

4/15/19: *BOSTON!*

So let's talk Boston, shall we? But to talk Boston, let's do a quick synopsis of how the marathon evolved.

- The Greeks were at war with the Persians in 490bc. The Greeks turned the Persians back at the town of Marathon, and a lone runner, Pheidippides, was responsible for carrying the message to the King in Athens, approximately 25 miles away. So off he went – and please don't ask me what his pace was, because he wasn't wearing a damn Garmin at the time – and he covered the 25 miles as quick as he could. He arrived at the palace, he stood in front of the King and the court and bellowed "VICTORY!" to all those in attendance....and then he dropped dead.
- Now fast forward 2000 years. The year is 1896, and the first modern Olympic games are held in Athens, Greece. One of the events was a long distance run of approximately 25 miles, in honor of Pheidippides' run. The first "marathon" was run by 25 athletes...only 9 of which actually finished. The winner was Spiridon Louis – a Greek postal worker that clocked a time of 2:58:50. He went on to become the founder of FedEx. (just kidding).
- In 1897, The Boston Athletic Association decided to put together a marathon, in honor of the prior year's Olympics. The city had recently adopted a new holiday, called Patriots Day – and it was determined that would be the day the marathon would be run. They felt like the marathon race being run on Patriots Day would sort of link the Athenian and American struggles for liberty.
- They used the distance run in the Olympics as the measurement to run (24.5 miles), and this event began as really a local race, with 15 runners competing. The winner was John McDermott (who was born in Manhattan – juuuuust saying), who finished the 24.5 miles in 2:55:10. By trade, McDermott was a lithographer. The rumor has it that he won this race while having tuberculosis. The winner simply received a wreath made of olive branches.
- The course originally started Ashland, MA to Copley Square in Boston proper. The race in Boston now had its foundation.
- Over the next few Olympic games, the distance of the "marathon" changed from race to race. No one felt a real need to worry about consistency of distance – it just had to be somewhat close to that 24.85 – 25 mile distance. Then....London hosts the games in 1908.....and the Queen gets involved.
- The Olympic committee gets together and makes plans on locations and dates for every event for the 1908 version of the Olympics. They draw up the marathon route, which was about 26 miles from Windsor Castle to White City Stadium. They proudly present the plans to the Queen for final approval....and then she looks at the marathon finish line and realizes that its several hundred yards away (385 of them, to be exact) from her viewing box. She then tells them to change the finish line so that they finish in front of her. This was the first time the race was measured at exactly 26.2 miles.
- This is also why, at Mile 25, you may hear some old-school runners (or just nerdy runners like me) yell God Save the Queen (or an offshoot of that phrase that doesn't exactly ring true with positivity).
- It took another 13 years after the 1908 version of this race for the International Amateur Athletic Federation to formally adopt the distance of 26.2 miles as the official distance of The Marathon. The BAA officially made the Boston Marathon 26.2 miles as the official distance in 1924.
- 1903 – The Red Sox (and the Braves) began alternating years where they'd start a baseball game at exactly 11:05am on Patriots Day, aiming it to start as the marathon ended. The tradition continues to this day.
- 1966 -Up until 1966, women were not allowed to run in marathons. Why? Oh there's a whole bevy of what we now see as DUMB reasons – including the whole uterus falling out theory. However,

Bobbi Gibb waiting in the bushes at the starting line in 1966, and when the gun went off, so did she – without a bib, becoming the first “rabbit”, I guess to run in a race. She’s now looked at as the first woman to ever finish the Boston Marathon, even if she didn’t wear a number.

- 1967 – Here comes Kathy Switzer. She registers for the race, using the name “K.V. Switzer”. Never lists her first name. Her boyfriend at the time – a guy that specialized in the hammer throw and was training for the Olympics – knew she was running and decided to enter as well. The two of them score bibs. They kind of hide her a bit at the starting line, the gun goes off, and she runs like the wind. Then – there is this famous series of photos where one of the race officials, a guy by the name of Jock Semple, lunges at her and tries to grab her and rib the bib off of her. Oh he failed big time on that one, as her boyfriend throws this perfectly-timed body block on Semple and takes that dude out of the picture. Switzer regains her balance and goes on to finish.
- 1972 = Women officially are allowed into the field.
- 1977 – Team Hoyt. Say no more.

