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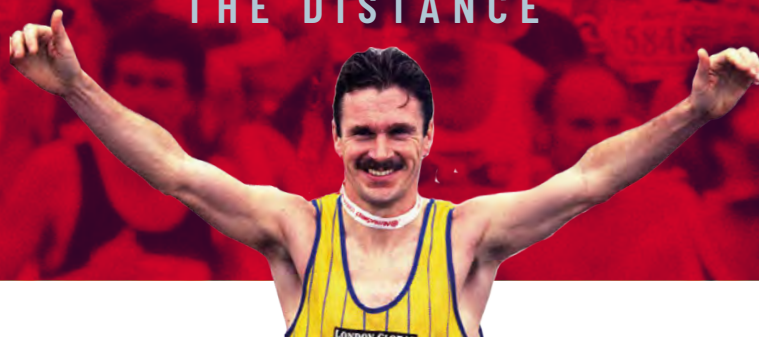
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CAIRESS COMING
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KIPCHOGE TAKES
ON BOSTON

MARATHON

SPECIAL ISSUE

EXPERT ADVICE ON RACING 26.2 MILES
AND THE BEST GEAR FOR TACKLING
THE DISTANCE



2023 TRACK AND FIELD

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RESPECT THE DISTANCE



Euan Crumley
AW Editorial Director

The marathon is a tough nut to crack. This is not an event you can bluff your way through – it will find you out. A number of things have to align for a successful assault on the classic 26.2-mile distance and, make no mistake, it's always a fight.

But these are some of the many reasons why the event is to be celebrated and this issue of AW is part of that celebration. With the boom in ultra distance running, there has been a recent trend of downgrading the difficulty of *only* covering the marathon as horizons have shifted and the public has gone looking for seemingly sterner tests.

Yet running a marathon well still involves no little skill, determination or willpower. With Boston and London just about to come under starter's orders, we look ahead to both events but also take the opportunity to speak to a number of people who know all too well just how difficult a beast it is to tame.

Few did it better than Paula Radcliffe, and it's scarcely believable that 20 years have passed since she tore her way through London's streets to rip up the record books. Many observers will say that the fact her fabled mark of 2:15:25 was overtaken can be partly attributed to the advances in shoe technology – and they have a point. It's no coincidence that the times have tumbled since the advances in footwear have gathered astonishing pace.

Radcliffe knows that, too, but she also acknowledges that success doesn't just come down to what an athlete is wearing on their feet (p30). Every single person we have spoken to for these pages mentioned the same phrase when it came to the marathon. "Respect the distance" was the recurring theme.

And so we shall see what these spring showpieces will bring. With a number of fascinating stories to follow on British shores and the men's world record-holder Eliud Kipchoge pitting his wits against the famously difficult Boston course, there is much to look forward to.

Should you be on a marathon mission of your own, then we wish you the very best of luck. You should take pride in the fact that what you're undertaking isn't easy. If it was, then everyone would be doing it. **AW**

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AW MARATHON

PAULA RADCLIFFE

LONDON LANDMARK

It's now 20 years since Paula Radcliffe changed the face of marathon running forever. To begin our special focus on the event which covers 26 miles and 385 yards, the former world record holder takes Euan Crumley behind the scenes of an unforgettable performance

But very rarely, all world record-breaking performances are exceptional. There are some, however – whether they be through chance or the workings of Allah – that are exceptional in the way they have changed the way we think about the world around us. One such happening occurred on the streets of London 20 years ago, on April 12, 2003. It was the final marathon of Paula Radcliffe's career, with the then 29-year-old living closer to her goal of becoming the first woman to break the four-hour barrier than she was to the British capital. She achieved it by running a time of 2:17:16, and setting a new world record for women's marathons in the process. It was a moment that changed the face of marathon running forever. To begin our special focus on the event which covers 26 miles and 385 yards, the former world record holder takes Euan Crumley behind the scenes of an unforgettable performance.

Expectations were high. When Radcliffe crossed the line in London in the spring of 2003, her time broke the previous record of 2:17:16, which had been set by her in the same race. It was a moment that changed the face of marathon running forever. To begin our special focus on the event which covers 26 miles and 385 yards, the former world record holder takes Euan Crumley behind the scenes of an unforgettable performance.

30 Paula Radcliffe takes us back to an unforgettable day in London

AW MARATHON

LIZ MCCOLGAN

"Gone are the days when I have to fight her corner"

Liz McColgan talks to Euan Crumley about the expectations surrounding the upcoming marathon debut of her daughter Eilish – and why she feels the 32-year-old has become a far stronger athlete, both on and off the track.

Liz McColgan has been a professional athlete for a long time. She's won a lot of races, and she's been a part of some of the most exciting moments in British athletics. But now, she's a mother. And she's got a daughter who's also a professional athlete. It's a bit of a challenge, but Liz is doing it. She's been a part of some of the most exciting moments in British athletics. But now, she's a mother. And she's got a daughter who's also a professional athlete. It's a bit of a challenge, but Liz is doing it. She's been a part of some of the most exciting moments in British athletics. But now, she's a mother. And she's got a daughter who's also a professional athlete. It's a bit of a challenge, but Liz is doing it.

50 Liz McColgan on daughter Eilish making her marathon debut

AW MARATHON

BOSTON

THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING

To the locals, the Boston Marathon represents so much more than a running event. It's also special for the runners who arrive from all over the world to take part – and one in particular is causing a stir, writes Euan Crumley

It was the first time I saw the Boston Marathon. It was a beautiful day, and the weather was perfect. I was running with a group of friends, and we were all having a great time. It was a beautiful day, and the weather was perfect. I was running with a group of friends, and we were all having a great time. It was a beautiful day, and the weather was perfect. I was running with a group of friends, and we were all having a great time.

54 Why Boston Represents such a special marathon challenge

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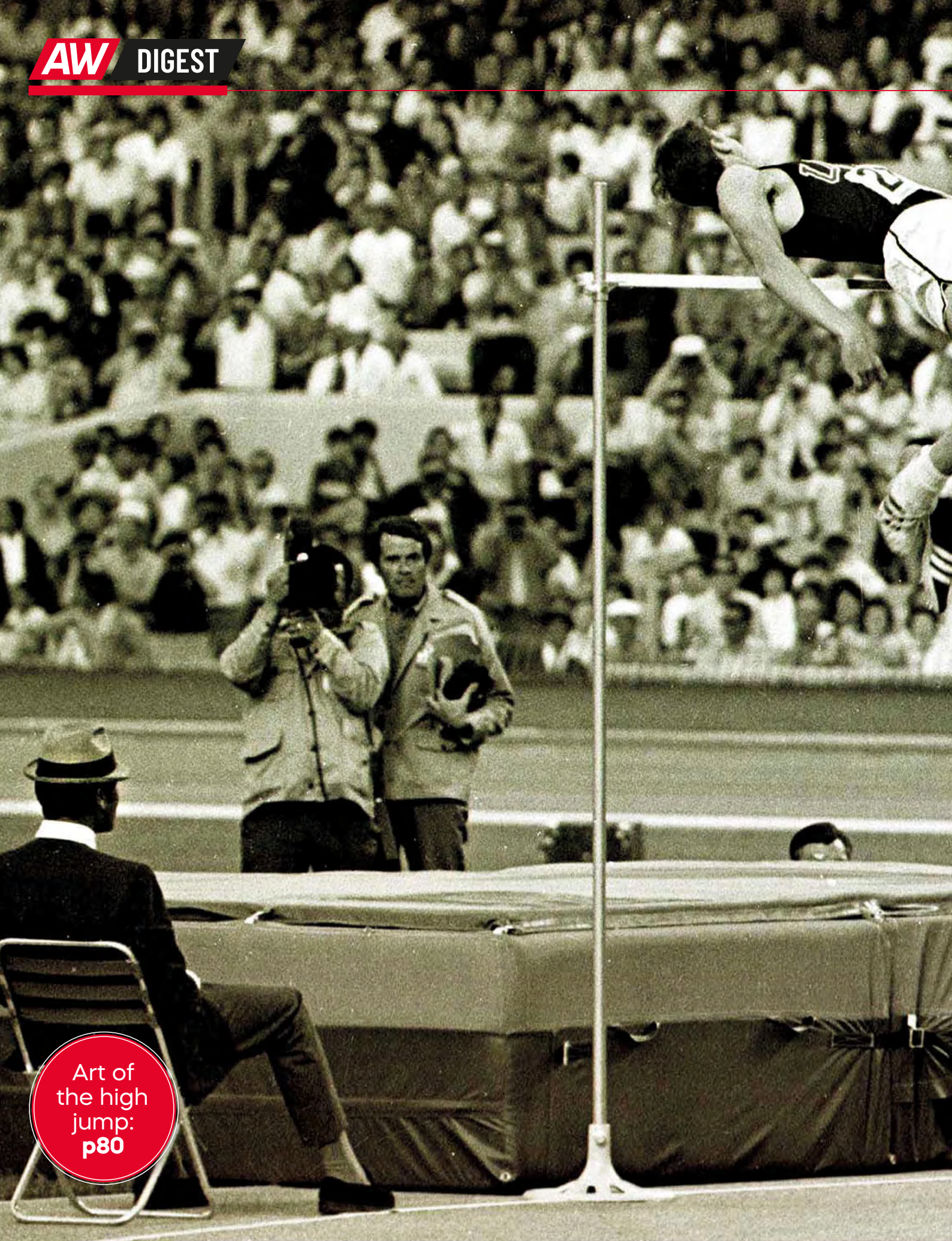
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Karsten Warholm
exclusive
ON SALE
MAY 18



Art of
the high
jump:
p80

PICTURE THIS

DICK FOSBURY
1947-2023

Few athletes have had quite the same level of impact upon athletics as Dick Fosbury, the 1968 Olympic high jump champion who transformed his discipline and passed away last month at the age of 76.

The American was one of the first to start leaping over the bar backwards – a technique which took him to gold at those Games in Mexico City and became known as “the Fosbury flop”. Up until then, the favoured method had been a straddle jump. **AW**



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POWER OF SPEECH

The willingness of athletes past and present to fight their corner has undoubtedly had a bearing on World Athletics' ruling on transgender and DSD athletes

WORDS: **EUAN CRUMLEY**

The momentum took a while to gather pace, but there can be no doubting the role that a collective voice has had in shaping the future of athletics for women.

The recent announcements from World Athletics that transgender women who have gone through male puberty are now excluded from female events is precisely what campaigners had been calling for. The regulations around DSD (Differences of Sex Development) athletes being sharply tightened has been welcomed, too.

For this to have become reality, however, has taken work. A lot of work. The likes of swimmer Sharron Davies has been at the forefront of speaking up for the protection of the female category and it was a tweet by the former Olympic swimmer which another Olympian, marathon runner Mara Yamauchi, admits sparked her into action.

"It read 'if you are silent, you are complicit in the damage being done to women's sport'. And I thought 'she's absolutely right. I can't with good conscience

stay silent on this any more'. So I started speaking up," says Yamauchi.

Both have continually aired concerns and highlighted issues around athletes who have gone through male puberty, but now identify as women, being allowed to compete in the female category. It wasn't an objection to how such athletes identify, but that it made for a very unlevel playing field for female athletes.

Transgender activists and athletes have, not surprisingly, reacted with dismay and an insistence of being excluded from the sport. But in fact it is exclusion from just one category of the sport, the female category, and World Athletics are setting up a working group to assess how best to create a pathway towards transgender inclusion.

A *YouGov* poll, an *AW* Twitter poll and other surveys in recent months have overwhelmingly backed up the conclusions which have now been reached by the global governing body, but the emotive nature of this debate has made many current athletes afraid to say what they think. It's not just the potential of the abuse they could face, but also the potential loss of contracts and earnings. The likes of

World Athletics' policy

- Transgender women who have gone through male puberty are excluded from female events.
- DSD athletes will be required to reduce their testosterone levels below a limit of 2.5nmol/L for a minimum of 24 months (or six months for currently competing DSD athletes) to compete internationally in the female category in any event, not just the events that were restricted (400m to one mile) under the previous regulations. The principle of restricted events has been removed from the regulations.

Amelia Strickler, Beth Dobbin, Emily Diamond, Ellie Baker, Kylie Grimes, Abigail Irozuru, Jade Lally and Kirsty Law were placing themselves firmly at risk, therefore, by speaking out. From the non-elite side, so too was the athlete who identifies as @femalerunner on Twitter.

"I have nothing but admiration for all the athletes speaking up because it does take some courage, especially the younger ones who are still competing," says Yamauchi. "It's great that they're speaking up and I hope others will have the courage to do so. This isn't transphobic, it's just asking for fairness in the female category."

As things stand, there are no trans-identifying male athletes competing at world level in the female category – it is the DSD changes which will have the biggest impact at this level given the number of elite competitors it will affect – but Yamauchi insists the powers that be are correct to have acted now, for a number of reasons.

"I think World Athletics have done the right thing to act early rather than waiting for a high profile case to emerge in athletics," she says. "But also the fact that we haven't had one at world level is beside the point to me. The damage is done by the discouragement it [inclusion of trans-identifying males in the female category] will cause for girls and young women at all levels.

"Parents of athletes also commit masses of time, money and energy to helping their children excel in sport and parents of daughters might be thinking, 'well, what's the point?'. Ditto for coaches of female athletes."

The World Athletics regulations have also been adopted by UK Athletics for events it licenses, and are expected to filter down into the lower levels of the sport in Britain. That does raise questions around how much pressure it might put on local

I THINK PEOPLE ARE TAKING WOMEN'S SPORT FOR GRANTED. THIS THREATENED ITS ENTIRE EXISTENCE

event organisers in terms of administration and enforcement. Yet professor Alice Sullivan, a running club volunteer, believes the clarity around this issue will make a big difference.

"I think, for grassroots sports, simplicity is really important," she says. "If you're organising a local 10km, you can't get into testing people's testosterone levels and I think there's [now] an assumption of honesty. If you say the female category is only for people who have not been through male puberty then I really think the vast majority of people will respect that."

While there is now more of a sense of optimism, Sullivan admits there is also a feeling of an opportunity having been missed.

"I think the one thing that has been a bit disappointing is that the sport – both elite athletes, and grassroots athletics – has never been consulted on the issue," she says. "I think more could have been done [by authorities] to lead a discussion and to try to enable people to have it in a civil and respectful way."

International shot putter Strickler, who has found herself featured across the media when airing her views in recent months, confirms she was never asked for her thoughts from those within the sport. That, and a reluctance from some of her higher profile peers to use their platform and offer more public support, does rankle.

So does the fact that, for all the apparent progress in women's sport, it still feels like an almighty scrap simply to stay afloat.

"I still go to competitions and earn half the prize money that the men do so we've still got a long way to go," she says. "I feel like women throughout history have had to fight for things and this is just another one of those things on the list."

There is certainly no overriding feeling that the work is done.

"I think people are taking women's sport for granted," says Yamauchi. "This threatened the entire existence of women's sport and I don't think we're out of the woods, to be honest. This is a very big step forward but I don't think the battle is won by any means in other sports and in other countries."

Sullivan concurs. "I think that's been a bit of a shock," she adds. "You assume a certain level has been reached and that people understand women and girls have a right to sport as well. I think this has shown that it's not a given at all." **AW**

BELOW: Amelia Strickler was unafraid to air her views





TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

The cases of Zane Robertson and Peter Bol are very different, but both have shown just how damaging the issue of doping can be, writes **Katharine Merry**

I'm normally delighted to see athletics making plenty of noise, but there has been a depressing familiarity to some of the headlines being created by the sport in the past month. In particular, I'm thinking of the stories which have perfectly illustrated two very different sides of the same coin when it comes to doping. For all the progress we seem to be making, there's an inescapable feeling of history continuing to repeat itself.

