

## 30 Years and Running

The year 2012 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Honolulu Marathon Training Program offered through the University of Calgary. The program was the first of its kind in Calgary in 1982 and was developed by a team of professors in the Faculty of Physical Education interested in helping people to run their first marathon. Since that time, the University has graduated an estimated 1500 first-time marathoners, many of whom ran in Honolulu, Hawaii for their inaugural event.

What has changed in 30 years of running? Industries around shoes, clothing, training plans, nutrition, medicine and personal or group coaching – have all developed exponentially. The people who run marathons and the time they take to run them – have all changed dramatically. These are all interesting areas to look back and reflect on just how far we have come.

In 1982,

- The Calgary Marathon was already 18 years old.
- The winner of the Boston Marathon was Alberto Salazar. Others in the top 5: Dick Beardsley, John Lodwick, Bill Rodgers and Erik Stahl. Salazar won in 2:08.52 in a sprint finish marking the first time two runners had broken 2:09 in the same race. The women's results: Charlotte Teskey won in 2:29.33, 7 minutes ahead of Jacqueline Gareau (Canada).
- The winner of the Honolulu Marathon was David Gordon in 2:15.30 and the winner of the women's race, Eileen Claugus in 2:41.11. In 1982 there were 10,043 finishers with far greater men than women completing the distance.
- The Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, Australia had not yet offered the women's marathon as an event.
- Nike was just underway with the production of their "air" technology in the Tailwind shoe and Mizuno had just introduced their Cassette Insole System (a multiple insole system to customize shoes).
- Gatorade was a product introduced to the NFL as the official sports drink, but it would be some time before it was commonplace at 'aid stations' in running races.
- Dr. Reed Ferber of the Running Injury Clinic at the University of Calgary was 12 years old and my co-facilitators with the marathon program were not yet born. 😊

Training for a marathon at one time seemed out of reach, but with participation rates higher than ever, runners are finding that completing a marathon is very possible. In fact, the Boston Marathon has adjusted their qualifying times for 2013 likely in part because there has been such an influx of applicants achieving the previously posted qualifying times. Statistics from the USA describe a boon to marathon participation between 2000 and 2009.

- 2000 - 299,000 finishers (62.5% male/ 37.5% female)
- 2009 - 468,000 finishers (59.6% males/ 40.4% females)
  - A 64% increase in overall participation in this 10 year period
  - Average finish time in 2009 was 4:35
  - Average finisher age was 38.7 years.

How have runners changed running? The simple attitude that ‘if they can do it, I can do it’, has brought the 10K, half marathon, and marathon experience into the lives of mere mortals. The expanding circle of people participating in this activity has moved the activity from elite-super-human to normal-super-human status. Can you do it? Of course you can. Will it lead to great things? That’s up to you.

#### Honolulu Marathon

Participation at the Honolulu has grown from 10,000 to upwards of 30,000 on a given year. It is the “peoples” marathon, with no cut off times. If you finish, you receive an official time and a medal. This fact has attracted many first timers over the years including well known, self professed “Penguins” like John Bingham of Runner’s World Magazine fame. Most marathon events have 6 hour or greater cut-off times and even allow for people slower than that to start ahead of the pack.

#### Our Training

Training programs have changed as well. In 1982 – the University of Calgary’s 8-month program was based on a high volume, 6-runs-per-week schedule with an emphasis on weight training. The volume was typical of the times; the weight training was fairly unique to this particular program. Today with some adjustment over the years it is now a 4-runs-per-week program, less volume with better adherence and fewer injuries. Rather than weight training per se, the focus is on “Core” conditioning, hip strengthening and yoga – which is supported by the current research. Four runs per week allow people to make adjustments and incorporate other activities into their week. There are countless running programs available that focus on the beginner, or seasoned athletes – all of which will work to get the runner to the finish line. The 8-month preparation process affords the new marathoner plenty of run-way to prepare for the big day.

Who, me? Yes, you.

The past 30 years has moved running forward in leaps and bounds with the technology, physiology, coaching and nutrition growing with it. There are experts at the University of Calgary ready to help you. Join us on April 2, 2012 for our information session where you can have all of your questions answered.

[www.ucalgary.ca/marathon](http://www.ucalgary.ca/marathon) or call 403-220-7023. “There are no shortcuts to the finish line, but we can get you there”.

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