

# The Running of the 28th Oahu Perimeter Relay— 134 MILES AROUND THE ISLAND

By Don Eovino

There are two running events in a yearly calendar that define the spirit and endurance of the long distance runner. One is the Honolulu Marathon. The other, the Oahu Perimeter Relay, calls for a similar type of runner.

Stamina is important since seven runners must run 134 miles or approximately 19 miles each. In addition, the runners must start, stop, race, and relax, for five or more hand-offs.

Each runner faces another not so subtle obstacle—that of sleep deprivation. In order to minimize the impact of 112 teams, 784 runners, and 224 vehicles racing around the island, the event starts in the dark on Saturday evening.

The runners wearing reflective vests climb around the saddle in Hawaii Kai, through Makapuu and Waimanalo along the north shore to Kaena Point where they shed their vests and are awakened by the blazing sun baking them from Waianae past the airport to the finish in Kapiolani Park on Sunday afternoon.

Outrigger Canoe Club's running team managed to persuade two teams to attempt this event—a Men's open, captained by Gino Merez, and a Mixed open captained by Katy Bourne.

This race takes a unique personality to participate. The aforementioned obstacles describe a warrior personality. A marathon completion is almost a prerequisite for joining the team. In fact, those who have the most difficulty are those who haven't completed one before and those that have, usually make time and miles for those who didn't.

However, we don't have that luxury of finding 14 individuals with those qualifications who are willing to sacrifice their Saturday night and Sunday mornings, convince their spouse or significant other that this is a worthy cause and in fact usually require them to accompany them somewhere on the course, and still believe they are fit enough to survive 19 miles of this.

So we adapt to the situation and that is what makes our stories so interesting afterwards. Gino's team included Matt Kresser, Beau Giles, Dave Stackhouse, Don Eovino and Vic Hemmy III. Katy's team included Terry Fields, Tommy Damon, Billy Balding, JoAnn Klinke, Bob DeWitz, and Stephan Reinke.

Katy's team had less war stories to tell as everything went fairly smooth after the difficulty of forming the team. Stephan Reinke hadn't run much since he broke and pinned a shoulder six months earlier, but based on his four time Ironman finishes, he rose to the occasion. Bob DeWitz supplied his van outfitted

with sleeping bags and cots. Bob ended up cramping a calf and sacrificed his body, ultimately missing the Maui Marathon because of the injury.

Terry Field suffered admirably and completed all her legs. Tommy Damon shined and brought home the baton as he did two years ago. Billy Balding raced and still found time the next day to enter a canoe race as well. Katy pushed herself as always and they finished with a time of 17 hr. 2 minutes, enough for a 3rd place finish in their division.

More stories were in store for Gino Merez's team. The pressure of a last minute cancellation required that Vic Hemmy and Beau Giles would have to do longer legs than they were ready for. Vic and Dave Stackhouse had to stack their legs all in the first half before Kaena Point since Vic had to lifeguard at 9 a.m. the next morning and Dave had to work at 3 p.m. that day as well. Beau Giles had signed up to race the event but had never done a marathon before. In fact, his longest run was the five mile 30/30 relay, last October. When asked why he entered, he stated that he was a fast runner, having run the mile in 4:26 in college and currently coaching cross country at Iolani. Little did he know what was in store for him for the next 16 hours. Vic Hemmy was the most enthused runner. We knew we had to calm him down so he could finish all his legs. He was assigned six legs. At 4 a.m. after completing three legs, Vic had burnt out his quads and was done for the day. It seems on his third leg that a runner ahead of him in the dark of Kaneohe kept distancing himself from Vic which ignited his competitive juices. Throwing caution to the wind, Vic sped up his pace to catch him.

With this new pace proving fruitless, Vic turned on a full blown sprint to catch the stubborn figure ahead. Only to realize upon capturing him that his intended victim was enjoying his off-legs on a bicycle. Now Beau would have to increase his legs to make up the short fall as well as everybody else. Undaunted, he pushed all night for all he was worth, and by midmorning both knees had given out, after he finished his assigned legs with some adjustments.

This left Matt Kresser with no slack and since he committed to the race did not deny his teammates his effort. With one long and final exhausting leg to go, Matt took the baton at Pearl Harbor and proceeded over the interchange. Not knowing the course, Don Eovino advised him to drop down to a path instead of going over the bridge. Unfortunately, this proved to be a mistake that took Matt

into Hickam Air Force Base.

After waiting for an extra 20 minutes for Matt's arrival, the team sent out a search party. Matt was found ambling along the airport viaduct having reconnoitered the military base for an extra three unwanted and unnecessary miles. Clenching his teeth, Matt handed off to the next runner and after sitting sullenly in the van and with profuse apologies by Don Eovino finally started talking to everybody.

Don and Gino finished up the legs for the team with Gino bravely augmenting his team with a total of 27 miles that day. Thanks to fast runs early on by Dave Stackhouse, Vic Hemmy, and Beau Giles, this team finished in a time of 16 hours, 32 minutes a pace of 7 minutes 20 seconds per mile, not bad considering the travails that attacked them.

Everybody recovered eventually. The event mimicked an outward bound experience. This relay is a phenomenon that brings out the true character of the individual. Fast runners run faster than ever before, sacrificing their muscles, ten-



The Men's Open team included Dave Stackhouse, unknown, Vic Hemmy III, Don Eovino, Matt Kresser. Not pictured: Gino Merez and Beau Giles.

dons, and ligaments as if their life depended on it. The only reward is a few finishers at the end of the line offering a handshake, an ubiquitous t-shirt and a nice medal to wear around your neck for the day.

But more than that is the experience of racing around Oahu in the cool of the night with a full moon overhead, listening to the crows of the roosters before sunrise in Haleiwa, battling the heat of Waianae, exhaustion, thirst, sunburn, sleep deprivation, with the joy of a group of like-minded individuals/strangers. You share a van with the only common thread being the desire to complete one more goal and have a permanent implant in your memory banks of a truly unique running experience.

## What If Your Teenager...

What if your child could discover how valuable it is to take responsibility, to work cooperatively in a team, and to take the initiative to learn and grow? More importantly, what if your teen could gain more self-confidence, be more sure of his or her own self-worth, and have greater self-potential?

What if someone told you that your teen could discover this in one week at Winners' Camp? Winners' Camp is a non-profit educational foundation that has been teaching teens all of this - and more- for fourteen years. Graduates of the program have reported that school work is now "a snap," that their grades have "gone way up," and that they have confidence in their own abilities.

Their parents report that they "can see a remarkable difference" in their teen's communication skills, study habits and grades, and that the participants have a greater sense of responsibility in all areas of their lives.

Winners' Camp has been cited by The Conference Board as being "among the most effective business-supported education improvement projects in the nation." Winners' Camp has graduated over 8000 participants and is known as an executive training for teenagers.

This year, Winners' Camp will be held on Kauai at Kahili Mountain Park Retreat, August 2-8, the tuition is \$980, and includes accommodations and meals for seven days, Inter-island air and ground transportation, over 100 hours of accelerated learning, course materials, student manual, souvenir t-shirt and camp photo plus a full-day parent integration seminar, and continuing support and follow-up. To request a brochure and application for your family, please call the Winners' Camp hot line at 263-6909 or visit us at: [www.aloha.net/~lhistwin](http://www.aloha.net/~lhistwin).

