

# Boston Marathon

By Stephanie Marrack

"Go Hawaii!" "Go Outrigger!" "Hey, I've been there." "Who do you 'row' for?" "Hey, what's that spoon in the middle of that 'O'?"

How can you not have the best marathon ever with a half-million spectators chanting and cheering each entrant from the first mile to the last 385 yards of Boston's 26.385-mile marathon?

Since my first marathon in 1977, the Boston marathon has always been my goal. Its history and elitism were appealing but I had no idea of its magic. Boston first began in 1897 and is held each Patriots Day, from the quiet New England village of Hopkinton to the Prudential Center in downtown Boston. It is the world's oldest continuing marathon and is considered the king of marathons. Each entrant must submit proof of qualification. For the open men, the qualifying time is 2:50, a pace of 6:29 minutes :seconds per mile. For open

women, the requirement is 3:20, which calls for a 7:38 pace. Having run a 3:20 in the Honolulu marathon in 1982 I felt I had no choice but to participate in "The Big One."

The national weather service was predicting chilly weather, partly cloudy skies, chance of scattered snow or rain and highs in the 40s. I sighed and thought, "Well, at least it'll be a good story." Wearing a wool hat, gloves, 2 shirts, my OCC singlet shorts, I started the 12 noon marathon with approximately 6,000 other entrants. What could have been a fast downhill (comparable to Monsarrat) start turned out to be a slow shuffle. Imagine 6,000 people starting on Kahala Avenue jostling for position for 3 to 4 miles.

The course was exciting! A natural rolling staircase lined with rocky pastureland, lakes, railroad tracks, small towns with 19-century houses, and not forgetting the girls of Wellesley College at 16 miles. I felt like Dorothy (not trying to sound corny) of the Wizard of Oz rambling through country roads and arriving at the crest of Cleveland Circle



at 24 miles to see the "Pru" looming off in the distance.

At the finish line, I was given a participation medal. My mother, Gertrude Berger, and sister, Tina Berg (my support crew) presented me with a haku head lei made from a bouquet of spring flowers. "No, I'm not the winner," I said to onlookers who asked me for my picture, but I sure felt like one. Who wouldn't—running with the fast company of Meyers, Rodgers, Benoit and Roe.

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