Rick was born in 1962 to Dick and Judy Hoyt. As a result of oxygen deprivation to Rick’s brain at the time of his birth, Rick was diagnosed as a spastic quadriplegic with cerebral palsy. Dick and Judy were advised to institutionalize Rick because there was no chance of him recovering, and little hope for Rick to live a “normal” life. This was just the beginning of Dick and Judy’s quest for Rick’s inclusion in community, sports, education and one day, the workplace.

Dick and Judy soon realized that though Rick couldn’t walk or speak; he was quite astute and his eyes would follow them around the room. They fought to integrate Rick into the public school system, pushing administrators to see beyond Rick’s physical limitations. Dick and Judy would take Rick sledding and swimming, and even taught him the alphabet and basic words, like any other child. After providing concrete evidence of Rick’s intellect and ability to learn like everyone else, Dick and Judy needed to find a way to help Rick communicate for himself.

With \$5,000 in 1972 and a skilled group of engineers at Tufts University, an interactive computer was built for Rick. This computer consisted of a cursor being used to highlight every letter of the alphabet. Once the letter Rick wanted was highlighted, he was able to select it by just a simple tap with his head against a head piece attached to his wheelchair. When the computer was originally first brought home, Rick surprised everyone with his first words. Instead of saying, “Hi, Mom,” or “Hi, Dad,” Rick’s first “spoken” words were: “Go, Bruins!” The Boston Bruins were in the Stanley Cup finals that season. It was clear from that moment on, that Rick loved sports and followed the game just like anyone else.

In 1975, at the age of 13, Rick was finally admitted into public school. After high school, Rick attended Boston University, and he graduated with a degree in Special Education in 1993. Dick retired in 1995 as a Lt. Colonel from the Air National Guard, after serving his country for 37 years.

### **The Beginning of Team Hoyt**

In the spring of 1977, Rick told his father that he wanted to participate in a 5-mile benefit run for a Lacrosse player who had been paralyzed in an accident. Far from being a long-distance runner, Dick agreed to push Rick in his wheelchair and they finished all 5 miles, coming in next to last. That night, Rick told his father, “Dad, when I’m running, it feels like I’m not handicapped.”

This realization was just the beginning of what would become over 1,000 races completed, including marathons, duathlons and triathlons (6 of them being Ironman competitions). Also adding to their list of achievements, Dick and Rick biked and ran across the U.S. in 1992, completing a full 3,735 miles in 45 days.

In a triathlon, Dick will pull Rick in a boat with a bungee cord attached to a vest around his waist and to the front of the boat for the swimming stage. For the biking stage, Rick will ride a special two-seater bicycle, and then Dick will push Rick in his custom made running chair (for the running stage).

Rick was once asked, if he could give his father one thing, what would it be? Rick responded, "The thing I'd most like is for my dad to sit in the chair and I would push him for once."

The 2009 Boston Marathon was officially Team Hoyt's 1000th race. Rick always says if it comes down to doing one race a year he would like it to be the Boston Marathon: his favorite race.

2013 was going to be Dick and Rick's last Boston Marathon together, but they were not able to finish due to the bombings. They vowed to be back in 2014 to finish "Boston Strong" with all the other runners, which they did; stopping many times along the 26.2 distance to take photos and shake hands of the many well wishers, and finishing with several of the runners from their Hoyt Foundation Boston Marathon team.

Dick and Rick will continue to do shorter distances races and triathlons together, and teammate Bryan Lyons will be taking over in pushing Rick in the 2015 Boston Marathon. Bryan and Rick ran some local races together this year, and will start training for Boston after the holidays, doing a half marathon in Carlsbad, CA in January, as well as, other local half marathons and races.

Neither Dick or Rick are ready to retire yet.