On one hand, there is Zane Robertson – the New Zealand distance athlete whose career was ended after testing positive for EPO and then

trying to cover it up in one of the most spurious ways imaginable.

And then there's Peter Bol, Australia's 800m Commonwealth silver medallist who also tested positive for the banned substance in January but his B sample returned an atypical finding, which saw his suspension from competition lifted.

At the time of writing the Sports Integrity Australia investigation is ongoing, but Bol's lawyers insist that two independent tests have shown there never to have been any EPO in his system and that his name should be cleared.

There are so many layers to each situation but let's start with Robertson. When I heard his claim that he had banned substances in his system because he

ABOVE: Zane Robertson has been banned for taking EPO

RIGHT: Australia's Peter Bol

I DO THINK PEOPLE ARE LESS INCLINED TO BELIEVE WHAT THEY'RE SEEING AND TAKE PERFORMANCES AT FACE VALUE

went to hospital in Kenya, where he lives and trains, and was administered EPO rather than the Covid vaccine... well, no one was buying that, were they? It just reeked of desperation.

Now, we should of course keep in mind the pressures, the environment and other circumstances which have driven this individual to cheat in the first place and to get to that point where they feel so desperate that this kind of behaviour feels like their best option. Ultimately, though, you have to decide whether you cross that line and take that option if presented. Outside of pressures and feeling this is your only option, you could also just be a cheat who is happy to be one and risk it all.

Hand on heart I can say that, during my career, no one ever approached me to do things in the wrong way in any environment that I was in, so I never got put into that kind of moral situation. I know that if I had found myself in that kind of set-up, then I would have refused. I was always very comfortable being the best that I could be and whatever rewards that bestowed on me was fine. I also wanted to be able to sleep at night and one day look my children in the eye.

I can accept why some athletes, whose thinking and stance is different, might find it so hard to turn down but I also think there must be countless examples of people who have shown real bravery and decided not to go down that road. But that's not splashed all over the news, is it? You just don't hear about those stories. They are not as exciting and interesting, but I'd love to hear them.

Make no mistake, the controversies around drugs cheats might make for good reading and attract the interest of the general public but they do a huge amount of damage.

I do think people are less inclined to believe what they're seeing and take performances at face value, which makes me very sad – and very angry. It's almost like the default setting is that everyone cheats and it's getting harder to convince people that that's not the case.

Examples like Robertson's certainly don't help and a really disturbing aspect to the story is how seemingly easy it was for him to get hold of the drugs.

Much has been written in recent months about the doping issues in Kenya and we are led to believe there is a great deal of work being done there to clean things up – and perhaps that's where Robertson can help to turn this awful situation into something more positive.

If the authorities are switched on, then here is someone who has information which could help go some way to stemming the tide. Whether he'd be willing to say anything, however, is another matter entirely.

Bol's case is of a very different nature and has raised a number of questions. One of the main issues to me, though, is why his name was released to the public while there was still an apparent element of doubt around his case.

It's been shown time and again that people have a habit of making instant, snap judgements about someone in these kinds of circumstances, so Peter will find himself answering questions on this subject for a long time.

Reading Peter's case sent my mind back to Diane Modahl and her situation in the early 1990s. I remember the mess surrounding the Commonwealth 800m champion's positive test prior to the 1994 Games. There were mishandled tests and a subsequent clearance of any wrongdoing from both the UK and global federations. The public spotlight and interest never fades around topics like this, does it?

Look through the history of any sport and you will find people who want to cheat. Sport ultimately is just a reflection of life, with cheats and short-cut takers.

Are the anti-doping authorities making an increasing difference? I like to think so. We should remember that news of athletes being caught is, ultimately, good news and there's a pride I take in seeing athletics being proactive in tackling this head on while some other sports still appear to be sitting on their hands.

It just never makes for pleasant reading. **AW**



Katharine Merry

Olympic medallist and broadcaster



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HANNAH ENGLAND

MY GREATEST RACE

ABOVE: Hannah England celebrates taking 1500m silver in Daegu

RIGHT: savouring that medal-winning moment

2011 World Championships 1500m final, Daegu, second place, 4:05.68

The path to selection might not have been smooth, but the 2012 Olympian seized her chance to land silver in South Korea

I went to the European Indoor Championships that spring and under-performed so I over-trained because I was so upset about how badly I'd done. I picked up quite a big Achilles injury and missed the first five or six weeks of the outdoor season.

I had five weeks totally off, from the end of April and all of May, which is quite significant for chasing qualification times. It was quite hairy but I very much felt that, if I could get to a race, then I should make the most out of it. That was quite refreshing as I'd struggled with nerves an awful lot up until that point in my career.

The week before the British Championships, I was trying to just run the qualification time, and I ended up running what is still my personal best, knocking three seconds off my fastest time. It was a shock – going from “am I even going to make a championships?” to being ranked pretty highly.

I'd finally made a senior team the year before at the Commonwealth Games and Europeans and I loved it so I really wanted to get back. I wanted to prove that I could do it for more than one year. There was just that desperation.

I was trying to make up for a disappointing indoor season as well and I felt like all the odds were against me, so it was quite motivating. But I hadn't ever thought I could get a medal. We had

FACTFILE

Born: March 6, 1987

Events: 800m and 1500m

PBs: 1:59.66 and 4:01.89

International achievements:

2011: World Championships 1500m silver

Lisa Dobriskey on the team who'd got a medal in Berlin two years before. I thought if I could get on the team, I stood a decent chance of making the final but just making the team was my main focus.

Daegu was super-hot and humid and I always preferred a more complicated competition environment. Whether it was time difference or climate, that gave me more to focus on and then I wouldn't get nervous to start competing.

I'd worked really hard with a sports psychologist in 2011, so I had my race plan and it was very much about trying to execute that. I was at that stage of my career where I'd probably beaten

see the domino effect. Everyone was panicking and moving. Hellen Obiri and Morgan Uceny fell in front of me and that was stressful. I could see it happening.

Morgan is actually a very good friend. I was thinking: "No, not Morgan". I kicked Hellen's arm and thought: "Blimey, that was close. I've done really well here to not fall over". I didn't see it as an opportunity, with two fast people gone, but it reshaped the race.

With 200m to go. I was thinking "I've had a good run". All I'd wanted was to give a good representation of myself and I'd done that. "I'm seventh, I've done okay". I was just totally relaxed.



EVERYBODY ELSE SEEMED TO TENSE UP. IT'S NOT THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO SPRINT – WHEN YOU LET THAT EMOTION TAKE OVER WITH THAT BIT OF DESPERATION. I JUST WENT ONTO AUTOPILOT

everybody at the Diamond Leagues. It felt familiar. I hadn't won that many races but, on any given day, I knew all those people were beatable in the first round and the second round. I knew I could do enough to progress but I very much saw it as one race at a time.

I was always much better in a sit-and-kick race. I won my heat but almost by accident. I was just trying to finish as high as possible but I put my foot down with 100m to go and just ran away from everybody. I thought: "That was way easier than your first round at the world champs should be". But it was a slower race – it played to my strengths – and that set the tone. I took so much confidence from winning the heat.

Lisa went out. She was really struggling with injury. She tried to front run the next heat to make it faster but still didn't get through. That was hard to watch. You don't want to take confidence from doing better than someone else but I suddenly realised I had achieved something that was not a given. For a team-mate to not achieve it made me realise how special it was.

In the semi-final, I ran really badly and went really wide. I wasted so much energy. I bumped into Usain Bolt in the lift afterwards and he told me my run had been awful. I only qualified as a fastest loser and didn't quite execute my race plan.

But, going into the final, I didn't feel any pressure. There were so many women in that race who thought they could win. I went in relaxed.

In 2011, nobody broke four minutes. Every race on the circuit had been very physical, so I was on high alert for it. There was a big move from Spain's Natalia Rodríguez and you could

Finishing the last 100m strongly was something I always practised in training. Coming into the home straight, we were still a group of seven and, apart from Jenny Simpson, you could see everyone was thinking: "medal!". Jenny was thinking: "I'm going to win this thing". I was just thinking: "I'll sprint as hard as I can and see what happens".

Everybody else seemed to tense up. It's not the most efficient way to sprint – when you let that emotion take over with that bit of desperation. I just went on to autopilot and that was incredibly useful for me. If I'd thought: "I'm going to get a medal or I could win this", I wouldn't have stayed as relaxed and it wouldn't have worked.

About 30m out, I was going through the technical cues I'd worked on. It felt like something I'd done 1000 times on the track with my training partners and then, suddenly, I thought: "Where's everyone else gone? Why is no one else sprinting?". Everyone else had melted away. I could see Jenny ahead of me but everyone else was gone.

From that point to the finish, it was probably less than a second. There's a picture of Jenny and me coming across the line and you've never seen two people look so shocked. We didn't really have time to celebrate or get a punch-in-the-air moment. It happened very fast. **AW**

As told to Mark Woods



RISING STAR

JOY EZE

Georgie Heath speaks to the European U20 100m medallist with an Olympic ambition

FACTFILE

Age: 18

Events: 60m, 100m, 200m, 4x100m relay

PBs: 7.31i, 11.44, 23.90,

Club: Gateshead Harriers

Coach: Michael Donnelly

Joy Eze is already one to watch for the future of British sprinting. She dominates her age group and recently defended her English U20 60m title while also being named in the British Athletics Futures programme for a second year running. We caught up with her to discuss her career so far, what drives her on and the heights she hopes to reach.

How did you first get into athletics?

My headteacher in primary school [now my coach] encouraged me to join the local running club, Gateshead Harriers. I do remember competing in a few cross-country events, especially in year four and somehow made it into the newspaper! The headline was “Joy wins with Eze”, which put a smile on my face.

When did you know you wanted to pursue athletics seriously?

At the English Schools Championships. In 2018 when the European U18 GB team were gathered at the front of the parade, I remember just being in awe of them. I knew that, somehow, that would be me one day.

Who do you admire in the sport?

I admire the likes of Dina-Asher Smith and Daryll Neita as they have helped to pave the way for female British sprinting. They are two very different athletes that are equally as good at what they do. They are athletes who are confident in their abilities and thrive on the global stage.

How much did it mean to you to be named in the Futures programme again for 2022/23?

It's always a privilege to be recognised by British Athletics for my ability, let alone being named as “Olympic Potential”. I'm grateful to be on the programme as it's a testament to the hard work I have done to get to where I am. With the support from the Futures

programme, in terms of nutrition, strength and conditioning to name a few things, I'll hopefully transition smoothly into seniors.

What was it like to be able to successfully defend your English U20 60m title in February?

It's one thing going to into a competition as the fastest on paper but another actually performing to your ability. I put pressure on myself to retain my title as that was one of my main aims of the indoor season. I just thank God that I was able to execute my race properly and take the title again.

What has been the hardest thing you have had to overcome so far in your athletics career?

The mental side of it is hugely important. Sometimes it's hard to believe in yourself when the times that you want aren't coming – when training is going well but your performance isn't quite matching up. It's about having the mental strength to reset and focus on what's ahead to best maximise your ability and performance. It's about not letting your nerves at the start line eat you up and instead focusing on your own race.

Who are your biggest supporters?

Definitely my parents. I like to think I am doing them proud and I work hard for them. They have worked hard for me and my brother to have the set-up that we have, so I owe it to them to be my





Joy Eze (313) successfully defends her U20 60m title

best. My friends are very understanding when it comes to my schedule and have been cheering me on for a long time and they come to watch me compete when they can.

My coach has literally seen me grow up in the sport and knows my potential, which he never fails to remind me of. He's flexible and understands what works for me, which every athlete needs in a coach. I also would like to show appreciation to Sport Newcastle for the financial help they have given me. Since I was U13, they recognised my potential and are still helping me now. Alongside this, I'm grateful to Nike who have supported me with training kit and other essentials which aren't easy to come by.

How did you manage balancing school/work/social life with training?

I've been an athlete for a huge chunk of my life, so I've learned how to manage training and schoolwork. Ahead of my A levels last year, I deliberately set out time to study before school because I knew

trying to study after training was a myth – especially after speed endurance training – that's way too tiring! Communication with my coach was key to ensuring that training and competitions fitted around my exams. I was often revising on the way to competitions. I've been able to maintain a good social life as my friends understand the sacrifices I make and help to work around that to make sure I'm not left out.

Do you have a career highlight?

Definitely the European U20 Championships in 2021. That competition was an emotional rollercoaster but to [win a bronze] medal unexpectedly in the 100m is something I will never forget. The cherry on top was winning the relay and Great Britain being the overall winners of the competition. I also made a lot of good friends from different countries that I still talk to today. Many memories and unforgettable funny moments were made at this competition.

What's next for you?

I would love to be picked for the European Junior Championships in Jerusalem in August and see how far I can go. As for my lifetime goal, making any of the upcoming Olympic teams would be a dream come true and that's consistently something I look forward to achieving. Being an Olympic champion is the ultimate dream. It sounds a cliché but no matter how long it takes to get there, I believe I will at the right time. It's about focusing on the steps to get me there.

What would you say to your younger self?

All the setbacks and disappointments are worth it. To achieve what I've achieved so far takes perseverance, so it's important that I continue working hard. Trust in God for His guidance and you will have no problem in being successful. It's also important to enjoy running and not allow external pressure to influence your mindset. **AW**



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This will be the 13th time in the history of these championships that the organisers have chosen

the MONDO cover, also used at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, which is considered to be extremely fast.

The last time the World Athletics Championships were hosted in Europe was back in 2017 in London where Usain Bolt competed for the last time as an individual.

Taking place between August 19-27, this will be the biggest event ever held in Hungary with a brand new state of the art stadium on the banks of the Danube River taking shape to welcome guests.

Situated in the heart of Central

Europe, Budapest (also called the Queen of the Danube) is easily and quickly accessible by road, rail and air from almost every major European city.

Balázs Németh, CEO of Budapest 2023, recently said: "The World Athletics Championships Budapest 23 will be the biggest sporting event of the year, with more than a billion spectators around the world. It is a great pleasure and a pride to be able to showcase Hungary, its magnificent historic capital and the new National Athletics Centre, which will be completed in time for the event."



The schedule for these championships was confirmed last year and each day offers stadium spectators the chance to be part of history. Some of the highlights of the programme are listed below where rivalries will be renewed, national, regional and world records potentially broken, titles defended and new champions crowned.

- Women's 10,000m final / 4 x 400m mixed relay final (August 19)
- Men's 100m final (August 20)
- Women's 100m final (August 21)
- Women's 1500m final/Men's high jump final (August 22)
- Men's 1500m final/men's 400m hurdles final/ Women's 400m final (August 23)
- Men's 400m final/Women's 400m hurdles final (August 24)
- Women's triple jump final/200m finals (August 25)
- Women's marathon final/4x100m relay finals/Men's pole vault final (August 26)
- Men's marathon/Women's 800m final (August 27)

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AT HOME IN AMERICA

Tim Adams speaks to British athletes Yusuf Bizimana and Amber Anning who struck NCAA gold indoors and are making the most of the land of opportunity

Making the decision to travel to the US and spend years honing your craft, away from family and friends, is not an easy one. Imagine being that apprehensive teenager who finishes school, lands in a new city and has to get to know new people in another country – not to mention perform well in their chosen sport.

On the surface, it's a daunting prospect but it's a path which has been trodden by a number of British athletes over the years, who go to the US to sample the high levels of competition and experience facilities which far exceed what's on offer in the UK. It's not a recipe which works for everyone, of course, but Yusuf Bizimana and Amber Anning look right at home.

