

The Schedule:

December: 19, MAC Age Group Classic, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, for those under 13 and men and women masters' athletes, 2-7 P.M.; **19,** Grand Prix #1, Princeton, N.J., 11 A.M. to 6 P.M.

January: 2, Grand Prix #2, Princeton, N.J., 11 A.M. to 6 P.M.; **9,** Masters' and Youth Athletics' Development Meet, 168th St. Armory, NYC, 10 A.M.; **9,** Open Development Meet (men & women and high schoolers), West Point, N.Y., 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.; **15,** Grand Prix #3, Princeton, N.J., 11 A.M. to 6 P.M.; **19,** MAC Relays (with prize money), 168th St. Armory, NYC, 6-11 P.M.; **30,** Men's Junior MAC Champion-

ships (age-group, high school), 168th St. Armory, NYC, 11 A.M.

February: 6, MAC Youth Athletics' and Masters' Championships, 168th St. Armory, NYC, 9 A.M. to 6 P.M.; **13,** Tune Up Meet, for open men and women, Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y., 9 A.M. to noon; **20,** Men's and Women's Senior MAC Championships, Princeton, N.J., 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.

The entry fees are \$2.00 for the Princeton and West Point meets, and \$1.50 for the Armory meets. All entries will be taken on the day of the meet. For information and a complete brochure, send a SASE to: MAC, P.O. Box 5340, FDR Station, NYC 10150.

The Final Winner

Central Park was dark and quiet, the hustle-and-bustle that is a marathon long over. But, suddenly, the calm was broken by the sight of another finisher approaching—on crutches. Race officials immediately dropped what they were doing and pulled the tape taut across the finish line. Just as they had almost nine hours earlier for Alberto Salazar. Just as they had eight and a half hours earlier for Grete Waitz.

Linda Down, a victim of cerebral palsy, was the third winner of the 1982 New York City Marathon.

She did not need that White House ceremony, with President Reagan honoring her along with Salazar and Waitz, to know she had done something special. Eleven hours after she began and almost four hours after the previous finisher had gone home, the 25-year-old Manhattan resident had completed her first marathon, on crutches called Canadian canes. That was its own reward.

"It didn't matter to me that I didn't have throngs of people cheering for me," she said, "The ones who were there were great—the people who scraped me off the ground when I slid on paper cups and tripped on garbage."

She must have fallen a half-dozen times, but she never considered dropping out. "Well, maybe once," she allowed. "When I was going over the Verrazano Bridge. The key was finally making it over the bridge at the start. I thought for a while I wasn't going to make it too much farther."

It was a long 26 miles and 385 yards, to be sure. At 12:49 P.M. when Salazar was finishing, Down was still in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn. The



Kathryn Dudek

barricades were gone by the five-mile mark, giving the street back to the cars and forcing Down to negotiate the sidewalks. "I felt kind of alone then," she said. At least she had plenty of company from Greenpoint on, with a support group that included family and friends and an ABC camera crew. By 20 miles, she knew she would finish. "I just told myself, 'I'm not going to give up now, even if it takes until Tuesday.'"

As it was, it took until 9:40 P.M. Sunday night, precisely 11 hours and 54 seconds after it started, which was long enough. Linda Down had tested herself—and she had won. "We're living in negative times," she said. "People are depressed over talk of recession, unemployment. Things feel impossible. Running the marathon felt impossible to me when I started, but I decided to try it. And no matter how far I got—and I wasn't sure I could even finish—at least I could say something is possible if you try."

Dave Rosner

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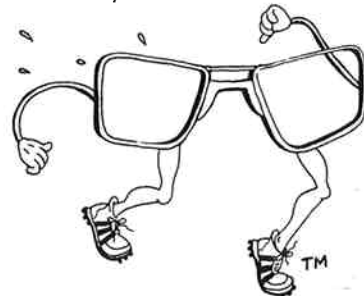


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