There is a statue of Team Hoyt at the starting line in Hopinton (2013). They completed Boston 32 times.

- 1979 – BAA gave trophies to the top 10 finishers, and medals to the top 100. You needed to clock a time of 2:24 or better to get one.
- 1980 = Here comes a dark moment. In 1980, Rosie Ruiz crossed the finish line first in the women's race. Marathon officials became suspicious when it was discovered that Ruiz did not appear in race videotapes until near the end of the race. A subsequent investigation concluded that Ruiz had skipped most of the race and blended into the crowd about one mile (1.6 km) from the finish line, where she then ran to her false victory. Ruiz was officially disqualified.
- 1983 – the first time that finisher medals were given out to Boston Marathon athletes. They were made of pewter, and had the unicorn logo of the BAA on it.
- The Unicorn is the symbol of the race, and the common belief is that this mythical creature was on the family crest of a founding family member of the BAA. Maybe that's true – but I haven't found any real proof on this one yet. Since the BAA's founding in 1887, the unicorn has always been its symbol. Some also say that it's a mythological creature – you can chase after it, but you'll never catch it. So the pursuit of it makes you better and better because you continue to try to catch it. The unicorn is sometimes referred to as Spike.
- 1986 – first time a cash prize was issued for winners. More many, many years, participating in this race was free of charge, since there was no cash prize for the winner.

- 2011 – Geoffrey Mutai of Kenya runs a 2:03:02. Although this was the fastest marathon ever run at the time, the International Association of Athletics Federations noted that the performance was not eligible for world record status given that the course did not satisfy rules that regarded elevation drop and start/finish separation (the latter requirement being intended to prevent advantages gained from a strong tailwind, as was the case in 2011).[21] The Associated Press reported that Mutai had the support of other runners who describe the IAAF's rules as "flawed".[22] According to the Boston Herald, race director Dave McGillivray said he was sending paperwork to the IAAF in an attempt to have Mutai's mark ratified as a world record.[20] Although this was not successful, the AP indicated that the attempt to have the mark certified as a world record "would force the governing bodies to reject an unprecedented performance on the world's most prestigious marathon course".
- 2013 – The Bombing. On April 15, 2013, the Boston Marathon was still in progress at 2:49 p.m. EDT (nearly three hours after the winner crossed the finish line), when two homemade bombs were set off about 200 yards (180 m) apart on Boylston Street, in approximately the last 225 yards (200 m) of the course. The race was halted, preventing many from finishing.[23][24] Three spectators were killed and an estimated 264 were injured.[25] Entrants who completed at least half the course and did not finish due to the bombing were given automatic entry in 2014.[26] In 2015, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, one of the perpetrators of the bombing, was found guilty of 30 federal offenses in connection with the attack and was sentenced to death. His brother was killed by police
- Notable Winners:
  - The first real Beast of Boston was Clarence DeMar. This dude won in 1911.....and then came back to win in 1922, 1923, 1924, 1927, 1928, and 1930. DAMN. I think the only run as strong as that was Grete the Great in New York City (9 wins). The dude was told in 1910 that he had a heart murmur and he should stop running. He also took a break from competitive running so he could focus on courses he was taking at Harvard and BU. Then he got drafted during WWI. He died of cancer in 1958 at the age of 70.
  - In the 40's Gerard Cote of Canada was the man to beat, with 4 wins.
  - In the 1950's and 60's, we saw many global runners win the race, with winners hailing from South Korea, Sweden, Japan, Finland, Guatemala, USA, Yugoslavia, Belgium, and New Zealand
  - In the 70's...here comes the Running Boom. Enter Boston Billy Rodgers, who wins 4 times from 1975-1980.
  - In the late 80's the wave of African runners enters the field and absolutely dominate. Runners from Kenya or Ethiopia win this race \_\_ times over the next 26 years, from 1988-2013. Robert Cheruiyot won 4 times during this time, and Geoffrey Mutai set the record in 2011 at 2:03:02.
  - Then the bombing in 2013. THEN....2014 and MEB WINS. First USA winner since 1983.
  - On the womens side:
    - Bobbi Gibb "won" from 66-68, unsanctioned. Then Sara Mae Berman did the same thing from 1969-71.
    - First year women became official competitors, Miki Gorman won.
    - Then Joan Benoit showed up, winning in 1979 and 1983.
    - 1986 sees the influx of foreign athletes, and some great athletes from all over the world get into the act:
      - Rosa Mota from Portugal wins 3 times from 1987-1990.
      - Then it's Uta Pippig of Germany winning 3 times from 1994-1996