The British duo were gold medallists at last month's National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Indoor Championships in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The 22-year-old Bizimana finished second to Navasky Anderson in the men's 800m final, but was promoted to first place after the Jamaican was disqualified. That meant he became the first Briton since Josh Kerr in 2018 to win an NCAA individual indoor title, having also run a personal best of 1:46.02.

Anning, also 22, was part of the Arkansas 4x400m foursome – alongside Joanne Reid, Rosey Effiong and Britton Wilson – which obliterated the NCAA record with 3:21.75 and set the

fastest indoor 4x400m time in history, bettering the world record of 3:23.37 set by Russia in 2006. In the process, Anning recorded the fifth-quickest indoor opening leg ever, with 51.47.

"It was the title I always dreamed about winning before I set foot in the US," says Bizimana, who is going to study for a major in advertising at the University of Texas alongside his track career.

"I set my goals really high and I know, deep down, if I give everything I have to achieve those things and surround

PHOTOS BY ADRIANA KITCHEN AND MATTHEW FLYNN PARKER





PHOTO BY ADRIANA KITCHEN

IT'S TOUGH BUT IT JUST RAISES YOUR MENTALITY. I THINK SOMETIMES YOU CAN GET TOO COMFORTABLE WITH WHO YOU ARE

myself with the right people, why not me? The reason I left home was to become an NCAA champion. I completed the mission and it felt so good. It wasn't the way that I wanted to win as I wanted to go crazy across the line.

"In that race, I'd gone to a place that I'd never been to before."

Inspired by Kerr, who won an Olympic 1500m bronze medal in Tokyo just three years after his NCAA title victory, Bizimana is grateful for the high-level competition the US college scene provides.

"He [Kerr] was killing it in the NAAs and coming back and making the [British] team," Bizimana adds. "I liked that kind of route. The times set here are winning championships. I want to be a part of that. I could have stayed in London but I knew what I wanted and I had to move to the USA to compete with the best every week."

Such high-level competition across the NCAA circuit means that athletes are recording times that

would be enough to win a BUCS title in the UK but wouldn't make a podium in a US university/college level event.

For example, Anning's personal best of 50.68 was the quickest by a British athlete in 22 years – putting her third on the UK all-time list behind Nicola Sanders and Katharine Merry – but her Arkansas team-mates Wilson and Effiong, plus Talitha Diggs and Irish star Rhasidat Adeleke, have all gone faster over 400m on the NCAA circuit just this year.

"It didn't even feel that fast," Anning tells AW, reflecting on Arkansas' record-breaking relay. "That [the strength in depth in talent] is one of the reasons why I came to America and why my mum pushed me to come here.

"It's tough but it just raises your mentality. I think sometimes you can get too comfortable with who you are so it's nice that I'm not always the fastest and I've got to go out and improve myself all the time. It just builds a different confidence in you. ▷

ABOVE: Amber Anning (5) celebrates with her Arkansas team-mates

LEFT: Amber Anning and Yusuf Bizimana both enjoyed NCAA success in Albuquerque

“Training with people like Britt [Wilson] is inspiring because I’m running with someone who ran the second-fastest time ever indoors [49.48] and a couple of months ago it would have been the world record. To see how she trains on a regular basis pushes all of us. To have that kind of group at our age is incredible.”

Anning, who is studying operations management and is aiming to do a major in public relations and advertising, understands the significance of academia alongside athletic pursuits.

There is also an awareness that the US set-up provides an opportunity to grow a wider profile via social media. In an age where sponsorship deals and potential income are related to your digital presence, on top of performance, the duo have realised they have to capitalise.

Given NCAA track and field athletes can now use NIL deals – Name, Image and Likeness agreements which essentially mean students can profit from their image – those who compete on the circuit are able to build large followings.

“So many people who aren’t even track fans have commented on my clothing,” Bizimana says, when asked about posting images of himself turning up to track meetings in suits. “That includes brands who have reached out about partnerships in fashion. So I was like cool, just me wearing suits gets exposure?”

“In the UK, it’s very hard to do that. In the US, that system is already in place and you just have to perform to get that. If I was to do this in the UK they might even think I was going too far and there’s stigma attached to self-promotion.

“Imagine turning up in a suit at Lee Valley? I would do that. I don’t care because this is what people want to see and it’s what makes our sport more interesting. It’s what creates the hype.”

Anning agrees with that assessment and regrets not starting up a vlog when she first arrived on a scholarship at LSU [Louisiana State University] in 2020, before moving to Arkansas last year.

“I tell my friends back at home, you’ve got to start posting more,” she adds. “It might be cringeworthy or cheesy but to be honest you have to cater towards your fans. They’re not following you because they’re concerned about what you look like, they care about track and wonder how you train and what you eat.

“Building your image is critical and starting off doing this stuff is super important. You’ve got to take advantage of everything that is out there and social media is something I need to be aware of more as you can maximise your image doing so.”

It hasn’t all been easy for the pair who left south London to pursue their dreams. Both Bizimana and Anning state they have come off a tough couple of years which included homesickness, self-doubt



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH YOUNG

and questioning their decisions. There is a desire, however, to repay those who helped them to make the leap.

The long-term goal for both is the Paris 2024 Olympics but a more immediate focus is the chance to win titles at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in Texas in early June.

“My family and quite a few people are coming out to it,” Bizimana says. “I’ve got to focus on what’s in front of me and right now it’s not about making teams or Diamond Leagues just yet.”

Anning, meanwhile, is targeting a place on the British 400m and 4x400m team at the World Championships in Budapest and wants to nail down the qualifying mark of 51.00 – her outdoor best is 51.78 – in the US.

Her ultimate aim is to break Christine Ohuruogu’s British 400m record of 49.41, which would be fitting as both were coached by the late Lloyd Cowan.

“Next year is a big one,” says Anning. “I just think track hasn’t been exciting for me over the past couple of years and now I’m around people who have those similar goals to me, it pushes you on to want greatness.” **AW**

ABOVE: Yusuf Bizimana has his sights set on more NCAA honours

Treating malnutrition is about more than food.

We catch up with Dr Jenna Broome an MSF doctor who has recently returned from Ethiopia where she has been treating patients with severe malnutrition.



MSF: What is the situation like in Ethiopia?

JB: “The malnutrition crisis there is the worst I’ve ever seen. You walk into our feeding centres and there are malnourished children everywhere. All our beds are full, family members are sleeping on the floors, mattresses line the corridors and, every

day, more desperately ill people arrive. We just can’t turn anybody away.

People walk for miles to get to us, carrying their children. We see kids brought in who are really sick, almost at the point where they won’t survive. But with just a little bit of care and some focused treatment, we see them turn around. We give them antibiotics, oxygen and blood transfusions and, once they are stabilised, start them on therapeutic food and they begin to get better. You see their personalities come back, they start to smile, they come alive again.”



Photograph © Jenna Broome/MSF

MSF: How does it feel to see those children recover?

JB: “It’s amazing. It’s the best feeling in the world witnessing something like that, watching kids who could barely lift their heads a few weeks earlier running and playing. It’s so moving to see parents having their little ones restored to them.”

MSF: What’s the biggest misconception about treating malnutrition?

JB: “That it’s just about giving people food. Malnutrition isn’t just hunger. These children have an inability to fight off infectious disease because their immune systems have been so compromised that they need a whole range of medical care.

But one thing I’ve learned working for MSF is that it doesn’t take that much to combat malnutrition. With the right treatment and care, kids can really bounce back. You don’t need a lot of fancy kit. You need antibiotics, vaccinations, basic medical equipment, therapeutic food, and doctors and nurses who can do the work. You can do an awful lot with very little.

It’s completely unacceptable that children are still dying of starvation in 2023 when it’s so treatable and preventable. And it’s not just in Ethiopia. In Nigeria, in South Sudan, in Somalia, MSF teams are treating men, women and children caught up in this malnutrition crisis.”

MSF: Why should people give to MSF?

JB: “Because many of these children would die if MSF wasn’t there. And we can only be there because of people’s financial support. If you’re reading this, we need your support to keep reaching and treating people affected by this malnutrition crisis. We can’t do it without you.”

Treating malnutrition is about more than food. It’s about medical care.

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ABOVE: Eliud Kipchoge (second from right) enjoying his 4200m relay debut at the Rio Olympics

WHEN LOVE WALKS IN

LEFT: Jake Wightman and Georgie Hartigan

Is it better for athletes to stick together when it comes to relationships or are there more benefits from being able to lean on someone from outside of the sport? **Verity Ockenden** examines affairs of the heart

In sport, we often talk about the importance of the people we surround ourselves with. We are influenced to work hard if those around us are also working hard and we consciously seek good “team culture”, knowing that happiness, motivation and success become contagious given the right environment.

We live and breathe our work, paying close attention to the minutiae of our daily routines, but we don’t often talk about the roles our personal relationships play in our careers. Understandably, the desire to maintain a certain level of privacy and professionalism around our romantic lives is what keeps this topic off limits most of the time, but that doesn’t lessen the impact that it can have on both an athlete’s wellbeing and their performance.

Speaking from my own personal experiences, as well as listening to those of my peers, it’s clear that creating and maintaining healthy relationships while dedicating oneself to an ambitious goal has its complexities, and these vary from person to person, depending on their scenario.

One only need watch the concern with which Gjert Ingebrigtsen reacts to news of his sons’ relationships on their *YouTube* documentary in order to understand the gravity of their potentially disruptive consequences to the elite lifestyle.

It is an expenditure of energy that isn’t considered available to spare, and a potential catalyst to changing priorities. Embarking on a relationship (or deciding to leave one, for that matter) can feel like a leap into the unknown at the best of times, and belonging to a community that tends to value

continuity and “control of the controllables” can make it seem even riskier.

However, as the Ingebrigtsen documentary goes on to show, making space for good relationships can actually also bring out the best in an athlete. As single-minded as we might like to be, most humans, at the end of the day, need love.

Finding that love and keeping it isn’t always straightforward, though. Even with the best of intentions, most people make a bit of a mess of it along the way. For athletes, it becomes an even greater minefield.

By nature we can be a demanding, selfish, boring and frankly confusing lot. When dating, people’s preconceived perceptions of us can differ wildly from the reality of our existence. While competing and indeed on social media, we usually come across as strong, fearless, confident competitors with everything going for us and so the person that we really are at home is often quite different to the idealised version of us that somebody has imagined.

Many are surprised by the fragility and insecurity exposed behind closed doors, finding themselves faced with challenges they weren’t necessarily expecting from the relationship. This, topped with the practicalities of a strict training and sleep schedule and lengthy absences due to camps and competitions, can make us pretty difficult people to spend time with.

When it does go wrong, regardless of fault, of course our mental health is likely to suffer and this in turn can affect athletic performance. One might well assume that an unhappy personal life would directly correlate with poorer results, but often this is not the case. One athlete I spoke to noted that during an unhealthy relationship they actually ▷

trained harder and more consistently than ever. Though they felt isolated and suffocated by their situation, their emotional response to it was to use running as their only outlet and distraction from reality. Looking back they recognise that their performance during that period was elevated, but now realise that the “fight or flight” survival mode that motivated them to throw themselves into training so intensively was not sustainable.

Emotional angst can only fuel the fire for so long before burnout occurs. Unfortunately, many athletes also find it difficult to get out of relationships that are not good for them. There’s an unwillingness to “rock the boat” during important phases of the season or cut ties with people who are involved in facilitating a lifestyle that works well for the athlete.

Some athletes consciously choose partners who share the same sport or discipline, benefitting from a shared understanding of each other’s goals and needs, while others find the intensity of this kind of relationship too much.

Take, for example, distance star Eilish McColgan and her partner, Michael Rimmer, a now retired triple Olympian over 800m. Eilish acknowledges that, for her, having a partner who understands the sport makes life a lot easier.

“Being an athlete is a strange life – involving a lot of time travelling and being around other professional

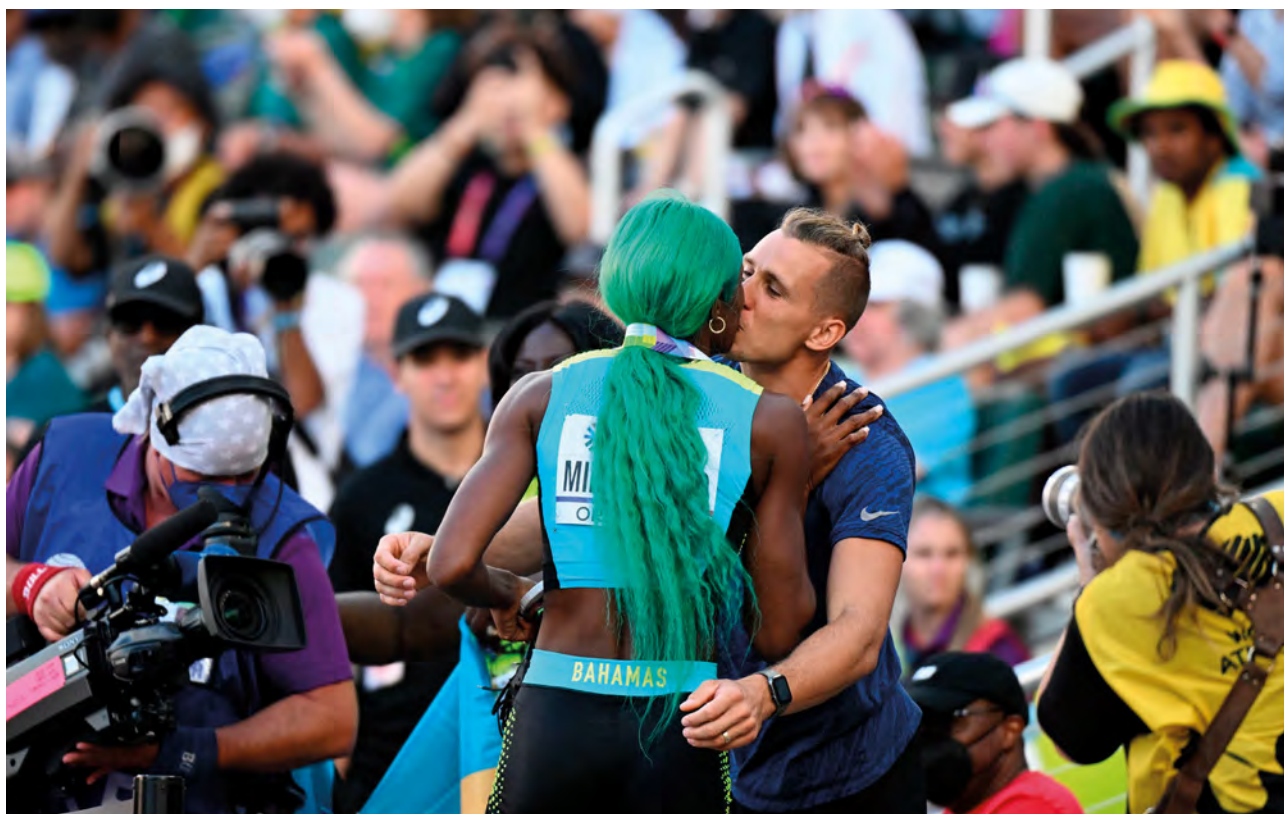
athletes,” she says. “I found, in previous relationships, my athletics was an issue.

“Other people picture it as glamorous and that whilst they are working a ‘real job’ – you’re living the high life. And so it used to cause friction as the reality of being an athlete is actually very far removed from what others think it is! Having a partner who gets the sport removes the mystery of what your profession truly is. We have a really good understanding of each other and what is important to us – both career wise but personally, too. We are a team and we find happiness being together.”

