

SPORTS SCENE

NYC Marathon 2006



PHOTO COURTESY OF N.Y. ROADRUNNERS
Kurt Fearnley, 25, of Australia finished first in the men's wheelchair division with a record-breaking time of 1:29:22.



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World champion wheelchair racer Amanda McGrory, 22, of Illinois took the women's wheelchair division, crossing the finish line in 1:54:17.

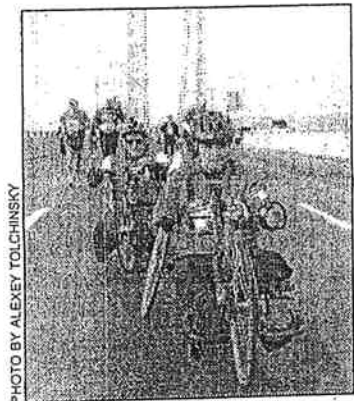


PHOTO BY ALEXEY TOLCHINSKY
Igor Zadorozhny, a triple amputee from Russia leads a group of Achilles athletes across the Verrezano Narrows Bridge on his way to completing the marathon in 3.5 hours.



PHOTO BY LOUIS MELLEDEY
Zoe Koplowitz, left, walks in Brooklyn on her annual overnight trek to finish the marathon.



PHOTO BY LOUIS MELLEDEY
Achilles member Laura Westby makes her way amid able-bodied athletes on Fourth Ave. in Brooklyn.

Hundreds of disabled athletes participated in the New York City Marathon, Nov. 5. Kurt Fearnley, 25, of Australia won in the men's wheelchair division with a record-breaking time of 1:29:22. This was done despite a mishap halfway through the marathon when he hit a pothole and fell over.

World champion wheelchair racer Amanda McGrory, 22, of Illinois won the women's wheelchair division, crossing the finish line in 1:54:17.

Paralympian Jacob Heilveil of Colorado had the best finish among the U.S. men, earning sixth place with a time of 1:40:49.

Many of the marathon participants were members of the Achilles Track Club, athletes who use crutches, braces, artificial limbs, wheelchairs or run without aids.

The outstanding male and female Achilles Athletes were Brian O'Sullivan and Ivonne Mosquera. O'Sullivan, an above the knee amputee, completed the course in 4:24:00 to set a world record for above the knee amputees. Mosquera, who is blind and runs with the assistance of a guide, completed the race in 3:36:15.

The hand cycle wheelchair racers fielded the largest number of finishers, with 98 crossing the finish line. The first male finisher was Edward Maalouf, who finished in 1:25:36, followed by the first female finisher, Monique Van Der Vorst, in a time of 1:35:48.

Sister Mary Gladys, age 75, finished her 25th marathon. Igor Cadzornny from the Achilles

Track Club of Moscow, who lost both legs and an arm while in the Russian military three years ago, completed his first marathon in 3:30:00. Minori Nakaaji from Japan, who is totally blind, completed her first marathon in a handcrank wheelchair.

Achilles was founded in 1983 by Dick Traum, who was the first amputee to run a marathon. Since its inception, Achilles has expanded to more than 46 cities in the United States and more than 60 countries. Some of the athletes are experienced, while others are participating for the first time.

Unfortunately, some of the excitement and spirit of the event was overshadowed by an ongoing divide between hand cyclists and traditional push-rim wheelchair racers. Many of the wheelchair racers claim that riding a hand cycle, (also known as hand cranks), in a marathon is the equivalent of riding a bicycle and that it would be more appropriate for them to enter bicycle races.

Although some marathons have recently decided to permit hand cycles, the prizes and public recognition are not comparable to that of the wheelchair athletes.

Hand cranks is a growing sport," said Traum. According to him, this is largely due to the fact that at nearly half the price, hand cranks are more accessible to everyone. He said that they are less expensive because "They don't have to be custom made like wheelchairs."

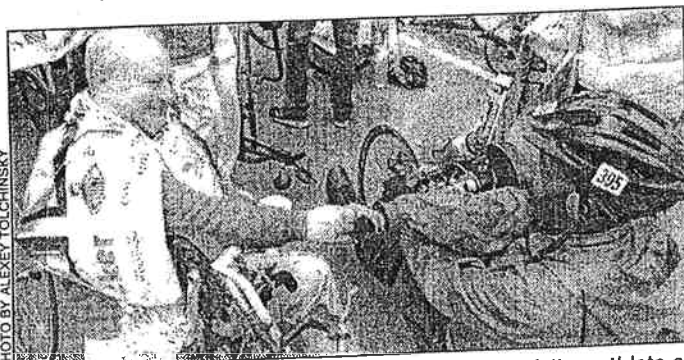


PHOTO BY ALEXEY TOLCHINSKY
Achilles President Dick Traum, left, congratulates a fellow athlete at the end of the race.



PHOTO BY LOUIS MELLEDEY
Ari Bert from Achilles South Africa chapter, left, travels through Brooklyn with his guide.