- From 1997-2017, a runner from Kenya or Ethiopia has won this race in all but 2 years.
  - And then.....2018. AND DESI LINDEN becomes the first American to win this race since 1985.
- Men's Wheelchair:
  - ERNST VAN DYKE. 9 TIME WINNER
  - On the womens side, there have been 3 5-time winners – Tataya McFadden, Jean Driscoll (7 in a row from 1990-1996!), and Wakako Tsuchida of Japan (5 in a row from 2007-2011!)
- Qualifying for Boston:
  - This started in 1970. You needed to submit something in writing that evidences that you can run the marathon in 4 hours.
  - 1971 – it drops to 3:30
  - 1977 – Ages 19-39 = 3 hours, 40+ = 3:30, women = 3:05
  - More age group times began to appear in the early 1980's and they have evolved to the current standard for qualifying.

Boston Marathon qualifying standards (effective for 2020 race) <sup>[33]</sup>		
Age	Men	Women
18–34	3 h 00 min	3 h 30 min
35–39	3 h 05 min	3 h 35 min
40–44	3 h 10 min	3 h 40 min
45–49	3 h 20 min	3 h 50 min
50–54	3 h 25 min	3 h 55 min
55–59	3 h 35 min	4 h 05 min
60–64	3 h 50 min	4 h 20 min
65–69	4 h 05 min	4 h 35 min

70–74	4 h 20 min	4 h 50 min
75–79	4 h 35 min	5 h 05 min
≥80	4 h 50 min	5 h 20 min

About one-fifth of the marathon's spots are reserved each year for charities, sponsors, vendors, licensees, consultants, municipal officials, local running clubs, and marketers. In 2010, about 5,470 additional runners received entries through partners, including 2,515 charity runners.[38] The marathon currently allocates spots to two dozen charities who in turn are expected to raise more than \$10 million a year.[39] In 2017, charity runners raised \$34.2 million for more than 200 non-profit organizations. The Boston Athletic Association's Official Charity Program raised \$17.96 million, John Hancock's Non-Profit Program raised \$12.3 million, and the last \$3.97 million was raised by other qualified and invitational runners.[40]

The number of BQ runners NOT accepted into the race has DOUBLED from 2012-2019, from 3,228 to 7,248.

Current day numbers estimate 30,000 starters each year. 500,000 spectators.

- Here's what went down on Monday...
  - Men's finish was the closest in its history – less than a 2 second differential
  - Romanchuck wins mens wheelchair

### **Mile 1 to Mile 2: Hopkinton**

**Elevation at start: 360 feet**

Slightly rolling terrain, but generally pleasant and uneventful. Crowds become much thinner.

### **Mile 2 to Mile 3: Ashland**

**Elevation at start: 320 feet**

Pleasant and uneventful. More rolling hills. Route 135 is just 2 lanes here - meaning one lane in each direction. The village of Ashland produces some cheering crowds, but otherwise there aren't too many spectators along this stretch.

### **Mile 3 to Mile 4: Ashland**

**Elevation at start: 265 feet**

Pleasant and uneventful. More rolling hills. The route becomes less rural, with commercial areas and small strip malls.

**Mile 4 to Mile 5: Ashland - Framingham****Elevation at start: 180 feet**

Runners encounter the first significant upward slope - a long half-mile incline as they enter Framingham toward the end of the mile.

**Mile 5 to Mile 6- Framingham****Elevation at start: 205 feet**

Runners leave country behind as they proceed along the Boston Marathon route through Framingham. The route becomes hillier also - three small rolling hills, resulting in a net drop of 25 feet by the end of this mile. Front runners begin to emerge, with other racers dropping back a bit.