As well as providing invaluable practical assistance for Eilish, Michael is also a key source of emotional support. Understandably, Eilish feels the pressure of wanting to perform well on behalf of her partner and family, knowing that they invest just as much effort into her career as she does, and so of course it “can be upsetting to feel you’ve let them down.” Thankfully, having found a partner such as Michael, however, Eilish always has his reassuring perspective at hand.

Similarly, Irish middle-distance talent Georgie Hartigan and partner to reigning men’s 1500m world champion Jake Wightman shares that, when leading such an unusual lifestyle “it’s nice that someone gets that you have to go up to the mountains for four weeks at a time or probably don’t want to spend too much time on your feet between training sessions”.

BELOW: world 400m champion Shaunae Miller-Uibo and her husband, decathlete Maicel Uibo



Georgie is also lucky enough to live and train with her partner, so the logistical problems of spending time together are reduced by the similarity of their seasonal plans. They both understand that they only have “a short window to achieve [their] athletic goals and therefore just do [their] own thing and support each other through it”.

Georgie also recognises that athletics can be a selfish sport but is willing to accept there will be times when each of them have to put their training before everything else. Jake has also had a positive impact for Georgie in terms of inspiring her to better her own performances.

She remembers being “quite lazy” with training before she started seeing him, and has since learned from him exactly “what it takes to compete on a high level and how to be more professional”. Being in an athlete-athlete relationship is not without its challenges, however, as periods of success and failure are not always going to be in perfect synchronisation.

For Georgie, last year was a good example of how that can be difficult as “Jake had the best season of his life and I couldn’t race due to having glandular fever. It actually was really fun for me to just be able to watch his season without worrying about my own races so that helped to take my mind off it, but it was sad not to be in Oregon to watch him, which I would have been had I been healthy.”

As painful as it was spectating those championships from the sidelines, Jake’s complete understanding of how heartbreaking athletics can be was a hugely comforting element of their partnership, and Georgie also appreciates being able to celebrate together when things go well as they both know exactly what work has gone into the achievements.

This isn’t a formula that works for everyone, however. I’ve met many an athlete who has found the “hyperawareness” of living with a sporting partner difficult.

Sometimes a partner’s extremely high understanding of athletics’ ups and downs has caused unhealthy levels of scrutiny in a relationship, and made it feel difficult to switch off.

For one athlete I chatted with, their relationship with a non-sporty person enabled them to feel far more stable mentally. Allowing space for their authentic self, for new experiences and differing perspectives made their relationship with running a lot healthier and created an environment in which they felt relaxed and fulfilled. It helped them to cope with periods of injury better and their time spent together on holidays provided a welcome energy boost.



ABOVE: Eilish McColgan and her partner Michael Rimmer

It’s also worth noting that just because a person does not understand the particulars of athletics doesn’t mean that they cannot draw parallels to their own experiences and passions. In fact, we can often learn the most interesting and useful things in life from those who bring a fresh approach that we are not familiar with.

Either way, I think people are increasingly coming to the realisation that emotional wellbeing and performance are inextricably linked. We’re learning that balanced lives which include other interests outside of our niche world can often actually add to, rather than take away, from our ability to perform at our best.

My personal takeaway given my own experiences of unhappy relationships, break-ups, periods of loneliness and of course happy relationships is that, at whatever point you find yourself, it’s important to put your own happiness ahead of your athletic performance (that will follow of its own accord!) and to remember to nurture who we are both outside of our sport and outside of our relationships, before losing ourselves completely in either of them. **AW**

Verity Ockenden is a British international athlete and European Indoor 3000m silver medallist

Splits

Mile	Split	Elapsed
1	5:10	5:10
2	5:08	10:18
3	4:57	15:15
4	5:07	20:22
5	5:10	25:32
6	5:22	30:54
10km		32:01
7	5:12	36:06
8	5:11	41:17
9	5:18	46:35
10	5:13	51:48
11	5:10	56:58
12	5:16	1:02:14
20km		1:04:28
13	5:16	1:07:30
Halfway		1:08:02
14	5:08	1:12:38
15	5:10	1:17:48
16	5:13	1:23:01
17	5:07	1:28:08
18	5:11	1:33:19
30km		1:36:36
19	5:07	1:38:26
20	5:07	1:43:33
21	5:11	1:48:44
22	5:06	1:53:50
23	5:13	1:59:03
24	5:03	2:04:06
40km		2:09:29
25	5:08	2:09:14
26.2		2:15:25



LONDON LANDMARK

It's now 20 years since Paula Radcliffe changed the face of marathon running forever. To begin our special focus on the event which covers 26 miles and 385 yards, the former world record-holder takes **Euan Crumley** behind the scenes of an unforgettable performance

By their very nature, all world record-breaking performances are exceptional. There are some, however – whether that be through the circumstances of how they were achieved or the manner in which they were delivered – which take on lives of their own.

One such happening occurred on the streets of London 20 years ago – on April 13, 2003. It was the third marathon of Paula Radcliffe's career, with the then 29-year-old having shown her clear aptitude for the distance the previous year by finishing just nine seconds outside of the world record when running 2:18:56 on her debut in the British capital.

She followed it up a few months later by destroying the mark in Chicago, winning in a time of 2:17:18,

and capping off a year which had also seen her win the world cross country title, Commonwealth 5000m gold in Manchester and secure a famous European 10,000m victory in Munich.

Expectations were high, then, when Radcliffe returned to London in the spring of 2003, having just broken the 10km world record with a run of 30:21.

A collision with a cyclist on a long run at her training base in Albuquerque – which left Radcliffe with a dislocated jaw, whiplash and badly bruised knees just weeks out from race day – was hardly the ideal preparation. Yet the thousands of spectators who lined the city streets and tuned in on television were about to be treated to a display which would change the face of marathon running.

Here, the victor takes us through the journey in her own words. ▷

The long road to the marathon

The moment that inspired me to get into running was the London Marathon, watching my dad run and seeing Ingrid Kristiansen set a world record that day.

Very probably, my coach always knew the marathon was where I was going to be strongest but we also made a unified decision that I would only go to it when I wanted to, and when I really felt ready to.

The one thing that was really key was my winning the World Cross Country in 2001. When I won as a junior [in 1992], that really cemented in my mind that I could make it as a professional athlete. I set a goal that day to try and be the first person to win junior and senior championships. I don't know if I was the first in the end, because it took me that long to do it, but it was a huge goal.

When the world cross fell into place in 2001, it was like, "okay, I can do it now" and it was off the back of that that we really started talking to [then London race director] Dave Bedford about making my debut in London in 2002. In the end, it was perfect, because I was able to retain the world cross title just before that one in 2002, as well.

Learning from the first two marathons

The first thing I learned with my first one was that I absolutely loved it. There is nothing – not even a packed Olympic Games or World Championship stadium – that competes with the streets of London on a London Marathon Sunday. I don't think you can fully do it justice with words, you have to experience it to really understand how special it is.

I also learned that my body and my mind were suited to the marathon. I think part of what's so fascinating about the marathon is that, until you actually do one, you don't know if you're going to be great or not. That's why that respect has to be there. I went into that first race never having run that distance and, of course, there are a few questions in the mind but they were answered.

The other big thing that I also learned from was that negative splits [running the second half quicker than the first] is the way to go in the marathon.

Great expectations

In Chicago, I got my period the morning of the race and it was windy and cold, so there were things we knew could be improved on in London. We were very sure that we could do the record there.

Dave Bedford wanted to bring in the male pacemakers and I think that was as much in case it was windy on the day and just because he wasn't sure that I could do it on my own in terms of pushing all the way through. Also, female pacemakers then could not go that quickly the whole way.

Obviously, they were really keen to have the world record in London. I really wanted to bring it back

Did you know?

✓ Radcliffe won the 2003 race by almost a mile. Her mark of 2:15:25 shattered her previous record by 1:53, meaning that since the Chicago Marathon of 2002 she had taken three minutes and 22 seconds off the time set by the previous record-holder, Catherine Ndereba.

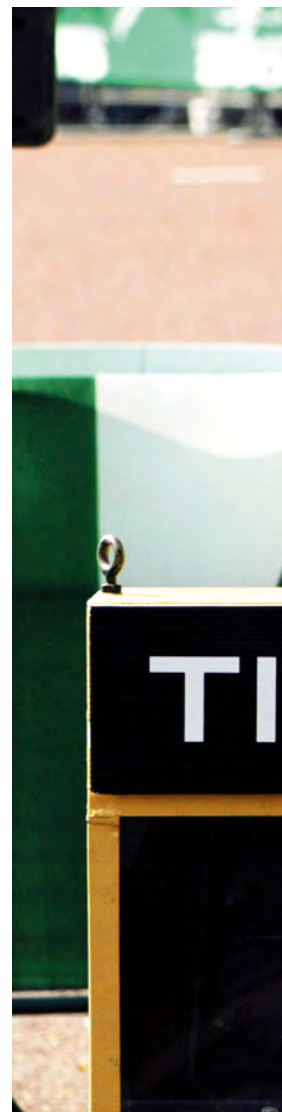
✓ Radcliffe was the fastest Briton, male or female, during the 2003 London Marathon. She finished two minutes and 32 seconds quicker than Chris Cariss of Bingley Harriers.

✓ Radcliffe's performance was only seven seconds slower than the legendary Abebe Bikila ran to win the 1960 Olympic title in Rome.

✓ 2:15:25 would have won every Olympic men's marathon title before 1960, not to mention the 1968 event, although the latter, it must be added, was held at altitude.

✓ After that pre-race collision with a cyclist in training, Radcliffe acknowledged a curious remedy which had helped her to reach the start line of the 2003 London Marathon. On the recommendation of her physiotherapist Gerard Hartmann, she treated her wounds with an ancient Aboriginal cure reputed to have powerful healing and pain-relieving properties – emu oil. Hartmann, who had originally been alerted to the alternative therapy by Australian 400m Olympic gold medallist Cathy Freeman, said at the time: "If you saw the photographs of the day after Paula's accident you'd never have thought she'd have been here. We got some [emu oil] flown in. It certainly seemed to aid Paula's recovery."

✓ Radcliffe was so strong at the time that, when Haile Gebrselassie made his marathon debut in London in 2002, during that event the Briton ran her final mile quicker than the Ethiopian legend after he faltered in the closing stages.





I DOUBT THERE ARE MANY WORLD RECORDS WHERE YOU KNOW FOR A COUPLE OF MILES THAT YOU'RE GOING TO SET IT. I HAD MILES OF BEING ABLE TO THINK 'OKAY, TAKE IT IN, THIS IS SOMETHING SPECIAL'

there and I didn't want anything to take away from it, which is why I made the conscious decision and said to the two guys I was running with "I'm going to run alongside you. I'm not going to run behind you and shelter. In my head, I'm racing you".

I'm not sure they made that much difference.

Mounting pressure and that bike crash

Because I'd had the accident with the bike coming into it, where I ended up with a minor concussion and a bit of a compacted hip, I was a little bit worried.

But it felt to me almost like fate clicking into place when I got a big clunk out of my hip when the physio was working on it the day before and it mobilised. It did cause problems afterwards but I got away with it through that race and I was able to

capitalise on all of the hard work I'd done in training.

In comparison to 2002, there was a lot more pressure from outside, but a lot more pressure from myself, because I wanted to deliver and I fully understood that in the marathon more than any other event you have to seize the opportunity on that day, because you never know when the next one's going to come around.

Not getting carried away

It was just about finding my rhythm [in the first half]. I've talked a lot about the fact that I counted in my head to get me through difficult spots, but also to pace myself. If I was counting in the right rhythm that I'd done time and time again in training, then I knew that was around about 5:10 ▷

BELOW: Paula Radcliffe's record stood for 16 years



2003 London Marathon result

- 1 Paula Radcliffe (GBR) 2:15:25
- 2 Catherine Ndereba (KEN) 2:19:55
- 3 Deena Drossin (USA) 2:21:16

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2.15.25

pace. I fully understood that it was critical to get to halfway and then do the second half slightly quicker if I could so I was really trying to stay in my own head and block out the crowd as much as I could.

The crowd was so great that day that I didn't want to get carried away and push too hard in the first half. In the second half of the race, I was definitely a lot more open to the support and needing the support of the crowd.

Quiet in the midst of a cacophony

The crowd noise is disorientating, but in a good way. I noticed it most when I went into the tunnels. To go from that noise to your own breathing, your own footfall and just the motorbikes was really strange.

It's almost like you were immersed in it. The noise became "okay, this is normal" and then suddenly it's not there anymore, and then you come out again onto the Embankment [in the closing miles]. The support really is crucial there because that's when it was getting really hard, but at the same time I knew I was always on for it [the record] so that gave me an extra bit of energy.

[Former international athlete and friend] Allison Curbishley was there and she said: "You never looked at me", but there was no way I could have picked out a single voice. It was hard enough looking for my red telephone box which signalled there was a mile to go.

Embracing the pain

It hurts, but it's a good hurt. It hurts a lot more when it's going badly!

You can only get to where your mind has told you it's got to go to. The pain within the race was kind of blocked out with all the different techniques that I used and with the euphoria of the day and just mental focus.

But the minute you finish, that's when you realise just how much everything cramps, and my mum still jokes about the fact that [my husband] Gary went over to her and said: "Have you got any make-up or something because she looks horrendous". I was just so exhausted. My stomach was really, really hurting and I don't think there's been many of my marathons where I could have done a warm-down afterwards.

A record-setting privilege

One of the many privileges of the marathon is that I doubt there are many world records where you know for a couple of miles that you're going to set it. I had miles of being able to think "okay, take it in, this is something special", as well as trying to be very conscious that I might not be in that situation ever again.

I absolutely ran as hard as I could to get as much out of myself as I possibly could, but I can remember lots of it now and, when you watch the

video, it's funny because I remember what it felt from being inside me so it looks different but the sounds of the day are still a part of that memory.

Running 2:15:25

During the build-up, Gary had been saying to me "you can run 2:16" and he sent a message to Peter Elliott, who was on the camera bike, and said "if you pick it up you can run under 2:16". Even at that point, though, I just knew I was up on my time from Chicago.

But we had deliberately said "let's not put a time limit on it" because what do I do if I'm ahead of that time? I don't want to know, I don't want to think I have to slow down, I want to keep going and see what I can do. That was why my only goal was to run as many miles as possible quicker than 5:13.

I realised with 800m to go I was under 2:16 and I was just trying to beat the other guy [one of the pacemakers]. He was moved down a different finish chute so I couldn't actually sprint with him to the line, but I was trying to run as hard as I could anyway.

"A thrilling satisfaction"

My goal was just to see how fast I could go and I really felt like, on that day, there wasn't a lot more I could have given or done so I was pretty satisfied with that. A lot of people have asked me is there an anti-climax when you work towards something for that long, and then it finally happens? There really wasn't. It wasn't a jumping up and down excitement, it was more like just really thrilling satisfaction that it had come together.

A life-changing performance

What was hard to deal with [afterwards] was that, instead of being known within your sport, it was kind of the next level up, which I don't think we were prepared for at all.

[My coach] Alex never changed, Gary never changed, I didn't change, it was just that we were a bit more of under the microscope, which was alright until Athens [2004 Olympics], and then it was really, really hard to deal with.

