

Malt, Mirth & Miles at Paddy's

There was frost on the pumpkin and a run on hot coffee for the early-morning vendors, volunteers and organizers at the 7th annual Paddy's Pub Shillelagh Shuffle 3-Miler in West Newton on Sunday, Oct. 19. Fortunately, the Pub Series siren didn't sound until 11:00 am, at which point it had warmed to crisp racing conditions, albeit with a strong wind that forced the dismantling of Race Director Mark Kelly's beloved balloon arch by the start line on Border Street.

"The pressure's off, I really just have to finish in the top 10," reasoned Pub Series reigning and defending champion, Terry McNatt of the Cambridge Sports Union. There was no need to get the calculator out for 2005 Pub Queen and Series leader Mimi Fallon of the BAA. A bit of breeze on the leader's maillot jeune would do the trick. There was no backing off by the Pub Series leaders, however. Paddy's is a certified record eligible 3-Miler and it's a flat, fast course. That said, former BU 4:08 miler Liam Revell showed admirable restraint in his quest for the Shillelagh (and a pair of shoes). "I sat behind the leader for about a mile and a half. The first mile was 5:06, pretty moderate. Two miles went in 10:15 and then I really pushed the last mile," commented Revell, whose final mile in 4:47 brought him home first in 15:02. The BAA's Matt Ely followed in 15:21 with Somerville's Alex Taylor third in 15:25. Pub Series runner-up Lee Danforth of the Hurtin' for Certain Striders gained a point of redemption by outkicking McNatt on Border St. to place fourth in 15:47—two seconds ahead of the Prince of Pints.

Former Villanova ace Kathy Fleming is now 40 years-old, a mother of three and "not in 2007 Paddy's shape" but that doesn't mean the defending women's champ can't crank out a 5:40 pace. Fleming needed it as the BAA's Brett Ely, 29, pushed the entire race. In the end, Fleming had another Shillelagh for the kids to play with as she crossed the finish line four seconds ahead of Ely (who duplicated her husband's performance) in 17:01. Fallon, 43, followed in 17:39 to stay a Clydesdale Caravan ahead of her nearest Publican pursuit.

Despite the gusty conditions, two age-group records were set and one was tied. With numerous and speedy Waltham TC members on hand, we'll go out on a limb and surmise that new 19-under course record holder (in 19:40) Maggie Mackenzie, 15, of Waltham, is but one of Waltham TC coach Joe Tranchita's many athletes. Pub Series Veteran champion Gordon McFarland, 60, tied Colin McArdle's 2004 mark of 17:39, one of the few bullets dodged by McArdle this year as Larry Legend and Vermont's Bill Dixon have been the harvester to McArdle's wheat field of records. Another of Colin's old adversaries, Newton tonsorial artist Kevin McNamara, 60, pulled in second at 18:13.

Last but not least, Cape Ironman Bill Riley, 72, wasn't hampered by national triathlon training this year and promptly lowered his 2006 record of 19:29 to 19:11 (6:23 pace). This year, Paddy's Publicans John and Karl O'Hara secured a one-day permit to open the Paddy's upstairs loft—in the process of being remodeled but capable of holding tubs of beer, an Irish band, and hordes of malt and hops revelers. An hour into the celebration, Team Fabulous received a cell phone alert. Team member Patty Foltz and hubby Tom—

fresh from the Bay State Marathon—were still in the ‘Quest for a Vest’ for doing all six Pub Series races. Mimi Fallon was leading the pair over the course after the duo had received executive clearance from NER Central. Team Fabulous ran the final 800m to the finish with our heroes. Along the way, a squirrel dropped onto the head and then face of Liane Pancoast, a momentary delay and reminding us of Somerville RR runner John Evans encounter with what we now refer to as the “aboreal assassin” at the Martha’s Vineyard 20M several years back. Despite missing points at Paddy’s, the amazing Ms. Foltz, 60 (3:31:19 at Bay State), still placed 6th on the Pub Series women’s leaderboard—and stifled all the ‘racket about a jacket’ talk with her post-marathon Paddy’s scamper.

All the Paddy’s food, music and beverage, along with a last opportunity to gather with friends from the Series, provided a fitting prelude to the awards night celebration coming up two months later at Doyle’s Café.

—**Bob Fitzgerald**

7th Annual Paddy’s Pub Shillelagh Shuffle 3M/NER Pub Series XI Grande Finale, West Newton, October 19

*1,236 Finishers - Timing by: Granite State Race Services - USATF Certified:
MA07030JK – Course certified in 2004, previous course between 2.88-2.89 miles.
Course Records: John Mortimer, 14:24, 2004; Kathy Fleming, 16:27, 2007. 19-under:
Chris Negron, 17:00, 2006; Maggie MacKenzie, 19:40, 2008. Masters: Jason Cakouros,
15:02, 2006; Mimi Fallon, 17:01, 2005. Seniors: Ken Leinbach, 15:56, 2007; Marge
Bellisle, 18:46, 2007. Veterans: Colin McArdle, 17:39, 2004 & Gordon McFarland,
17:39, 2008; Catherine Farrell, 22:40, 2005. 70-79: Bill Riley, 19:11 2006.*