Plenty of spectators usually line up to watch here.

**Mile 6 to Mile 7 - Framingham****Elevation at start: 180 feet**

Development becomes denser, with office buildings, factories, and stores lining the road around the intersection of Route 135 and Route 126. The route is mostly flat, with a drop by the end of the mile of another 25 feet. Experienced runners take it easy along this stretch, as the biggest challenges lie ahead.

**Mile 7 to Mile 8 - Framingham - Natick****Elevation at start: 155 feet**

Hard to tell where Framingham ends and Natick begins. Mostly flat, with a gradual rise of about 25 feet by the end of the mile.

**Mile 8 to Mile 9- Natick****Elevation at start: 180 feet**

Stores and more stores line the route. Mostly rolling terrain, but still fairly flat.

**Mile 9 to Mile 10 - Natick****Elevation at start: 150 feet**

Mostly flat, and less commercial as the runners first pass Lake Cochichuate, and then run through Natick's historic district.

**Mile 10 to Mile 11 - Natick****Elevation at start: 170 feet**

The road is flat through Natick, where the intersection of Routes 135 and 27 in Natick Center mark the first 10 miles. Lots of crowds gather around Natick Center.

**Mile 11 to Mile 12 - Natick****Elevation at start: 180 feet**

Development thins out, as the runners approach more suburban Wellesley. The route drops slightly, and the peaceful wooded area just to the west of Wellesley gives no hint of what is about to happen in Mile 12.

**Mile 12 to Mile 13 - Wellesley****Elevation at start: 165 feet**

The course inclines rather sharply downhill but then climbs up toward the end of the mile.

**Wellesley College**, located near Mile 13, cancels classes for the day. Wellesley students begin lining up soon after Mile 12 to create what they call the **Scream Tunnel** - a wall of sound, unbroken for the duration of the race and amplified by loud music, colorful signs, high fives, hugs, and kisses to cheer on the runners as they stream past.

**Mile 13 to Mile 14 - Wellesley****Elevation at start: 145 feet**

Mostly flat.

Less than 200 yards into Mile 13 is the halfway mark. Runners turn left onto Route 16, and head through blocks lined with ritzy shops as the Boston Marathon route leads them east from Wellesley Center.

**Mile 14 to Mile 15 - Wellesley****Elevation at start: 130 feet**

Mostly flat.

Runners pass the picturesque village houses and more shops on the outskirts of Wellesley, and then cross Route 9. Crowds are usually fairly thin here.

**Mile 15 to Mile 16 - Wellesley Hills - Newton Lower Falls****Elevation at start: 160 feet**

After crossing Route 9 there's a slight rise - and then after about half a mile comes the sharpest descent of the race, an abrupt 100-foot drop into Newton Lower Falls. This is where the terrain changes, and for the next 9 miles, the runners will be challenged by a series of rippling hills.

Crowds are still fairly thin here.

### **Mile 16 to Mile 17- Newton Lower Falls - Newton**

#### **Elevation at start: 60 feet**

Almost immediately, runners pass the "Entering Newton" sign, and start a long half-mile plus uphill climb taking them along the Route 128 overpass. Traffic roars by below, with lots of honking from drivers who look up and spot the Marathon runners. The elevation of the overpass exacerbates whatever unpleasant weather elements may be at play - strong winds, driving rain, searing (remember, our [Boston weather in April](#) can bring nasty surprises). The course drops a bit around Newton Wellesley Hospital, and finally gets a little flatter.

Not too crowded here.

### **Mile 17 to Mile 18 - Newton**

#### **Elevation at start: 115 feet**

After going through a mostly flat residential area, runners turn right at the firehouse (which is on their left) onto Commonwealth Avenue (Route 30). Newton's four difficult hills lie ahead, and the first, "Firehouse Hill," is about to begin. This is a steep hill, although less than a half-mile long, beginning just past the Brae Burn Country Club on the right.