BELOW: Radcliffe insists the pain truly kicked in after she crossed the finish line





ABOVE: Radcliffe deliberately ran to the side of her pacemakers

Plus, in 2003 [after London] was probably – up until Athens – the hardest time of my life to deal with because I had an injury to my shin. I missed Paris [the World Championships] so I was nine weeks just icing, icing, icing and trying to get rid of crepitus and inflammation in the muscle that runs alongside your shin bone.

It wouldn't go and I couldn't run, which is my coping mechanism, so I'd say it's probably the closest in my life that I've ever come to depression, and it came so quickly after being on such a high so that was very, very hard to deal with.

The impact of super shoes

It's impossible to say [how fast I could have gone in super shoes]. There are so many components to it. Without a doubt it would have been faster.

It has changed the face of marathon running, in particular, because part of the skill was being able to manage those dead legs and that feeling at the end of the marathon, what happens at 30km, when everything hurts and your muscles aren't working as well as they did, and you've got to be able to handle that. Now you don't have to be able to handle that because it isn't that same feeling.

It's a different skill and it's still very much a skill. You've still got to get out there and run it and I'm not taking anything away from the runners today by saying that, but it has changed everything.

I think even slightly inadequate fuelling, you can probably get away with now, because the muscles aren't being shaken as much and smashed as much.

There's also the changes from the cumulative effects of being able to train in the shoes and recover and put in back-to-back sessions. Another thing that

helped me with the marathon was that my body naturally could absorb hard sessions every other day. Not a lot of people at the time could do that. Now everyone can do that.

Changing the way the event is raced

There's a lot less fear. You still have to respect the distance and people still hit the wall now but you see a lot less of people's leg muscles just cramping up whereas it used to be kind of an unwritten rule of marathoning that you couldn't go too fast in the first half because you would pay for it and your muscles wouldn't be able to cope past 30km. But now you can see athletes racing in different ways and you can see people able to surge and throw in really fast 5km, 10km splits in the first half of a marathon, tail off tired and then come back. You couldn't do that before because once you'd started to lose it you wouldn't be able to get back on top of it. Also, because of the shoes you can race more often.

Giving it everything

One of my goals when I came into the sport was that I wanted to see what I was capable of doing and how fast I could run. I think there are some events – perhaps if I'd raced the half marathon a little bit more I could have run quicker and for 1500m I definitely could have run quicker in a race – but with the marathon I pretty much got as much as I could out of it. So that's why I'm proud of that.

I'm happy that I got the opportunity to take part in it. The London Marathon, the New York Marathon, Chicago Marathon – they're all special and it was an honour to be able to do them. I think I'm really lucky. **AW**

MARATHON MARVELS



Steve Smythe looks through the history books to chart the evolution of the fastest ever performances produced over 26 miles and 385 yards

Not only does this month mark the 20th anniversary of Paula Radcliffe's groundbreaking run in London, it is also 40 years since Grete Waitz and Joan Benoit set marathon records on the same weekend. What better time to look at some of the most memorable bests over the distance?

Women

1 Dale Greig (GBR)

3:27:45, Isle of Wight, 1964

Given that women were not allowed to officially run marathons at the time, this performance was never ratified as a record. However, Greig started four minutes before the men and ran the first sub-3:30 on a very hilly course.

2 Elizabeth Bonner (USA)

2:55:22, New York, 1971

Four months earlier, Bonner had run 3:01:42 in Philadelphia but, on this occasion, and chased by Nina Kuscik (2:56:04), she went well inside the three-hour barrier on a course in Central Park.

3 Christa Vahlensieck (GER)

2:34:47, Berlin, 1977

As more women began to compete over the distance, the world mark gradually fell, with Cheryl Bridges (2:49:40 in 1971), Miko Gorman (2:46:36 in 1973), Chantal Langlacé (2:46:24 in 1974) Jacqueline Hansen (2:43:54.5 in 1974) and Liane Winter (2:42:24 in 1975) chipping away. Vahlensieck just missed breaking the 2:40 barrier with a run of 2:40:15.8 in 1975 but improved significantly to win the official German Championships two years later and take almost half a minute off Langlacé's then world record of 2:35:15.



4 Grete Waitz (NOR)

2:27:32, New York, 1979

Already a well-established track runner, Waitz made a notable debut with a run of 2:32:29 to win New York by nine minutes and smash the world record. However, that paled into insignificance the following year as she improved by five minutes with an historic first sub 2:30 as she won by 11 minutes from Briton Gill Adams.

5 Grete Waitz (NOR)

2:25:28.7, London, 1983

In 1980 the great Norwegian went two minutes faster still in New York (2:25:41). That mark appeared to have been beaten a year later as Allison Roe won in the Big Apple in 2:25:28.7 but that run was later found to have been around 150m short.

Remarkably, 40 years ago Waitz matched Roe's time to the fractions as she won the third London Marathon before going on to win the inaugural World Championships event.

ABOVE: Grete Waitz on her way to victory in 1983



6 Joan Benoit (USA)
2:22:43, Boston, 1983

Though it was a point-to-point course and downhill overall, meaning it would later be ignored for world record purposes, the day after Waitz's London run saw the American who would go on to win the first ever Olympic women's marathon in 1984 shave almost three minutes off the Norwegian's world best as she won by nearly seven minutes.

7 Ingrid Kristiansen (NOR)
2:21:06, London, 1985

Norway regained the record with a brilliant solo run in the fifth London Marathon as Kristiansen won by exactly seven minutes and set a time that would last for 13 years.



ABOVE LEFT:
 Joan Benoit

ABOVE RIGHT:
 Naoko Takahashi

BELOW LEFT:
 Ingrid Kristiansen

BELOW: Brigid Kosgei

8 Tegla Loroupe (KEN)
2:20:43, Berlin, 1999

The diminutive Kenyan managed to break the record first in Rotterdam and then, a year later, removed four further seconds in Germany with a strong finish.

9 Naoko Takahashi (JPN)
2:19:46, Berlin, 2001

The Japanese who had won Olympic gold in Sydney beat Loroupe by over eight minutes as she broke the 2:20 barrier with a well-paced effort, having gone through halfway in 69:50.

10 Catherine Ndereba (KEN)
2:18:47, Chicago, 2001

The future double world champion and Olympic medallist won by over six minutes as she took another minute off the world record.

11 Paula Radcliffe (GBR)
2:15:25, London, 2003

After a good debut in London, the Briton took a minute-and-a-half off the record in Chicago (2:17:18) but six months later she ran a stunning time, making her over three minutes faster than any other woman in history.

12 Brigid Kosgei (KEN)
2:14:04, Chicago, 2019

Many thought Radcliffe's record would last longer than 16 years but the full impact of shoe technology was becoming clear as Kosgei produced a brilliant run to win the race by over six minutes.



It's worth remembering that marathon running was very much a men-only activity for decades, meaning there has been a lot more history and record-breaking.

Men

1 John Hayes (USA)

2:55:18, 1908, London

The first official race over 26 miles and 385 yards was staged at the 1908 Olympics, which ran from Windsor to White City in London. Famously the first across the line was Dorando Pietri (in 2:54:46) but he was disqualified for receiving assistance after collapsing on the track.

2 Hannes Kolehmainen (FIN)

2:32:35, 1920, Antwerp

The great Finn had won an Olympic 5000m and 10,000m double in 1912 and returned to win another Olympic title. His time took over three minutes off Alexis Ahlgren's 1913 mark, but the event was actually contested over 42,750m – more than 500m longer than the usual distance.

3 Jim Peters (GBR)

2:17:39, 1954, Chiswick

Pre World War Two the world record stood at 2:26:42, but Korean Yun Bok Sun lowered it further by running 2:25:39 at the 1947 Boston Marathon.

That record was demolished by Peters in the AAA race on the Windsor to Chiswick course with a run of 2:20:42 in 1952. He then improved in the 1953 race to an historic 2:18:40 and then to 2:18:34 in Turku later that year.

He was not done, however, and returned to the British course where he took almost a minute off his previous record.

4 Sergey Popov (URS)

2:15:17, 1958, Stockholm

Peters' record lasted four years until the European Championships, when the Soviet athlete destroyed the field to win gold by over five-and-a-half minutes as he ran away from Olympic champion Alain Mimoun after halfway.



ABOVE: Abebe Bikila

BELOW: Basil Heatley

5 Abebe Bikila (ETH)

2:15:16, 1960, Rome

The then unknown Ethiopian, running barefoot, had a great race with Moroccan Rhadi Ben Abdesselem to win Olympic gold and shade Popov's time by less than a second.

6 Basil Heatley (GBR)

2:13:55, 1964, Chiswick

Bikila's record was shaved by Japan's Toru Terasawa (2:14:28) and then Buddy Edelen (2:14:28), both set in 1963.

Heatley ran the same course as Edelen in the Polytechnic race a year later but went over half a minute quicker to confirm his Olympic selection, with runner-up Ron Hill also bettering the previous record with a run of 2:14:12.

7 Abebe Bikila (ETH)

2:12:11, 1964, Tokyo

Returning just after an appendix operation, Bikila retained his Olympic title – leaving Heatley over four minutes in arrears – and then famously carried out some callisthenics.

8 Derek Clayton (AUS)**2:08:33, 1969, Antwerp**

In 1967 the powerful Australian made history with the world's first sub-2:10 clocking as he ran 2:09:36 in Fukuoka. Two years later, however, he improved the record by a further minute as he won the race from Akio Usami by just under three minutes.

9 Steve Jones (GBR)**2:08:05, 1984, Chicago**

Having finished eighth in the Olympic 10,000m, the Welshman produced a shock in his first major marathon as he left Olympic champion Carlos Lopes (2:09:06) and world champion Rob de Castella (2:09:09) well in arrears with a strong drive over the last few miles.

10 Khalid Khannouchi (USA)**2:05:38, 2002, London**

Lopes (2:07:12), Belayneh Densimo (2:06:50) and Ronaldo Da Costa (2:06:50) reduced the record between 1985 and 1998 but it was Moroccan-born Khannouchi who first broke 2:06 in 1999 with 2:05:42. Three years later, and now an American citizen, he shocked a brilliant field which included track stars Paul Tergat (2:05:48) and Haile Gebrselassie (2:06:35).

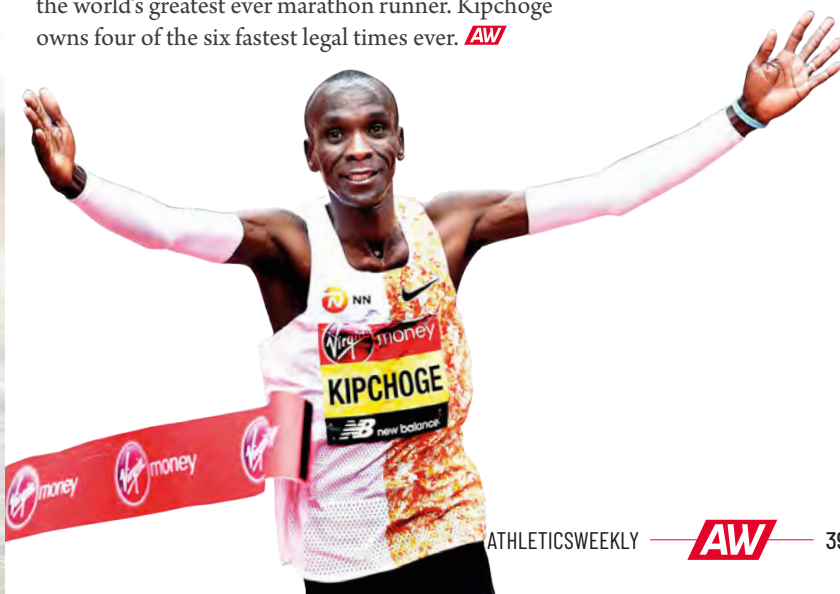
11 Haile Gebrselassie (ETH)**2:03:59, 2008, Berlin**

Tergat ran the first sub-2:05 marathon in the German capital in 2003 but his great track rival improved that mark to 2:04:26 in 2007. Then, in front of an estimated one million spectators, he improved to an historic sub-2:04 run and added to his 5000m and 10,000m world records, as well as multiple global golds.

**12 Eliud Kipchoge (KEN)****2:01:09, 2022, Berlin**

Kenyan Patrick Makau (2:03:38), Wilson Kipsang (2:02:23) and Dennis Kimetto (2:02:57) reduced the record between 2011 and 2013 but it was their compatriot Kipchoge who caused the biggest upheaval to the history books.

First the Olympic champion ran 2:01:39 in Berlin in 2018 before removing a further half minute on the same course four years later. In between he also broke the two-hour barrier in Vienna – an event not eligible for world record purposes – and won another Olympic gold to move out on his own as the world's greatest ever marathon runner. Kipchoge owns four of the six fastest legal times ever. **AW**



ABOVE: Steve Jones

BELOW LEFT:
Haile Gebrselassie

BELOW: Eliud Kipchoge



After storming to glory in 1993, little did Eamonn Martin realise that it would signal the start of a 30-year drought of domestic male victories at the London Marathon. **Jason Henderson** hears all about that historic day

“I get no pleasure out of the fact that no British man has won since me. I don’t want to take that to my grave”

LEFT: Eamonn Martin completes his London victory in 1993

It is 30 years since Eamonn Martin charged to victory in the London Marathon. Making his debut at the distance, the then 34-year-old showed few signs of inexperience and always looked in control as he followed every move. In the closing stages only one rival remained – Isidro Rico of Mexico. But, racing under the shadow of Big Ben with 200m to go, the British 10,000m record-holder unleashed his trademark sprint finish to triumph emphatically in a time of 2:10:50.

It was a grey, windswept spring morning in the capital and the jubilant Martin was cheered home by huge crowds before being overwhelmed by interview requests in the subsequent days. In typical old-school fashion, six days later he put his Basildon AC singlet on again to race for his club at the national road relays and received a standing ovation from fellow athletes at Sutton Park.

Following the victories of Hugh Jones, Mike Gratton, Charlie Spedding, Steve Jones and Allister Hutton, Martin was the sixth British man to triumph in the race in the space of 12 years. What no-one could imagine at the time, though, is that no British male runner has been unable to win the race since.

“I get no pleasure out of the fact that no British man has won since me,” he says. “I don’t want to take that to my grave. I want the sport that I’m so heavily involved in to have progressed. If a Brit won in the next few years, I would be genuinely really

pleased. The kudos of winning in 1993 has been great, but it’s done.”

Ironically, Martin was not massively favoured to win back then either. Some considered him too tall and heavy to be a good marathon runner. He was also in the twilight of his career, had never run a marathon and was minus a shoe sponsor at the time. After winning, though, he joked that he was “fastest fat old git on the day”.

At the pre-event press conference the British male contenders included Martin, Paul Evans, Paul Davies-Hale, Carl Thackery and Steve Brace. Martin was last to be brought on to the stage but whereas his fellow competitors talked about various injuries and problems they’d suffered, he simply smiled and said “everything went perfectly”.

His build-up had been injury and illness-free. After enjoying victory at the Hastings Half Marathon, he placed a solid 34th in the World Cross Country Championships in Spain three weeks before London. A 25-mile long run followed, as did a fast five-miler at the Southern Road Relays for his club.

“I was still the British record-holder for 10,000m and had a lot of speed. I had been running a lot of miles for a number of years so I went into it [London] with a view to winning,” he says. “I thought I might not have too many marathons as I was already 34 so I thought I’d go straight into a big one. The timing and locality in London was good. My aim was to run with the leaders and if things went wrong and I wasn’t good enough, then fair enough. I knew I was in great shape, though.”

Close to the race, Martin’s coach Mel Batty paid ▷

a visit to Ron Hill in Lancashire and explained his athlete's training to the former European, Commonwealth and Boston marathon winner. "There are multiple ways to prepare," recalls Martin, "but Ron told Mel that he felt we were doing everything right, which for me was a real stamp of approval."

