

sports

Aerobics teacher wins marathon

By KEVIN PYLE

The second annual Texas A&M Marathon was run Saturday with over a thousand contestants jamming the streets of the campus. The event, sponsored by the Health and Physical Education Department, began shortly after 7:30 a.m. when Dr. Carl Landiss, head of the department, fired the gun signaling

the start.

The event had men's and women's competition in age groups ranging from 14 and under to 56 and over. Runners could run either a quarter, a half or a full marathon, which was 26 miles and 385 yards.

The winner of the marathon was Tinker Murray, a graduate student in cardiac rehabilitation at Texas

A&M. The 26-year-old from League City ran the course, which wound around and through the A&M campus, in a time of 2:41:22.4.

Murray was pleased with the win but not with his time. He said he had hoped to run it in about two and a half hours.

Murray, an aerobics teacher who

runs 10 miles a day during the week and 20 miles on either Saturday or Sunday, said he just tries to concentrate on running when he is competing. He described the race as "nice and scenic but a little windy."

For Murray, it was his second win in a marathon and a happy one as it was his first race since he was hurt earlier in the year.

Coming in second in the marathon was 49-year-old Al Becken from San Antonio. He was also the winner of the 49-54 age group.

Becken, who runs with the San Antonio Road Runners track club, came in some nine minutes behind Murray with a time of 2:50:51.

It was Becken's fifth marathon of the year and 37th of his career. He said although he usually runs in the 2:40s, he enjoyed the race and the course. "It was a good course and one of the best monitored and marked courses I have ever run on,"

he said.

Becken, a Civil Service employee at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, runs seven to eight miles a day. He credited his sons with getting him started in running. His sons ran track in high school and college and he said that got him interested.

"I have been at it six years," he said, "and, at my age, my problem isn't endurance, it is speed."

The first woman to cross the finish line in the marathon was also a member of the Road Runners. Maggie Rust, a 26-year-old radiology technologist, had her best time ever as she was clocked at 3:23:29.

She said she has been competing for a year and this was her fifth marathon. Rust also said she runs between 75 and 80 miles a week.

Drawing more attention than any of these people, however, was nine-year-old David Reyna. The youngster, running in his third marathon, had his best time as he crossed the finish line in 3:21:27. David's father, Eddie Reyna, a re-

search scientist in the oceanography department at Texas A&M, also ran in the marathon but did not finish. "David always beats his father," said Mrs. Reyna. She also said it was her son's fifth year of running and that David and his father run together about 65 miles a week.

David didn't seem interested in all of the fuss being made over him as he seemed content to just eat an orange his mother had given him.

There were a wide range of ages in the event with the youngest being a six-year-old girl and one of the oldest being a 62-year-old man. There were also some strange sights in the event. For instance, there was one character who ran the marathon in a mask and two others who fought off the boredom of the long distance race by wearing head phones.

In all, 939 people finished the race with 192 completing the full 26 miles.



Tinker Murray first to finish 26-mile marathon. Battalion staff photo

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A runner experiences marathon

By DOUG GRAHAM
Battalion Staff

There is a lesson to be learned when you have been smoked by a 9-year-old kid in a marathon. Or when a skinny little girl wearing glasses blows you into the weeds. You learn, when a host of people pass you, that marathon running isn't for the proud.

It is not for those who subscribe to the "Win" ethic, either.

It is for the competitively introverted who compete for love of sport, not the glory of defeating rivals.

That was the attitude I had to take. Since I had not trained for the race, I had to depend on two principles: there's no alternative to finishing, and if you must do it, then enjoy doing it.

That was it. There was no way I could frown at and intimidate those dry 26 miles before me. I had to joke, laugh, and play with the dis-

tance I was covering until, at the end, I was finished. Most of the runners looked professional in odd nylon color combinations of shoes and shorts, but I wore a rabbit's foot outfit: my khaki NMMI shirt, cavalry brass, green GI socks, and old high school gym shorts. My electric green running shoes comforted my feet, and I was fortified with my patented orange juice and half-a-jar of honey breakfast.

Though the breakfast served to give me quick energy, the clothes simply served as morale boosters. Feeling good was the key to finishing the race, so no matter how unorthodox I looked, I wore what I wanted.

So did all of the quarter-, half-, and full-marathon runners around me. We whooped at the gun, and I ran with a friend for the next three-quarters of the marathon. I was a bit bloated from drinking that full quart

of orange juice before the start, and could feel it rise until I covered almost 15 miles.

After the first 5 miles, everything settled into place. Feet, knees, and heart and lungs started working together; I had found my pace. Meanwhile I made dumb wisecracks or withdrew into my head to play tunes or think.

It was peaceful, the continual running. On and on and on. The worst section was near the Swine Center because way off in the distance you could see exactly how far you had to run. That was depressing.

After returning from the leg out to the Swine Center, the crowd was thinned out. Most of the half- and quarter-marathoners were finished, leaving the field to the rest.

My friend and I parted at the 20 mile mark, as I sought to better my time. I crossed the pedestrian overpass, hoofed on down the road, and began to experience some of the loneliness of a long distance runner.

I finally started overtaking people. They were the broken people, the walking, who were mentally defeated, or those whose

muscles were knotted in cramps, or whose ankles were so swollen they couldn't go on.

I finally hit the "Wall" at about 22 miles. It did not hit me suddenly, rather it was a realization that whereas, before I was feeling pretty good, and was capable of moving along, suddenly I had to grind it out and push myself.

In short, I had run out of gas. But I kept pushing. On and on, so slow it almost hurt, I kept going, up and over the overpass. I broke into a slow-motion sprint, probably finishing in the lower 50 percent of my class with a 4 hour and 3 minutes time.

I had lost. But I sure remember thinking I had won as I walked from the finish line. I was like so many others, walking like an arthritic old man. The next morning, still a little sore, I woke up with no ribbon for victory, or newspaper clippings to keep in a scrapbook. I had not won anything, but I think I won a bit of self-knowledge about what it is possible for a human body to do. That is a victory of sorts.

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