Large crowds gather around the firehouse and along Comm Ave. From here on in, expect lots of spectators lining both sides of the route.

### **Mile 18 to Mile 19 - Newton**

#### **Elevation at start: 145 feet**

The course curves around quite a bit, but is mostly flat, with a small net drop of 15 feet.

### **Mile 19 to Mile 20 - Newton**

#### **Elevation at start: 130 feet**

Runners encounter Newton's second hill . . .

Just after Mile 19 begins, runners cross Walnut Street, where the "Forever Young" statue of John A. Kelley shows Boston's famous Marathon runner as a young athlete next to his older self. Almost immediately, the course - now quite curvy - begins a gradual incline. By this point, the runners are looking tired and stressed, but soon the hill becomes steeper. It flattens out a little - and then climbs again near Centre Street.

### **Mile 20 to Mile 21 - Newton**

#### **Elevation at start: 150 feet**

. . . and the third hill, another sharp incline just after Newton City Hall.

Mile 20 begins almost at Centre Street. **Heartbreak Hill**, Newton's fourth hill along this stretch of Comm Ave, comes just after the shops near Centre Street and forces the runners up a winding half-mile rise to Hammond Street. The hill itself isn't horrible - but it does come at a point in the runners are already exhausted by the previous hills and all those miles. Prudential Tower comes into sight at the summit, and crowds along this stretch are large and enthusiastic.

Crowds get even bigger after this point, so if being in large crowds makes you feel uncomfortable, stake out a spot at or before Mile 20.

## **Boston Insider Tip: Why is Heartbreak Hill So Hard?**

If you look at this rise while watching the Marathon, you hardly even realize it is a hill. But the runners have already covered almost 21 miles and 3 previous difficult hills.

Their stamina starts to ebb, and then they hit this hill that seems to **go on and up forever**.

### **Mile 21 to Mile 22 - Newton / Chestnut Hill**

**Elevation at start: 230 feet**

Runners pass Boston College at Mile 21 as the course plummets around the Reservoir, with minor ups and downs. The downward portions of this stretch are considered especially difficult - perhaps after the recent strain of Heartbreak Hill. BC's Screaming Eagles shriek, along with the rest of the large exuberant crowds. The Chestnut Hill Reservoir is on the right, just as the runners head toward the Mile 23 mark.

### **Mile 22 to Mile 23- Boston / Brighton**

**Elevation at start: 150 feet**

Parts of this mile are flat, and parts go downhill - tough for the runners at this point. Crowds line Cleveland Circle, and become increasingly thicker from this point on.

### **Mile 23 - Brookline**

**Elevation at start: 95 feet**

Crowds grow even thicker.

### **Mile 24 - Brookline**

**Elevation at start: 60 feet**

Boston University students line both sides of Commonwealth Ave, cheering almost as loudly as the Wellesley students.

## Boston Insider Tip: Boston Marathon Route

- **Crowds** are biggest the closer you get to Copley Square - so for less congested viewing, pick a spot in a location along the way, such as Newton.
- **Do not drive** into the city! Streets start being blocked off and parking restricted two days before the race, and the number of streets affected grows each year.

### Mile 25 - Boston / Back Bay

**Elevation at start: 15 feet**

Runners go through **Kenmore Square**. From Kenmore Square, they run along Commonwealth Ave for a couple of blocks in the Fenway neighborhood and then a couple of block in Back Bay until they reach Hereford Street, where they turn right.

Every year, the **Red Sox** play a home game at nearby **Fenway Park** on Marathon Day that normally starts at 11:05 (you can [confirm the schedule here](#)). As soon as the game is over, the crowd surges out of Fenway Park and pours into Kenmore Square. The fastest runners have already gone past by the time the game ends - but the crowds loud cheer the rest of the runners as they strive to complete the final mile.

### Mile 26 - Boston / Back Bay

**Elevation at start: 10 feet**

Runners pass the big stores along Boylston Street.

### Mile 26 + 385 yards - Copley Square

**Elevation at start (and finish): 10 feet**

The finish line!