

Race Course: B-. The course was designed with one goal in mind - fast times. The course is very flat with limited turns and few hills. It is an ideal course for runners seeking a fast time or first-time marathon runners. The course starts and finishes at the same spot in downtown Long Beach. The scenic backdrop of the race was the Long Beach Harbor, Belmont Shores, Naples, and the Marine Stadium area. Approximately 75% of the race course hugged the shoreline and marina area. The remaining 25% was in the residential areas of Long Beach.

The number one point of discussion among the runners was how did this new course compare to the old Long Beach Marathon course. The major advantage to the old course was the 8 mile shoreline loop around the Long Beach Harbor to the Queen Mary. This part of the course was replaced with eight miles of loops in residential areas. I enjoyed the new course but many of the runners preferred the old course.

Race Organization: A. For a first time run, the race organizers certainly did a good job. Between 6:30 am and 7 am the marathoners were serenaded by the USC Trojan marching band. The race started on time. The course was very well laid out. There were aid stations every mile with water, Gatorade, Vaseline, and Porta-potties. There was excellent support by the volunteers and the local Long Beach residents.

Post Race: D. The refreshments at the end of the race were a major disappointment. The middle and end of the pack runners only received water and apples. They were out of oranges, bananas, bagels, and Gatorade.

Overall, this was a "B-" experience. Hopefully, this marathon will become a regular fixture on the marathon circuit. However, it has a major way to go to achieve it's goal of being the Boston Marathon of the West Coast.

RUNNER'S PROFILE

by Joe Howell

Back in the November 1998 issue of the SBAA Newsletter, I wrote a column entitled "Great Rivalries-Where are They?" I focused the article on Terri Thomas and Bobbi Janowiak, two well known, incredibly buff local runners who are veterans of numerous marathons, multiple Hawaii Ironman competitions and other races. Terri and Bobbi continue their friendly competition; unfortunately, my effort to stir up other local rivalries appeared to be unsuccessful-until recently.

This month's Profile features John Orach. John was a very competitive bike racer for years. (In fact, before I knew him, I heard one of the regulars at the track describe John as "the tall guy who always runs wearing a bike jersey". Judging from his many years of bike racing, he undoubtedly has lots of bike jerseys to run in.) Now, with relatively few years of running experience, John is hooked on running, competing in longer and longer races and consistently turning in some very impressive performances.

Finally, to the rivalry issue. Back in the October 1999 issue of the Newsletter, the Runner's Profile featured Mick Caruso. Mick took great delight in trash talking John Orach and Jeremy Torres. When I asked John if he would be willing to be the feature of this month's Profile, he seized the opportunity to send a little trash back to Mick. In fact, the two are good friends and appear to bring out the best in one another, whether smiling as they appear to glide effortlessly (almost) through the Group #1 workout Tuesday nights at the track or in head to head competition in local races. With a little luck, the two of them have many years of competition and rivalry ahead of them.

Where are the rest of you rivals? Let me hear from you.

Basic Information

Name: JOHN ORACH

Age: 30

Employment/Family: McGhan Medical (Sales Support Rep.)

Dating a wonderful and "race-day-stress-tolerant" person, Tessa.

Other Sports/Interests: Cycling - raced competitively from 1986 to 1998 as Cat. 2. Turned to running after cycle burnout. Soccer.

Running Highlights

Favorite Distance & PR at same: 10K's (35:45) and Half Marathons (1:18:42) are my favorite.

Best Race and Why: 1998 S.B. Half Marathon - I knocked three minutes off my previous year's time. Also, I finished ahead of Mick Caruso and Todd LaJeunesse.

Worst Race and Why: 1998 Avocado Run. I ran the first mile fast. I felt great and thought I was really going to stick it to Mick and Todd. By mile two, I was out of gas while Mick and Todd blew by me, never to look back! They stuck it to me!

Average Weekly Mileage (last 12 months): 25 to 35 miles.

Favorite Local Race: Santa Barbara Half Marathon (Pier to Peak is a close 2nd favorite)

Goals (Realistic) for 2000: Break 17 minutes at Nite Moves. I get close, but can't break it. Run sub 1:18 at Santa Barbara Half Marathon.

Goals (Wildly Optimistic) Year 2000: To run with Mick Caruso past the Cabrillo Bathhouse without having him mention that his name is on the SBAA plaque inside and/or having him drag us inside to see it.

Additional Information

Why I Run: I began to run as an off season alternative to cycling. I began to like it more and more. Burned out from cycling, running offered the challenge of something new, something to learn and something to learn from.

My Runner Hero & Why: Mick Caruso - He proves that you can be very competitive in local races running 10-20 miles a week . . . and at an old age.

Personal Training Tips: The instant you feel that you "have" to run instead of "want" to run, stop and think about your motivation and satisfaction. It's okay to take time off, be it one day, one week or one year.

I love runners who ...: share experience and help others.

I hate runners who ...: don't wave or say "hi" when I have waved or said "hi" in passing.

Suggestions for local races: Make all the start times 8:00 a.m. (Mick has a hard time getting to the 8:00 a.m. ones on time.)

Serious answer: I hear there was a race held on Mountain Drive? I love the view and train on it quite often.

Suggestions for SBAA: Create an age division of 30-31 so I might have a chance at winning something!!

My views on race promotion and entry fees: Any person willing to promote a race with his/her time and energy can charge whatever they like for entries. No one forces us to race.

Quote: "Remember, it's not important that your new shoes make you run faster. It's important that they make you look faster."

SBAA Member since 1998.

