



Marie's marathon memories

IT WAS great to meet former national marathon champion and Irish Olympian Marie Murphy at the adidas Dublin Marathon Expo in the RDS. Marie won the Olympic marathon trial race in Wexford back in 1988 and qualified to run for Ireland in the Seoul Olympic Games.

For the past 10 years Marie has been Head Coach for Track & Field and Cross Country at Louville High School in Woodland Hills, California. She has also coached marathon runners at the Leukaemia Foundation – a charity who are regular visitors to the Dublin Marathon.

Marie is now working closely with Susan Love MD, of the American Cancer Research Foundation. "I am very excited to be working with Susan and having my programmes raising funds for breast cancer research," Marie said. "I enjoy taking the American runners back to my home town and I hope to bring a really big group to Dublin for the 25th Anniversary race next year."

Marie turned 40 in 1999 and decided to go back to track running after a break of thirteen years. "I set a goal of breaking five minutes for the mile, allowing myself one second for each year I lived since running a 4.40 mile as a 20 year old. I achieved my goal and during the same season I won the Masters O40/45 National Championship 1500m in 4.41.2, broke the U.S.

Masters 800m record with 2.19.3 and was a member of a team that broke the O40/45 4x800 relay."

The Olympic Trial race in Wexford remains a cherished memory for Marie Murphy. "On the day I achieved my goal and saw a childhood dream come true," she said. "I have great memories of my family and friends celebrating the moment with me. It was a great day."

Now Marie has joined the Irish Runner team and in this and future issues she will contribute a series of training and motivational articles. We are delighted to welcome her on board.

Raheny Shamrocks Road Race reaches milestone

ONE OF Ireland's biggest road races, the Raheny 5, celebrates its 20th anniversary on Sunday January 25, when over 1,500 athletes are expected to complete the Raheny Shamrock promotion.

Over the past several years, numerous athletes have used the event to fine-tune their preparations for the National Interclubs CC three weeks later. The race also attracts large numbers of fun-runners and walkers.

While several high-profile Dublin road-races have fallen by the wayside, the Raheny race, sponsored by An Post, has been growing rapidly and last year record its biggest field, 1,450.

'Road racing in Ireland is now experiencing a resurgence of the running

boom comparable to the 1980s — average fields at the adidas series of races over the summer were in the region of 1300,' said Pat Hooper, race director and former Olympic marathoner.

'Therefore, we're confident we'll have a huge field. We're also hoping to have a strong elite field.'

The defending champion, Mark Kenneally, who became the first Raheny winner of the event two years ago and retained his title last year, will be back hoping to make it three in a row. Another local, the recently crowned national marathon champion, Annette Kealy, will also toe the line.

Both can expect stiff competition — the organisers are offering a cash bonus to the first man under 23 minutes and the first woman under 26:30.

A one-mile race for children aged 10 to 15, which last year attracted well over 200 runners, takes place at 2:30 pm. The main race begins at three.

As usual, a whole array of prizes is on offer in all categories. Athletes are encouraged to enter in advance, with the pre-entry fee a very reasonable €7. Entries on the day are €10. See entry form in this issue or call Raheny PRO John Fitzsimmons (01 834 5809) or race director Pat Hooper (01 839 2222).

Hartmann completes Ironman

AS REPORTED in the last issue, Limerick Physical Therapist, Gerard Hartmann made the journey back to Hawaii in October to compete in the Ironman Triathlon on the 25th anniversary of the legendary event.

We can now report that 42-year-old Hartmann completed the Ironman course in 11 hours 7 minutes and 23 seconds. "My goal this time around in Hawaii was to complete the event rather than compete," Hartmann explained.

"After my cycling accident in 1991 I was told that I would never run again and it was very satisfying to have proved the orthopaedic surgeon wrong."

Hartmann's Hawaii feat was not without incident. In fact, it was a real triumph over adversity, as he first had to recover from a

debilitating virus in the week before the event and then with only two days to go his racing bike broke into two pieces while he was out on a practice spin. "I sensed that there was a problem with the bike and even though I had it checked out by a mechanic, it was only when I put the machine under stress that the frame cracked," he said. "I completed the Ironman on a borrowed bike. It was hugely satisfying just to finish. The Ironman motto is 'Everything is Possible'. My own motto now is – To finish is to win and to win is to finish."

Finishing the Ironman gave me a much deeper appreciation of the effort that the ordinary runner puts in when completing a marathon. It was a very worthwhile experience for me."

