

SPORTS

7 Disabled Runners Compete in Marathon

by Janet Rivera

The 14th annual New York City Marathon was held on a rainy Saturday on October 23. In spite of the chilly, wet weather people thronged most of the 26.2 miles of the race to cheer on the 17,000 runners seven of whom were disabled. Six of the disabled runners were from the Achilles Track Club.

Initially, allowing wheelchair runners in the marathon was a



Marathon participants from l. to r., Sandy Davidson, John Paul Cruz, and Linda Down.
(C) 1983 Dick Traum

cloudy issue. The New York Court of Appeals had ruled in favor of the ban imposed by the New York Road Runners Club against wheelchair users. However, earlier this summer after pressure from the disabled, the Roadrunners Club, which organizes the massive yearly event, decided for now to allow wheelchair participants.

Marty Ball, one of two among the seven runners in a wheelchair, was the first disabled runner to finish. He did it with a time of 2:55. The other wheelchair marathoner, Francisco Hidalgo, came from Spain to take part in the event. His time is unknown.

Pat Griskus placed second and broke the record for an amputee below the knee with a time of 3:55. The previous record had stood since the marathon began 14 years ago.

The other four runners were given a lead time of up to six hours. A lead time is given to enable disabled runners to finish with the other runners.

At first John Paul Cruz did not think he would be able to run in

the race because he was sick with a bad cold. Cruz, born with one leg, finished with a time of 7:06. Later Cruz, along with marathon winners Ron Dixon and Grete Waitz, flew to Washington to be congratulated by President Reagan. "I can't even remember what was said because I was in shock. It felt like a dream," Cruz said.

Linda Down, who has cerebral palsy, and was one of last year's unforgettable marathoners with a time of over 11 hours, tied Dick Traum for fourth place with a time of 8:45. Traum, an amputee, is a five time marathoner.

Linda finished the marathon almost two hours ahead of last

year's pace because she did not have to fight traffic for the last 5 miles and because she took a three hour lead time. She said the rain was no problem to her in the beginning but in the last two hours of the race the rain made for cold running conditions. "As my teeth started to chatter someone was kind enough to lend me their windbreaker," Linda said. One of her thrills was watching Grete Waitz pass her by.

Sandy Davidson, who is disabled from a stroke, participated in his first marathon and finished with a time of 10:15. "It was a new experience for me and I felt encouraged by the people's support along the way," he said.

All of the disabled runners, in spite of a *Daily News* report to the contrary, used their real names in their race applications.

The members of the Achilles Track Club have already started training for next year's marathon. "It's the main race we concentrate on," said John Paul Cruz. They meet at the Road Runners Club on 9 East 89 Street, where on non-race weekends there is usually a workout on Saturdays. The Club's number is (212) 398-0348. *

National Games Held in Hawaii

by Ed Morrison

The 27th National Wheelchair Games are now history. 450 wheelchair athletes (from all over the United States) traveled to the lovely island of Oahu, Hawaii to compete in the Nationals. They were all housed in the dormitories of the University of Hawaii. The lucky ones had spare time before the Games to travel around the island and see its beauty. I was fortunate enough to be one of them.

To be eligible to compete in the Nationals, an athlete must qualify at one of the Regional Games in the spring of each year, throughout the United States. The competition sports are archery, weight lifting, table tennis, swimming, air weapons, slalom, track and field events.

Randy Snow from Texas and Marcia Brevard from Minnesota were elected male and female athletes of the Games. George Murray, the NWAA Wheaties Champion Athlete won the PVA Jack Gerhardt Athlete of the Year Award. Three athletes, Carol Giesse Woledge from Ohio, Bruce Carr from Chicago and Dino Wallen from California were inducted into the NWAA Hall of Fame for 1983.

Ed Rowan, PVA National Sports Coordinator accepted the Benjamin H. Lipton award presented by the Bulova School from Ed Morrison, President of the Bulova School Spinners Wheelchair Sports Team and the NWAA Appreciation Award from B. Dale Wiley, Chairman of the NWAA for PVA.

From the results of the competitions at the Nationals, the United States International Teams are picked. This year 30 athletes went to Stoke Mandeville, England and 16 to Vienna, Austria to represent our country.

From the local scene, the Joseph Bulova School Spinners Wheelchair Team composed of 13 athletes captured 26 medals at the Nationals, 19 of these were for table tennis. The Bulova School Table Tennis Team is recognized as the strongest in the country.

Besides wheelchair competition at the Regional, National and International levels, there is also much going on in the Tri-State area. The Tri-State Wheelchair Athletic Association sanctions many Wheelchair Invitational Meets throughout the year. The Joseph Bulova School Health/Sports Complex is open to all disabled people. If you would