On the Thursday of race week, Martin's wife gave birth to their third child, which meant he welcomed his new-born son into the world before travelling into London for the press conference and race.

Martin had prepared painstakingly for the event and had practised taking energy drinks balanced on steeplechase barriers while doing track workouts. With a background of working as an engineer for Ford, he applied a methodical and scientific approach to his running. Yet despite this he chose not to wear socks nor a watch on race day.

"I hope it doesn't come across as arrogant, but I could always see the lead vehicle!" he laughs. "Why did I want to have another gadget that would take my focus away from just running?"

As for going sock-less, he never wore socks in shorter races and had no problems with blisters or indeed chafing elsewhere on his body. For Martin, it was just another race. Albeit much longer than usual.

In the race itself, Martin's rivals fell away one by one as the miles ticked by. He recalls: "I got to halfway and some athletes had dropped away. At 16 miles more vanished. At 20 miles it was by then a small group. I felt that as we went on at the same pace then more and more would drop off."

Did he ever have a rough patch himself? "I didn't feel great around 10km but I shoved it out my head as it was so early in the race," he replies. "But in the latter stages of the race I didn't have a bad patch, really."

Martin's strategy was to let others lead and to just sit behind but he found himself accidentally creeping into the lead at some points. "I felt I was full of running," he says.

Passing Tower Bridge at around 22 miles there was a moment when he saw a group of friends and he waved and smiled. He wasn't celebrating prematurely, though. "I was just trying to tell them 'believe it or not I'm still here and feeling okay!'"

He adds: "It got to the point where it was just me and Rico battling it out and I was really familiar with battling it out with 'AN Other' at the end of a race – whether it was on the track, country or road. It was a very familiar scenario, albeit not at the end of 26 miles of running."

What is his abiding memory of the race?

"I do remember the enormous relief of finishing. Obviously there was a lot of pleasure, too, but also just relief of having got through the preparations and the event itself. I don't think it was the greatest athletics achievement of my life as I had more in me that day. But executing my first marathon perfectly was a big relief."



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One of Martin's first jobs post-race was to call into work to tell them he would have to take Monday off to attend the winners' press conference. "They told me 'yep, we didn't think you'd be here!'" he says.

When he eventually drove home, people saw his name on the side of his car and began giving him the thumbs up at traffic lights. Stepping inside his house, Martin found reporters and cameramen waiting for him. After going into work on Tuesday he was given a standing ovation by workmates before apologising for having to take a further day off to go on *Pebble Mill* on Wednesday with Alan Titchmarsh. "I was also asked to go to a spot the ball winners event to present a cheque," he adds, "but they were more interested in me than the cheque winners!"

On the Friday night he returned to Hastings, the scene of his half-marathon win the previous month, to honour an agreement to present some prizes. He then drove with a friend up to Birmingham for the national 12-stage road relays.

"I'd been pulled from pillar to post," he recalls. "It was a heck of a week, really. It felt like I'd had hundreds of interviews so running that race came as quite a relief as I was doing what I do best."

He continues: "I ran quite well in the relays [moving his club from 25th to 9th on stage five] but I was really deeply knackered after that. It wasn't a

smart idea as I usually believe in having a few weeks off after a marathon.

"I got a standing ovation at those road relays around the entire course, though, which really meant a lot. It made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. I have such fond memories of the people cheering for me. At the time it was colossal."

A stalwart of British endurance running, Martin plays more tennis these days rather than running due to a dodgy knee but he continues to remain involved in athletics either as a coach or team manager or, as he puts it, simply as a "fan and punter".

He is poised to replace Ian Byett as secretary of the English Cross Country Association and he was Emile Cairess's team manager at the European Cross Country Championships in December.

He says of the 2023 London Marathon hope: "He's a great lad, a real talent and I wish him all the best this month. Whatever happens I think he's got a great future."

Naturally, he hopes Cairess or one of his contemporaries can break the 30-year curse in coming years by becoming London Marathon winner. "I've done a lot of coaching in recent years in addition to team management," says Martin, "and I want these athletes to do well and to effectively beat my times." **AW**

ABOVE: Eamonn Martin won his duel with Isidro Rico over the closing stages

PEDIGREE CHUMS

Friends and training partners Emile Cairess and Phil Sesemann will become rivals as they look to fly the British flag in London – but without any canine assistance, writes **Jason Henderson**



When Emile Cairess and Phil Sesemann step on to the start line at the TCS London Marathon on April 23 they will be leading the British men's hopes and flying the flag for Leeds. The duo live within a mile of each other in the West Yorkshire city and have matched strides during countless tough workouts in recent years. Occasionally some of Sesemann's other training partners get in the way, though.

"We used to do more easier runs together," says Cairess, "as Phil has a couple of dogs and they're a bit manic on the runs. One time I was running with Phil and one of them tripped me up and I had to miss two or three days of running!"

Sesemann insists someone else's dog was the main culprit in the melee. Whatever the details, the pair now largely only meet up to do more important sessions in a canine-free environment. "I always want to run with the dogs," says Sesemann, "and Emile quite rightly doesn't want to risk injury!"

LEFT: Phil Sesemann with his canine companions Kipchoge and Haile



Sesemann made headlines in 2021 when he finished as first British male in the London Marathon and it emerged he had done lots of training with a Spaniel and Vizsla cross called “Kipchoge”, as well as a German Shorthaired Pointer called “Haile”. The self-styled “mileage mutts” even have their own *Strava* accounts and Sesemann says they join him for around two thirds of his own training.

Different coaching set-ups also mean Cairess and Sesemann do not link up for every single run. For the past year Cairess has been coached from afar by Italian marathon guru Renato Canova while Sesemann is guided in Leeds by Andy Henderson. Still, their schedules are flexible enough that they often hook up for key workouts.

Given they will effectively be rivals on April 23, does it ever get too competitive, though? “Not at all,” says Cairess. “We’re training really hard but we’re not competitive and don’t try to kill each other in training.”

Their set-up is clearly working. After his 2:12:58 debut in London two years ago, Sesemann improved his PB to 2:12:10 in London last October,

whereas in January he delivered an eye-catching victory when out-kicking world 1500m champion Jake Wightman to win a BMC 3000m in Sheffield.

Cairess, meanwhile, brought his 10,000m best down to 27:34.08 last summer but has looked even better at longer distances, with 60:32 at the Valencia Half-Marathon in October and a runaway victory at the Liverpool Cross Challenge in November before storming to a spectacular silver medal behind Jakob Ingebrigtsen at the European Cross Country Championships on a hilly course in Italy in December.

A bout of Covid scuppered Cairess’s training over Christmas but he got back into running during an altitude camp in Kenya in January. Sesemann joined him on that trip, with Kipchoge and Haile staying in Leeds where fellow runner Josh Dickinson, a former Inter-Counties age-group winner, helped the mileage mutts stretch their legs in their master’s absence.

Cairess got a taste of the London Marathon in October when he acted as one of the pacemakers. This time he is making his debut and determined to go the distance. Right now he is one of the most ▷

ABOVE: Emile Cairess and Phil Sesemann have been long-time clubmates at Leeds City



PHIL HAS A COUPLE OF DOGS AND THEY'RE A BIT MANIC ON THE RUNS. ONE TIME ONE OF THEM TRIPPED ME UP AND I HAD TO MISS TWO OR THREE DAYS OF RUNNING

exciting talents in British distance running due to his Euro Cross silver and subsequent 10-mile British record of 45:57 in Barrowford last month.

Cairess is a full-time athlete but when he's not training he spends time with his long-time girlfriend, Georgia, a 2:05 800m runner, or watching Arsenal FC – an unusual choice of football club to follow for a Yorkshireman. "Some people would consider I'm a plastic fan as I watch most matches on TV," he says, "but that's just the way I enjoy it."

Cairess's first love was football and as a teenager he was a keen right-winger playing in the top division grassroots league matches in his native Bradford area. "I used to think I was really good," he grins. "Whether I was, you'd have to ask other people. I had an inflated view of my own skill. I was obsessed with Thierry Henry. I idolised him and still do to be fair."

Cairess was inspired to run by his mum. "She tried to go running every day if she could and because it was part of her lifestyle I saw it as being a normal thing to do and wanted to go out running," he explains. "It seemed like good fun."

Running cross-country at Bradford Grammar School also helped attract him to the sport. Notable alumni include Alistair and Jonny Brownlee, plus Richard Nerurkar, who coincidentally held the UK 10-mile record which Cairess beat recently.

So when did he kick football into touch? "I was 16 and by that time I was maybe in the top 10 at national-level events and I realised I wasn't going to be a footballer. I thought if I wanted to get better at running then I had to start running at the weekends rather than playing football."

UK all-time marathon rankings

2:05:11	Mo Farah	Chicago, 2018
2:07:13	Steve Jones	Chicago, 1985
2:08:14	Callum Hawkins	London, 2019
2:08:33	Charlie Spedding	London, 1985
2:08:36	Richard Nerurkar	London, 1997
2:08:52	Paul Evans	Chicago, 1996
2:09:08	Geoff Smith	New York, 1983
2:09:12	Ian Thompson	Christchurch, 1974
2:09:16	Allister Hutton	London, 1985
2:09:17	Mark Steinle	London, 2002
2:09:24	Hugh Jones	London, 1982
2:09:28	Ron Hill	Edinburgh, 1970

PHOTOS BY LONDON MARATHON EVENTS

Sesemann's road to London 2023 has been different. Growing up in the south of England, his first club was Blackheath & Bromley AC but he moved to Leeds about 12 years ago and, like Cairess, has competed for Leeds City AC while working in the area as a junior doctor.

Even now he does part-time work at St James's University Hospital and explains: "I pick up odd shifts if they fit around training or races," he says. "It's enough to keep my hand in."

LEFT: Phil Sesemann crosses the line in London last year





On his London Marathon ambitions, Sesemann says: "I've been top 10 twice in a row so I'd like to make it three in a row, although the field looks a bit stronger in depth this year. So I could end up running quicker but end up in a lower position. But I don't want to be on a marathon start line aiming to be fifth best Brit or something like that. I'd like to be first Brit home but it's mainly about running my best possible marathon on the day and to see where that takes me."

Approaching his fourth marathon, does he have any tips for Cairess? "I don't think he needs any, to be honest," says Sesemann. "He trains enough and trains hard. I don't think marathon is this complete step up from other events that some people think it is. If you've prepared well and race well on the day then there's no reason for me why it can go wrong."

Cairess adds: "Running is just running but if you're in the right shape then you can drop down to 3km like Phil did [in Sheffield] or run well at cross-country or up in the marathon. It's all pretty similar and requires most of the same training and skills."

Sesemann is 30 years old and Cairess is 25 but they both envisage long careers in the marathon. "If you look at Kipchoge, Mo Farah, Thommo [Chris Thompson], Sinead Diver, they're into their 40s and running at their peak for marathons," says Sesemann, "so I don't see it's a three to five-year career for me. Running around the London Marathon is so much fun so I can imagine myself doing that for a while, yet."

Cairess agrees. But what happens when their marathon careers do end? Sesemann is attracted to the idea of ultra marathons in future and enjoys the idea of one day entering a canicross race for fun, too.

You're unlikely to find Cairess in the same race, though. He is not interested in ultra running and, when it comes to canicross, he doesn't fancy the idea of taking another tumble. **AW**

>> Farah nearing the end of the road: p48

ABOVE: Emile Cairess was on pacing duties in London last October

Nearing the end of the road

Mo Farah is hoping to enjoy a fond farewell to the marathon in London, writes **Jason Henderson**

Fully 25 years after winning the first of three Mini London Marathon titles, Mo Farah is poised to tackle the full 26.2 miles of this iconic race for the final time.

Now aged 40, he is not expected to challenge for victory this month. Yet only a fool would entirely rule out the 10-time global track champion and he is guaranteed to receive more media interest during race week than anyone else.

Farah was forced to withdraw from last year's London Marathon on the eve of the event with a hip problem. Injuries also scuppered his dream of making the Tokyo Olympics.

A sign of his declining ability was arguably shown 12 months ago when he was out-kicked by Ellis Cross at the Vitality London 10,000. Despite this he has been training hard in Ethiopia and, who knows, could spring a surprise on the day.

"I'm not a spring chicken any more and you can't keep coming back and getting into races unless you are in the right shape," said Farah earlier this year. "And, for me, I'd love to be able to finish at home and I think we are getting closer to the end of my career, for sure."

Farah always appeared more at home on the track than in the marathon, but his move to 26.2 miles has been far from

disastrous. After a humbling debut in London in 2014, he returned in 2018 to break Steve Jones' long-standing UK record with 2:06:21.

A few months later he enjoyed his best marathon of all with a European record of 2:05:11 to win Chicago in style. He has spent the last four years searching in vain to rediscover that form and this month's big race could prove his final hurrah.

Win or lose, Farah has nothing to prove and should allow himself to enjoy the experience in London. That's the view of Paula Radcliffe, whose husband Gary has coached the four-time Olympic track champion in recent years.

"The most important thing is, hopefully, that he's able to enjoy it," says Radcliffe, "and he's able to go in and make a few more of those London memories and savour them."

"That's something that I'm eternally grateful for as I got the chance to do that in 2015. It was the slowest time I ever ran (2:36:55), so it wasn't for speed. It was just the chance to be able to get out there and be a part of it."

Radcliffe adds: "For Mo to be able to go out and to be semi competitive, to get around there and just appreciate the crowd, appreciate the race that it is and appreciate London, I think it will be really, really special. It makes me emotional thinking about it." **AW**



London elite men's field*

For the first time in history two men who have run inside two hours and two minutes will be together on the same start line.

Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia, the second-fastest man ever with a PB of 2:01:41, and Kelvin Kiptum of Kenya, the winner of the 2022 Valencia Marathon and the fastest marathon debutant in history with 2:01:53, are both set to race.

Also in the line-up are Ethiopians Birhanu Legese and Mosinet Geremew – both of whom have run 2:02, which means the event will feature four of the five fastest men in marathon history on the start.

Add to this the reigning champion Amos Kipruto of Kenya and world champion Tamirat Tola of Ethiopia and it is a mouth-watering field.

Amos Kipruto (KEN, PB 2:03:13)
 Kenenisa Bekele (ETH, 2:01:41)
 Kelvin Kiptum (KEN, 2:01:53)
 Birhanu Legese (ETH, 2:02:48)
 Mosinet Geremew (ETH, 2:02:55)
 Tamirat Tola (ETH, 2:03:39)
 Kinde Atanaw (ETH, 2:03:51)
 Leul Gebresilase (ETH, 2:04:02)
 Seifu Tura (ETH, 2:04:29)
 Sir Mo Farah (GBR, 2:05:11)
 Geoffrey Kamworor (KEN, 2:05:23)
 Brett Robinson (AUS, 2:07:31)
 Dewi Griffiths (GBR, 2:09:49)
 Rory Linkletter (CAN, 2:10:24)
 Chris Thompson (GBR, 2:10:52)
 Tom Gröschel (GER, 2:11:03)
 Ben Connor (GBR, 2:11:20)
 Joshua Griffiths (GBR, 2:11:28)
 Frank Lara (USA, 2:11:32)
 Luke Caldwell (GBR, 2:11:33)
 Weynay Ghebresilasie (GBR, 2:11:57)
 Phil Sesemann (GBR, 2:12:10)
 Adam Craig (GBR, 2:13:58)
 Emile Cairess (GBR, debut)
 Paulos Surafel (GBR, debut)
 Sean Tobin (IRL, debut)

Men's wheelchair line-up*

Marcel Hug will be looking to match David Weir's TCS London Marathon record of three consecutive wins.

