

Record Points, Pints, Pub Series Palaver at Paddy's

In a gangbuster Pub Series 'Grand Finale' at the 9th annual Paddy's Shillelagh Shuffle 3M, records were rocked, Pub Series precedents were set and no one needed hip waders, ala last year's Nor'easter. A month out from race day, Paddy's RD Mark Kelly reported slower numbers than in 2009; nonetheless, Paddy's proprietors John & Karl O'Hara stocked the kitchen and cleared the taps. It was a wise move, because when Armageddon wasn't forecast for Oct. 17 a record field of 1,987 responded to the fair weather news.

With the gun, Dublin native Dave Fitzmaurice lit out at a 4:44 pace while the Pub players engaged in a tactical play for points, content to watch the young lad fly solo...which is what he did on the certified 3-Mile course, all the way to the finish line at the end of Border St. in 14:34—just 10 seconds off the course record set by John Mortimer in 2004. "It was a bit hard with the wind and being out alone, but I felt good," said Fitzmaurice, on a one-year exchange program at Boston College up the road. "I joined the New Balance Boston team because I have no eligibility at BC. I'm just a student, not a student athlete."

Fitzmaurice would receive his Shillelagh alongside redheaded 'Colleen' Kristin Murphy, Pub Queen for 2010 with an unprecedented...but wait, behind Fitzmaurice a nip and tuck 6-race duel between Hurtin' For Certain Strider teammates TJ Unger and Lee Danforth was literally coming down to a finish-line sprint the length of Border St. Danforth, behind Unger by a solitary point, got a leg up as both were timed in 15:55. This is the first overall tie in the 13-year history of the Pub Series. When we tallied the pair's aggregate time over six races they were separated by less than a second. Two-time Pub Series champ Terry McNatt of CSU arrived next in 15:35 with another former Pub champ—Jason Cakouros of HFC—rounding out the top five in 15:36.

The BAA's Murphy donned the maillot jeune needing only to win Paddy's to be the first athlete, male or female, to win all six Pub Series races and achieve a perfect score. "I felt confident going in, my training's been going well, but I was a little nervous. I might have run the first mile a bit fast," revealed Murphy, who was free and clear from the outset and averaged 5:38 pace to break the tape in 16:52. "She's capable of running low 17s for 5K so Kristin could have run faster if pushed," noted adidas point man Mike McGrane.

Pub Series silver medalist Megan Sowa captured second in 18:03 with the BAA's Jacqui Cilley making a return visit to the Series for third in 18:12. HFC's Meaghan Scarbo placed fifth in 18:37 to clinch Series bronze. Right behind Meaghan was Long Island Senior superstar Kathryn Martin, 59, in 18:43 and we might as well start the record spree here. Although national talent Marge Bellisle, 55, of Warwick, RI, ran 19:26 and finished fourth overall in the Pub Series (a first for a Senior—male or female) insult was added to injury as Martyn lowered her CR by 3-ticks. Like Martyn, fellow New Yorker Bob Giambalvo was coming off the US Masters 5K Championships in Syracuse and boasted plenty of leg speed. Delhi's Giambalvo, 61, ran 17:23 to eclipse the Veteran's record held jointly by Colin McArdle (2004) and Gordon McFarland (2008). Behind the record setter, Lovell, ME's Kevin McDonald, 60, and Watertown's Duke Hutchinson, 63 (tied for the Pub Series Veteran title) were "duking" it out. Hutchinson had been taking it on the chin over the last few races but closed to within 3-seconds of McDonald in 20:21. "I surprised myself today," said the Dukester. "I never thought I could get that close to him but I started passing people in the last mile and there he was. I couldn't catch him but I did meet him for the first time before the race, nice guy."

Whirlaway RC speedster Doug Martyn, 50, (9th overall) tied the Senior record of 15:56 set by Ken Leinbach in 2007. Youth was also served as 17 year-olds Derek St. Cyr and Maggie MacKenzie claimed the 19-under records. Hudson HS standout St. Cyr ran 15:59 while Mt. Alvernia ace MacKenzie logged in at 19:20.

Cape Cod AC Hall of Famer Janet Kelly and CSU's Catherine Farrell went 1-2 in the Veteran's division at Paddy's, mirroring their standing in the Pub Series, and while Cape Ironman Bill Riley limped across the finish line in 22:37, it was Marshfield RR'er Bob Hillman who retained his spot atop the 70+ throne. Also, hats off to 2009 Pub Series "Rookie of the Year" Lou Peters, 86, who navigated the course in 36:45. Paddy's was also a launchpad for Heartbreak Hill Strider Amy Pace, 36, who ran 19:34 to vault into the Series final \$ position, while senior runner Kayleen Rosato, 50, ran 21:01 to secure the silver position in the Series 50+ division.

In a nice touch, everyone who placed among the top three in their division, from youth thru 70+, received new running shoes. Music and mirth along with the usual chicken pot pie and dogs were de rigueur outside while inside Paddy's pizza and aqua vitae ruled as a band played upstairs. Last year we remember watching snow fall outside Paddy's (a nice scene if you weren't soaked to the bone); this year there was nary a bumpershoot in sight.

—*Bob Fitzgerald*