



PATRICK ANDRADE

**READY TO RACE** Dick Traum, 59, will compete in his 11th N.Y.C. marathon Sunday, his first as a wheelchair entrant.

# Disabled marathoner adds finishing touch

**GUEST**  
STAFF WRITER  
Traum will no doubt smile in his eyes when he crosses the Central Park Carousel near the end of Sunday's New York City Marathon.

When competing as the event's first disabled marathoner in 1976, he got lost on the course and feared he might not make it past the proverbial "wall" at the 20-mile mark.

But when he heard the carousel's treacly music about a mile from the finish line, his gloom turned to joy.

"It was the greatest feeling of my life," he recalled. "I had made it. Even today when I pass by there it has special meaning to me."

Traum, 59, who lost his right leg when he was hit by a car in 1965, will be one of 30,000 competing in the 31st annual 26.2-mile race through the five boroughs.

It will mark the 11th city marathon for Traum, who is about to set a record for most ways of competing in the event.

He's run on his artificial leg,

he's walked the course alongside a friend who has cerebral palsy and he's completed the marathon on crutches.

This year, Traum will use a hand-crank wheelchair. That's because his doctors ordered him to stop running after he underwent knee replacement surgery in July.

His best running time was 6 hours, 44 minutes. As a hand-crank user, Traum said he anticipates finishing in 2 hours, 25 minutes.

"You move like you never moved before," said Traum, who will be one of 140 wheelchair users in Sunday's race. "It's sort of like hot-rodding."

When he's not zooming around Central Park, Traum can be found at the headquarters of the international nonprofit organization he founded, the Achilles Track Club, which encourages people with disabilities to exercise and compete in races.

At a benefit dinner for the club last night, Traum announced he had found a sponsor for the first Achilles Marathon, to be held in Brooklyn's Prospect Park on April 1.

Some 500 disabled and 1,500 nondisabled runners, who are expected to raise money for nonprofit organizations, will participate in the race.

The Achilles Marathon will award top finishers in several classes — including those in wheelchairs and those who are blind or have undergone organ transplants.

Traum wants this marathon to become a world-class event for nonprofessional disabled athletes.

"It will give people who are disabled the opportunity to win prizes where they can compete with their peers — something they're not often able to do," he said.

## The 31st running of the New York City Marathon — by the numbers:

