st B. A. A. Marathon, which will end (for some of them) at Exeter Street—exactly 26 miles and 385 yards and from two and a half to seven hours later.

The field is not the largest since the first race in 1897—several times entries have topped 200—but it is the most cosmopolitan. Marathoners from at least eight countries besides the United States will compete: Greece, Turkey, Korea, Finland, Trinidad, England, Hawaii, and, of course, Canada.

In fact, experts will be mildly surprised if a native son wins. Stylianos Kyriakides, the Athenian bill collector, is the automatic favorite because of his victory last year, but two of his fellow countrymen have impressed—especially Athanasios Ragazos, who finished second to Charley Robbins in the Reddish A. A. 15-mile warm-up two weeks ago. Kyriakides finished sixth in that race and a week earlier ran fifth in the V. F. W. 10-mile handicap won by Ted Vogel of Tufts, one of the leading American contenders.

Canadians Always Threaten

The Canadians—some of them with a background of snowshoe racing—usually prove especially lasting competitors. Last year three of the first seven finishers were Canadians: Gerard Cote was third, Ab Morton, fifth, and Lloyd Evans, seventh. Cote, the only Canadian to win the B. A. A. Marathon three times (1940, 1943, 1944), is regarded as perhaps the best Marathoner in North America, though Johnny Kelley, two-time winner (1935, 1945) has beaten him.

Foreign contingents—apart from the Greeks and Canadians—will provide color as well as competition: Ki Chung Sohn (Olympic winner at Berlin in 1936), Yun Bok Su, and Seung Yong Nam from Korea; Turkey's national champion, Sevki Koru; Finland's European champion, Mikko Hietanon; Kenneth H. H. Baily of England, who straggled in 37th last year; Oswald Kisson from Trinidad; and a Hawaiian quartet: Takeo Takushi, Berton G. Hooper, Feliciaro Castilliano, and Norman K. Tamanaka, whose names indicate varied enough racial origins.

Marathoning International

Furthermore, the number of different nationalities only reinforces the impression of variety

that the B. A. A. event has always given. Variety of uniforms, for example: everything from bright, new store-bought shorts and shirts to tattered, home-stitched scare-crow ensembles. Variety of running styles, too; the gay jog of Gerard Cote; the long lope of Johnny Kelley; and, of course, the inimitable shuffle of Clarence De Mar, seven-time winner.

Mention of De Mar suggests the considerable variety of ages of the competitors. What other sport boasts an age span of 37 years—the gap between Mr. Marathon and 21-year-old Vogel? And Vogel, in turn, suggests the variety of occupations of marathoners. Ted himself is a student at Tufts, and a recent picture shows him posing with fellow-runner Joe Smith, a bottle of milk between them; Smith is a Medford milkman.

Smith Holds Record

Smith is also holder of the record for the B. A. A. race: two hours, 26 minutes, and 51.2 seconds. Joe set the mark in 1942 and has not competed since, but he is back for another crack at the grind, principally because he wants a position on the 1948 Olympic team. The fact that Saturday's race is one of the three qualifying events for Olympic team candidates provides American runners with a special incentive: the winner automatically makes the team.

Of the 1936 Olympic team, only Johnny Kelley appears to have a chance of repeating on next year's squad. Billy McMahon has quit running, and Tarzan Brown, the Rhode Island Indian, finished only 12th last year.

The unusually fast field, the incentive of the Olympics, and a car-free course might push the winner to a new record, if the weather is favorable. No vehicles of any sort will be allowed along the route, except for the official busses including the familiar cargo of tea bottles, water cups, and oranges; and a clear track should relieve the runners of the mental and real hazard cruising traffic has so often provided in the past, especially towards the city.

Predicting a winner is even more risky in marathoning than most sports. About the only thing riskier is to predict a record-breaking winner, but students of the Marathon are inclined to believe that if somebody does break the record, he probably will not have a name like Joe Smith—an eventuality which would give a cosmopolitan finish to a thoroughly cosmopolitan race.