

“No relief from the heat at Grandma's Marathon”

By Jim Gerweck, Managing Editor *Running Times* Published June 17 2007
Copyright © 2007, Southern Connecticut Newspapers, Inc.

Usually, Grandma can be counted on to be a pretty nice gal - you know, a couple of bucks in your stocking at Christmas or birthday, some thoughtful if not always desired presents, and so forth. But yesterday, for the second year in a row, Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minn., proved to be a bit of a meanie, greeting runners with heat more conducive to sitting on the beach along Lake Superior rather than running on the roads alongside it.

As a result, times were universally slow, with even the winners clocking in at nearly five minutes off their PRs, and the slowdown becoming even more pronounced farther back in the pack. What made the conditions even more deleterious is the fact that the race was for all intents and purposes the last real chance American men had to get a time of 2:22 or faster that would qualify them for this November's Olympic Trials in New York. A large group of them descended on Duluth with that goal in mind, and set out working together to achieve it. Due to the heat, only three of them did, and you could see the look of obvious anguish on the faces of those finishing in the 2:25 to 2:30 range, knowing that their efforts, on a better day, would have netted them their trip to the Trials.

Nonetheless, Grandma's remains a great event; in fact, had the race been run even a few days earlier, the runners would have started in temperatures in the 50s rather than the 70s. Friday night's shift of the wind from the East, off the lake, to the West, put an end to that, and from that point, the deal was pretty much sealed.

While it's still technically possible to post a qualifying mark until Oct. 7, the date of the usually fast Chicago Marathon, from a practical standpoint this was the last best chance for American men, and it evaporated just like the water spilled on the hot pavement in Duluth.

Rebecca Wright

overall place: 1500 out of 6981
division place: 36 out of 327
gender place: 321 out of 2565 F
Clock time: 3:52:53
Chip time: 3:51:10
Clock pace: 8:53

Joseph Poliquin

overall place: 1501 out of 6981
division place: 76 out of 428
gender place: 1180 out of 4415 M
Clock time: 3:52:53
Chip Time 3:51:10
Clock pace: 8:53



So, we will consider ourselves lucky to have survived “Grandma’s” at sub-4 hours.
- Bekkie & Joe