

O'Hara's Herald Pub Series Finale

Early in 2002 a couple of experienced publicans – John and Karl O'Hara – purchased the Troubadour Pub in West Newton and by that October they were involved in a road race which proved an instant success. It did not escape the attention of the publishers of this magazine who are not only customers of the O'Hara's but promote an annual series of races emanating from pubs, and...Voila!

This brings us to the second Paddy's 3 Mile Shillelagh Shuffle and the final stop in the 2003 NER Pub Series.

As is now common knowledge, this year's champions are Eric Beauchesne and Kara Haas; for Beauchesne this is his third title in a row, emulating the feat of the olde meister Paul Hammond, but it wasn't easy. He was still off the pace until race number four when he managed to get by early leader Chris Teague and avoid absence or a complete collapse in race six. Haas moved into the lead in the second race but still couldn't afford any drastic slip at the shuffle.

As it turned out, Beau ran into a tartar in the person of Tom Dion, a product of the great track teams of Falmouth High School in the 80's. Dion, who had lived out of New England for 15 years until his return in June, crossed the line just two seconds back of the winner's 14:19. Another six seconds back was Teague. A good part of Dion's absence was spent in the Big Apple flogging pharmaceuticals and trying to find a good position in New England, which he finally did. Since then he has hit the bricks twice before the Paddy race came along – he won the Runaways Running Club 5-Miler at Attleboro this summer, edging out Terry McNatt by 6 seconds (about the same margin he had over the CSU star here). A few weeks prior to Paddy's he ran in the Apple Harvest 10-Miler in Harvard, where he ran second to Keiron Tumbleton, a son of the Auld Sod who coincidentally had won the inaugural Shillelagh Shuffle in 2002.

Post race conversation centered on whether the top pair had encountered each other in high school or college competition. Dion was at West Virginia in the eighties and nineties when Beauchesne was at Providence. Asked about future meetings Dion stated, "I'll see him again," adding, "I just hope I can hang on to him."

Kara Haas crossed the finish line in 16:56 pulling 42 year-old Wiley McCarthy along 18 seconds back while also carrying what appeared to be a couple of 12 packs (of some beverage) while breaking the tape.

At the awards ceremony she was asked by MC Bob Fitzgerald if she was imitating Eric Beauchesne's fondly remembered act at the Malden Irish American Club a couple of years ago (wearing a keg on his back while winning), but she would only acknowledge that she had heard of it.

Haas stated unequivocally that she would be back to defend next year and, "try to come up with something original."

Good luck Kara. In five years no women has succeeded in repeating as Queen of the Malt.

-Irish Tom Hurley
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