The Swiss athlete won every single Abbott World Marathon Major Marathon he raced last year, which led him to win the Abbott World Marathon Series XIV title (the award for the most points won across the six major marathons).

Among those trying to stop Hug will be Weir, who has won a record eight times in London and returns for what will be his 24th consecutive London Marathon, plus Daniel Romanchuk of the United States, who finished a close second to Hug last year.

Rafael Botello Jimenez (ESP)
 Evan Correll (USA)
 Sean Frame (GBR)
 Kota Hokinoue (JPN)
 Marcel Hug (SUI)
 Simon Lawson (GBR)
 Jordi Madera Jimenez (ESP)
 Michael McCabe (GBR)
 Patrick Monahan (IRL)
 Hiroki Nischida (JPN)
 Aaron Pike (USA)
 Jetze Plat (NED)
 Daniel Romanchuk (USA)
 James Senbeta (USA)
 Brian Siemann (USA)
 John Boy Smith (GBR)
 Tomoki Suzuki (JPN)
 Ernst Van Dyk (RSA)
 Sho Wantanabe (JPN)
 David Weir (GBR)

**information correct at time of going to print*

Mo Farah's marathon history

October 2019	Chicago	2:09:58	8th
April 2019	London	2:05:39	5th
October 2018	Chicago	2:05:11	1st
April 2018	London	2:06:21	3rd
April 2014	London	2:08:21	8th

PHOTO BY LONDON MARATHON EVENTS



PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

“Gone are the days when I have to fight her corner”

Liz McColgan talks to **Euan Crumley** about the expectations surrounding the upcoming marathon debut of her daughter Eilish – and why she feels the 32-year-old has become a far stronger athlete, both on and off the track

Liz McColgan's journey into the marathon was not a long and winding road. One phone call was all it took. It was 1991, she had just become world 10,000m champion and, on the other side of the globe, two of the top female contenders were giving their thoughts on her at a press conference connected to the upcoming New York Marathon.

McColgan takes up the story: “Lisa Ondieki and Rosa Mota were asked: ‘Do you think the young Scottish girl who has just won the world 10,000m title could run a marathon?’ and they both said no.

“[New York race director] Fred Lebow called me and said: ‘Do you want to compete and prove them wrong?’ and, me being me, I said yes. I only had nine weeks’ training or something for New York and I won it. Then, because I won there, London gave me this fantastic deal and you couldn't say no to it.

“So I moved to the marathon without really planning on doing it. Looking back, I would have preferred to have done a couple more years on the track and then move up. I think it was a little bit too early for myself but I had a pretty decent marathon career.”

That “pretty decent” career brought wins in New York, Tokyo and London. She will be back on the streets of the British capital this month, too, but it will be very different this time.

She will be there to watch her daughter, Eilish, get her first taste of the distance and embark on the fulfilment of a plan which has been much longer in the making than Liz's move up.

The younger McColgan will be the focus of much attention in London. Following her recent exploits which have brought a raft of British records, as well as Commonwealth and European medals across a number of distances, now the marathon education begins. ▷

At this stage, it's all just potential but a few questions should be answered on April 23 and there is an unmistakeable excitement about what might be possible.

"I honestly think the marathon is her distance. I'm not sure Eilish is too convinced yet!" grins Liz, who is also her coach. "I remember when she was a 1500m runner, and it's the same process as when I said to her 'move to the 5000m' and she said 'I couldn't do that' and then she moved to the 5000m. Then you say 'now move to the 10,000m' and she says 'I'm never going to do that'. We've eventually got to the distance that I think that is her distance.

"Everything about her and her testing has pointed towards the fact that she could be a good marathon runner. The time is right for her to move up. I think the next couple of years will be quite exciting for me as a coach to see just what we can do."

While, to outside observers, that might sound like an awful lot of pressure it's simply an honest assessment around an athlete who has grown immeasurably in recent years. Her 10,000m run of 30:00.86 last month, in the midst of full marathon training, was the latest in a long line of Paula Radcliffe's national records to fall into Eilish's grasp.

Slicing 43 seconds off her own UK half marathon record to win the Generali Berlin Half Marathon in 65:43 has done little to dampen expectations.

While Radcliffe's 2:15:25 marathon best might be out of reach this time, Liz isn't about to shy away from the fact that the long-term aim is to be among the world's best.

"Eilish is really coming into her own. She's seeing the athlete she is and what her strengths are," adds McColgan senior. "She really believes in what she's doing now and she's putting together some really, really classy stuff. The results are speaking for themselves.

"She hasn't surprised me. I've got a lot of knowledge from what I did as an athlete and, from what I see, she's so much stronger than me in all areas. I can compare that to what I did and I can see what she's capable of doing.

"But you can have an athlete that's capable of doing it but actually turning that into reality is a completely different ballgame. The athlete's got to believe in that process and believe in themselves and Eilish has just really blossomed into a very strong individual, in terms of mindset as well as physicality."

She has had to be strong away from the track, too. Eilish has openly discussed the online abuse she receives on a daily basis and her mum is full of admiration as to how that challenging issue is dealt with.

"As a coach, it's not as bad but, as a mother, it's very frustrating when you see some of the idiotic things people put online about Eilish.

"But gone are the days where I have to stand and fight her corner because she will fight her own



I'VE GOT A LOT OF KNOWLEDGE FROM WHAT I DID AS AN ATHLETE AND, FROM WHAT I SEE, SHE'S SO MUCH STRONGER THAN ME IN ALL AREAS

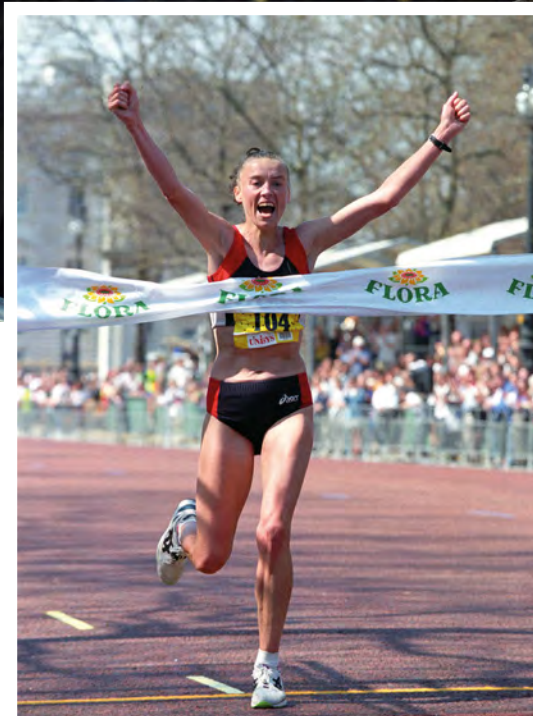
corner now and I think that's great. I'm really proud of the way she deals with it and I'm really proud of the fact that she calls them out.

"These people are sitting behind their little screens and they think they can say whatever they want to anybody but I think Eilish deals with it in a really positive way. She turns all of that negativity into something really positive and that's what I'm really proud of. She's a girl people can look up to and be motivated by."

A good performance in London will only enhance that feeling. Provided all goes smoothly until race day – there have been some injury hiccups, one of which was caused by Eilish having to jump out of the way of some young runners

ABOVE: Liz and Eilish McColgan celebrate 10,000m Commonwealth gold last summer

RIGHT: Liz McColgan won the London Marathon in 1996



on the track who wouldn't move – what would represent success for this outing?

"We're all quite excited about what London will bring," adds Liz. "We're not being blasé – she's not going to go out there and win it – but what we're looking for is for her to have a really strong race, a good result for her and a good experience so that she comes away with a lot of positivity to know what we need to do to get down to those girls that are running 2:15s."

"The best in the world are running 2:14/2:15 so there's no point in looking at being a 2:20 runner. If you want to be winning medals and being competitive then you've got to be looking beyond that now. This will give us a little insight as to what we need to do to make her the best marathon runner she can possibly be." **AW**

London elite women's field*

Eilish McColgan will be part of an incredibly strong women's elite field in London. Among those taking part are the defending champion and world 10km record holder Yalemzerf Yehualaw, world record-holder Brigid Kosgei and Olympic champion Peres Jepchirchir.

The reigning Olympic 10,000m and 5000m champion Sifan Hassan will be making her marathon debut, while 1500m world record-holder Genzebe Dibaba will also be on the startline, as will the 2016 Olympic 10,000m champion Almaz Ayana.

Yalemzerf Yehualaw (ETH, PB 2:17:23)
Brigid Kosgei (KEN, 2:14:04 WR)
Peres Jepchirchir (KEN, 2:17:16)
Almaz Ayana (ETH, 2:17:20)
Genzebe Dibaba (ETH, 2:18:05)
Sutume Asefa Kebede (2:18:12)
Judith Jeptum Korir (KEN, 2:18:20)
Alemu Megertu (ETH, 2:18:32)
Natasha Wodak (CAN, 2:23:12 NR)
Susanna Sullivan (USA, 2:25:14)
Ellie Pashley (AUS, 2:26:21)
Maor Tiyouri (ISR, 2:29:04)
Alice Wright (GBR, 2:29:08)
Rosie Edwards (GBR, 2:31:56)
Samantha Harrison (GBR, 2:32:22)
Eilish McColgan (GBR, debut)
Sifan Hassan (NED, debut)
Girmawit Gebrzihair (ETH, debut)
Dominique Scott (RSA, debut)

Elite women's wheelchair field

Defending champion and London course record-holder Catherine Debrunner heads the elite women's wheelchair field, which also includes world record-holder and three-time London winner Manuela Schär. Madison de Rozario, the Paralympic and Commonwealth Games champion who won the 2018 London Marathon, is also back, as is last year's runner-up Susannah Scaroni, former London Marathon champion Tatyana McFadden and talented young British athlete Eden Rainbow-Cooper, who finished third last year.

Eliza Ault-Connell (AUS)
Christie Dawes (AUS)
Madison de Rozario (AUS)
Vanessa De Souza (BRA)
Catherine Debrunner (SUI)
Patricia Eachus (SUI)
Jenna Fesemyer (USA)
Yen Hoang (USA)
Tatyana McFadden (USA)
Merle Menje (GER)
Eden Rainbow-Cooper (GBR)
Aline Rocha (BRA)
Susannah Scaroni (USA)
Manuela Schär (SUI)
Kina Tsubasa (JPN)
Wakako Tsuchida (JPN)
Michelle Wheeler (USA)
Shelly Woods (GBR)

**information correct at time of going to print*

THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING



PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

To the locals, the Boston Marathon represents so much more than a running event. It's also special for the runners who arrive from all over the world to take part – and one in particular is causing a stir, writes **Euan Crumley**

It was late and dark by the time I arrived at my hotel. It was Friday night, I was tired from the journey and not fully taking in my surroundings.

This trip to Boston seven years ago was partly on work business – to speak with a few athletes and coaches based in that corner of America at the time. The main purpose of my stay, however, was to run the marathon.

This was my first time in the city where everybody knows your name and my first chance to look around arrived on a crisp Saturday morning. My hotel was very close to Boston Common, right in the heart of town but also the venue for the Boston 5km which kicks off what is a triumphal annual three-day weekend.

Everything comes to a head with the marathon, which is always run on a Monday. Patriots Day. A state holiday. The room to breathe offered by that extra 24 hours gives everything and everyone oxygen.

Still slightly fuzzy headed from the jet lag I dozedly stepped out from the hotel and rounded a corner, headed in the direction of the Common. I came out through a narrow street blinking into the light. The only thing I can compare what happened next to is that feeling when you're at a big sporting event and suddenly the whole stadium opens up in front of you. In this case, it was a sea of runners.

Every second person was wearing a Boston jacket with the Boston Athletics Association (BAA) unicorn logo emblazoned across the back. Every single person was wearing trainers. ▷





PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: Runners head down a packed Boylston Street to the finish line

RIGHT: Eliud Kipchoge's presence will add an extra dimension to proceedings

The entire city had taken on the guise of Running Land and this blue and yellow-toned circus carried on right through until I got on to the plane home a handful of days later.

"In Boston, people look at Marathon Monday as like being the official start of spring," says Mark Coogan, an Olympic marathon runner in 1996 and now high-profile coach who grew up – and still lives in – Massachusetts.

"I remember when I was little, my dad would take us up to watch the marathon. There's a party atmosphere, with cookouts and college kids with kegs [of beer] and people just having a good time. By watching it, it made me start to enjoy running.

"It's really an emotional time and it seems like everybody is positive, you don't see anybody in a bad mood or bitching and moaning. Everyone is excited to be there and be part of it."

Those excitement levels have been raised a notch this year by the prospect of seeing the fastest marathon runner in history tackling this notoriously difficult, quad-trashing hilly challenge as part of its 127th edition on April 17.

The route being downhill overall and point to point means there won't be a world record from Eliud Kipchoge this time, but it will be fascinating to see the marathon master taking on this unique test.

There's no doubt that the Kenyan double Olympic champion adds a considerable helping of sparkle to whichever event he competes in but, where the Boston Marathon is concerned, the course is always the star of the show.

Event day feels different right away, when participants have to gather close to Boston

Common in the early hours again to catch one of the fleet of distinctive yellow school buses which ferries runners 26.2 miles away to the start line in the town of Hopkinton.

"I remember getting on the bus and heading out to the start line, thinking I couldn't believe how far away it seemed," recalls Coogan, who made his marathon debut in Boston. "It was like you were getting a one-way ticket to go to war."

Kipchoge famously lives a no-frills existence in his training camps and can expect few bells and whistles when it comes to the pre-race set-up, either.

"You're hopping on a bus, going 26 miles away, and then you're in the basement of a church, like you're just sitting on a floor," adds Coogan. "It's not luxurious at all, it's very old school, and then you cut through a little cemetery and out on to the starting line."

When the gun goes, it marks the start of an undulating journey through seven towns before the final couple of miles are completed in Boston itself. Whether it be Hopkinton, Ashland, Framingham, Natick, Wellesley, Newton or Brookline, each staging post turns out in style as part of the tradition.

"To me, it's a community event. Even though it's one of the marathon majors, I see it as a local thing," says Coogan. "So many people from the little towns along the way... they've probably been having the same people over to their houses for years and just walking out [to cheer] when the race is coming by. There are bars and restaurants along the way, too. There's a biker bar and I remember when I was running, out of the corner of my eye seeing these big motorcycle guys there and they were like 'look at these skinny b****ds!'"

It's between miles 15 and 16 in Wellesley where the toll of the mainly downhill first half starts to bite. A steep descent soon makes way for the start of the Newton Hills, which are strength sapping right from the start and come to a painful head with the infamous Heartbreak Hill which stands just over five miles from the finish line.

"You get a lot of muscle damage. It's tough running," says Coogan of the stretch which will either make or break performances. It's little wonder, then, that Kipchoge and his group have been working hard on a course at his Kaptagat training base which he has called "the Boston route" to simulate those very conditions.

Once back into the city, the final task is to take a right on to Hereford Street, then left onto Boylston Street – towards the end of which sits the finish line. Enclosed by the downtown buildings, the wave of noise which bounces off the walls and carries the runners home is unforgettable.

It's here where, 10 years ago, the bombings caused so much damage and there are special remembrance

plans in place for a tragedy out of which the “Boston Strong” motto emerged.

The permanent memorial adds poignancy to a place which has forever been laced with emotion.

This is a special location for distance runners across the globe. Every person on that start line has had to run a qualifying time to be there, so there’s an added dimension to completing this particular challenge.

How quickly will Kipchoge do it? The course record of 2:03:02, run by his fellow Kenyan Geoffrey Mutai in 2011, is the target. Should he hit it then the man whose best stands at 2:01:09 will hold the course records of four of the six marathon majors.

He would not be the first athlete to arrive in Boston expecting to run quickly, only to find that the elements had other ideas, mind you. Remember Des Linden and Yuki Kawauchi holding up best to the torrential rain and the biting cold temperatures to spring some surprises in 2018? “You just never know what you’re gonna get,” shrugs Coogan.

There are no pacemakers in Boston, either – just good, old fashioned racing and pace judgement.

Kipchoge has shown himself to be made of the sternest stuff, though, and is still fully expected to be leading the way. His participation has definitely had an impact on an event which already takes over this piece of America which is dripping in historical significance.

“There’s been more hype than normal this year,” adds Coogan. “Kipchoge never loses so he’s got to be the favourite. I think it will be a different experience for him, but he’s shown he can run anything.”

It will be unique experience, too. Whatever happens, Coogan will be watching closely and will allow his mind to drift back towards watching as a small boy with his father at the top of Heartbreak Hill, huddling around a radio as a teenager with his fellow athletes to listen in following a high school race meeting or experiencing every undulation as a professional athlete.

It’s those delicate, personal threads which are woven into the fabric of Boston. Now we’re about to see the next addition to this rich running tapestry. **AW**



Boston Marathon elite fields

Aiming to push Eliud Kipchoge all the way in Boston will be reigning men’s champion Evans Chebet, 2021 winner Benson Kipruto and two-time victor Lelisa Desisa.

In the women’s field, last year’s winner Peres Jepchirchir – who just beat Ababel Yeshaneh to the line – has opted for London this time around. Yeshaneh will be hoping to go one better this time, while 2022 third placer Mary Ngugi also returns. Hellen Obiri, who made her marathon debut in New York last year, has been an intriguing late addition to the field.

In the wheelchair contests, men’s reigning champion Daniel Romanchuk is up against world record-holder Marcel Hug who is going for his sixth Boston win. Course record-holder Manuela Schär is eyeing a fifth Boston title, though Susannah Scaroni and Tatyana McFadden will be roared on by the home supporters.

Men’s top 20

Eliud Kipchoge (KEN, PB 2:01:09 (WR))
 Evans Chebet (KEN 2:03:00)
 Gabriel Geay (TZA 2:03:00 (NR))
 Herpasa Negasa (ETH 2:03:40)
 Benson Kipruto (KEN 2:04:24)
 Lelisa Desisa (ETH 2:04:45)
 Shura Kitata (ETH 2:04:49)
 John Korir (KEN 2:05:01)
 Nobert Kigen (KEN 2:05:13)
 Girmay Ghebreslassie (ERI 2:05:34)
 Andualem Belay (ETH 2:05:45)
 Mark Korir (KEN 2:05:49)
 Filmon Ande (ERI 2:06:38)
 Andamluk Belihu (ETH 2:06:40)
 Isaac Mpofu (ZIM 2:06:48 (NR))
 Hamza Sahli (MOR 2:07:15)
 Michael Githae (KEN 2:08:03)
 Albert Korir (KEN 2:08:03)
 Conner Mantz (USA 2:08:16)
 Scott Fauble (USA 2:08:52)

Men’s wheelchair top 10

Marcel Hug (SUI 1:17:47 (WR))
 Ernst van Dyk (RSA 1:18:04)
 John Cassidy (CAN 1:18:25)
 Aaron Pike (USA 1:20:02)
 Johnboy Smith (GBR 1:20:05)
 Hiroki Nishida (JPN 1:20:28)
 Kota Hokinoue (JPN 1:20:54)
 Daniel Romanchuk (USA 1:21:36)
 Rafael Botello (ESP 1:22:18)
 Patrick Monahan (IRE 1:22:23)

Women’s top 20

Amane Beriso (ETH, PB 2:14:58 (NR))
 Sheila Chepkirui (ETH 2:17:29)
 Joyciline Jepkosgei (KEN 2:17:43)
 Lonah Salpeter (ISR 2:17:45)
 Angela Tanui (KEN 2:17:57)
 Fancy Chemutai (KEN 2:18:11)
 Gotytom Gebreslase (ETH 2:18:11)
 Hiwot Gebremariam (ETH 2:19:50)
 Edna Kiplagat (KEN 2:19:50)
 Celestine Chepchirchir (KEN 2:20:10)
 Maurine Chepkemoi (KEN 2:20:18)
 Mary Ngugi (KEN 2:20:22)
 Nazret Weldu Gebrehiwet (ERI 2:20:29 (NR))
 Sara Hall (USA 2:20:32)
 Ababel Yeshaneh (ETH 2:20:51)
 Vibian Chepkirui (KEN 2:20:59)
 Atsede Baysa (ETH 2:22:03)
 Des Linden (USA 2:22:38)
 Viola Cheptoo (KEN 2:22:44)
 Nienke Brinkman (NED 2:22:51 (NR))

Women’s wheelchair top 10

Susannah Scaroni (USA 1:27:31)
 Manuela Schär (SUI 1:28:17 (CR))
 Madison de Rozario (AUS 1:31:11)
 Tatyana McFadden (USA 1:31:30)
 Jenna Fesemyer (USA 1:33:50)
 Marie Emmanuelle Alphonse (MUS 1:35:14)
 Christie Dawes (AUS 1:37:12)
 Vaness de Souza (BRA 1:40:23)
 Aline Dos Santos Rocha (BRA 1:41:39)
 Michelle Wheeler (USA 1:45:45)

Eliud Kipchoge is well known as one of the greatest marathon runners in history but a new book looks at the journey of the man who helped him break barriers – his coach, Patrick Sang. In this extract from *We Share The Sun*, author **Sarah Gearhart** writes about a day to be remembered in Vienna

MAKING HISTORY TOGETHER



"W

e all cried." We as in old men. Old women. Mothers. Fathers. Young boys and girls. We as in anyone who was paying attention.

Especially in Kenya.

"There was a big crowd in Eldoret. You put so many heads of Black people [together], it was like asphalt. The only difference is it was moving," Patrick Sang says, chuckling.

What was it about that moment, on October 12, 2019, in Vienna when Eliud Kipchoge defined himself and the sport as he proved possible what many thought wasn't – to run a marathon in less than two hours? That was a crying moment for the world, as Sang puts it.

Earlier that day, a Saturday, Sang went for a walk in the dark, misty morning. "Alone. I just wanted to be alone," he says. Sometimes he prefers to be that way. Likes keeping to himself in general. He says that he rarely speaks to the media, despite frequent interview requests. As one who is a self-described loner, he enjoys solitude. "I love staying alone. I have no problem. People ▷

PHOTOS BY INEOS 159 CHALLENGE

think I'm crazy. On weekends when I'm not busy I stay at home. From Saturday until Monday. Read. Rest."

There are moments when Sang is not alone, yet he can feel alone. Ironically, those moments are when he's surrounded by people, like at camp. "Even when I'm with these people I feel alone. Besides what brings us together, what else is there?" he says.

Sang speaks about a close friend, originally from Kenya but who has Danish citizenship. "This guy," as he refers to him and not by name, he can sit with the whole day. Kindred spirits. A personal connection. Camp is different. Camp is less that and more "a vehicle for transmission," in Sang's words. A relationship limited to the service you provide. A professional connection.

As Sang continued to walk alone, his mind wandered. Not about the moment. He didn't want to think about the moment. Because "when you think about the moment, you get distracted." He thought about the situation. Like the weather, which was just shy of 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Somewhere away from his walk alone in the dark, misty morning, the boy who once approached Sang for a training plan was counting down to the monumental endeavor he was about to embark on: the INEOS 1:59 Challenge, Kipchoge's second attempt to break the two-hour mark for a marathon.

And the boy who became a man the world was watching was ready. So focused, Sang remembers. Imagine the impact. "Everything is on your shoulders. Everything. And you're the only one." Sang speaks about Kipchoge. "Sometimes you think, Am I doing the right thing?"

Yes, a real thought. "Of course, you don't tell anybody, and you don't want to show that you're not sure of yourself. The athlete can panic."

All along here was a guy who had a mind that surprised even Sang. "How do you quantify a strong mind?" He asks the question out loud in a way as though the air will respond.

"I think he was always like that," Sang reflects on Kipchoge's sense of focus. "I could see the guy had gone into another mode, an extra mode of activating his mental strength," Sang says of that day in Vienna.

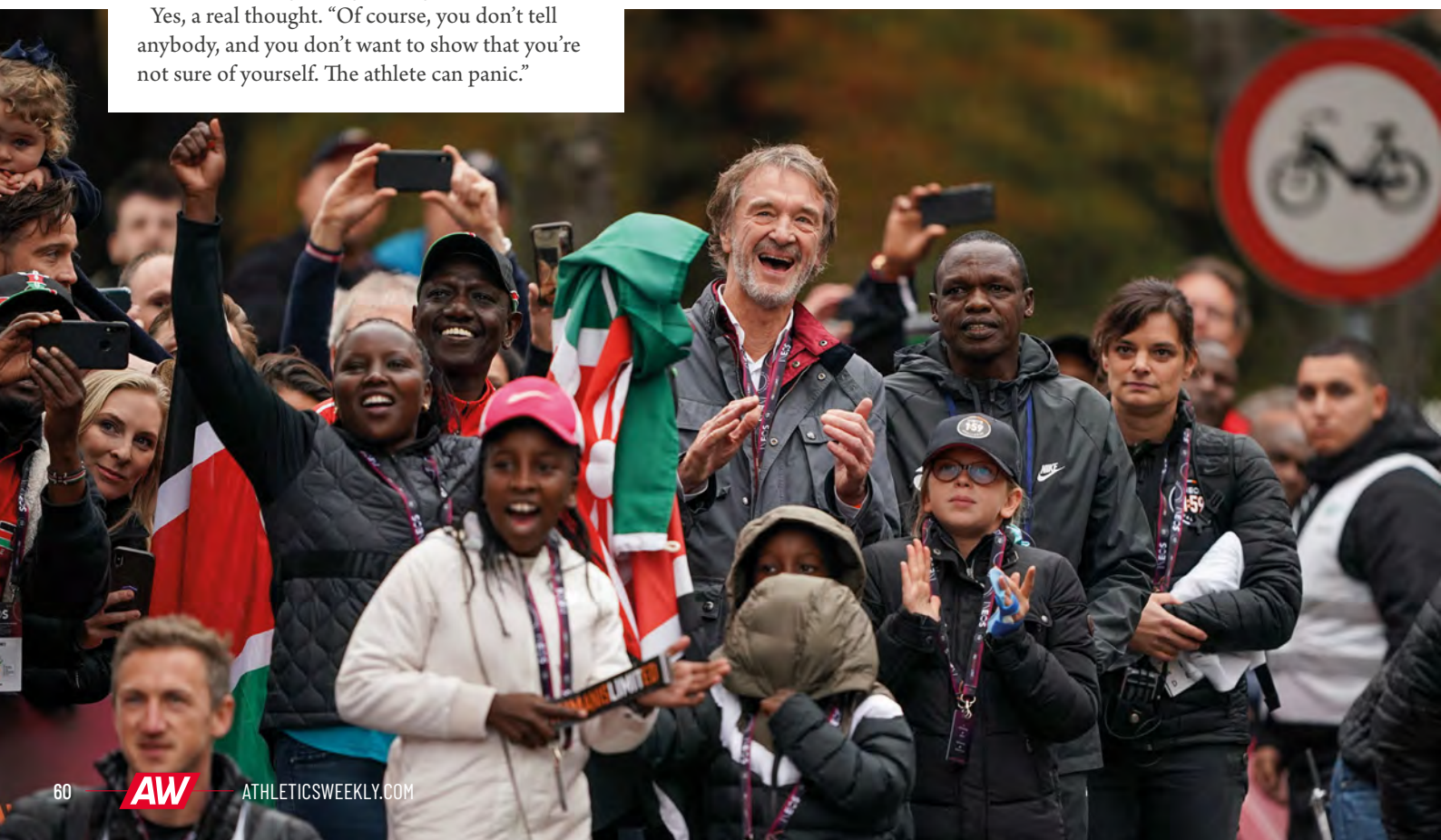
Certain things activate your senses. "It's like always being on the road, and one day you decide to buy a car. But all along you've been seeing cars. The eyes are programmed in a certain way. Your eyes start seeing things. Your heart starts listening to things that it wasn't listening to before. And then the brain starts adjusting." Sang had always been aware of Kipchoge's mental acuity, but not in the context of being as powerful as what Kipchoge would display on this day.

"What is interesting of the mind about this guy, from the moment I started training him, he's never asked anything about training. Never. He comes to training for training."

When Kipchoge and Sang had first embarked on the journey to attempt to run a marathon in less than two hours in 2017, Nike's Breaking2 project, "there was so much negativity on social media when it was announced. 'It's impossible.' Some scientists were saying it will take another 75 years before a human being comes close," Sang recalls. "People are entitled to their opinions, so who am I to argue with their opinions."

BELOW: Patrick Sang (third from right) awaits Kipchoge's arrival in Vienna

RIGHT: Kipchoge breaks the two-hour barrier





PATRICK SANG

ALL ALONG I WAS TEACHING HIM, BUT HERE IS A GUY WHO IS TEACHING ME THAT THE MIND CAN SUPERSEDE ANYTHING

the official marathon world record. The time was a symbolic record that had proved something about humanity. As Kipchoge would say, “No human is limited.” Still, Sang had led Kipchoge to the accomplishment, which he credited as much to Kipchoge’s intellectual acumen as to his physical conditioning. “He confirmed to me that mental strength supersedes everything,” Sang says.

“The best competitor is yourself,” Kipchoge repeats the words that Coach taught him back in 2003. “Respect yourself, and when you are on a starting line, know that you are the best-trained person.” You are your best competitor.

“The way he soaks in information, the way he internalises, the way he executes it,” Sang says. “It made me realise that as a human being, if you use your mind very well, what we normally achieve, we can achieve maybe 10 per cent or even 20 per cent more. All along I was teaching him, but here is a guy who is teaching me that the mind can supersede anything.” The boy who became a man the world was watching hugged Sang tightly, though briefly, as their embrace was quickly intercepted by several pacers, who hoisted Kipchoge above their heads as he toted the Kenyan flag.

“In my mind, I don’t think I would be where I am without Patrick. I don’t think I would run the way that I am running or perform well without him,” Kipchoge says. Had Kipchoge been under a different coach, he doesn’t trust that he would have made the transition to the marathon. He doesn’t think he would have broken any marathon record, either. “I’m really happy for the guidance. I’m happy for everything.”

Kipchoge is at a loss for a singular word to describe what his coach continues to mean to him. “I’ve interacted with Patrick as far as life is concerned, as far as the sport is concerned, as far as business is concerned. When I actually put it in one cup – life, sport, and business – and try to mix them, I cannot get the right word to describe.”

Eliud Kipchoge, a gift to the world, as he was called. But Patrick Sang, too. The man who wrapped the gift. **AW**



We Share the Sun: The Incredible Journey of Kenya's Legendary Running Coach Patrick Sang and the Fastest Runners on Earth is available now

“The power of blocking all of that negativity and focusing, it was unbelievable. If it was me, I would have been affected,” Sang says.

He continues, “Truly we have not explored the human potential in whatever we do as far as the contribution of mental strength is concerned. That is an area I’m still trying to understand.”

The event in Vienna was held 165m above sea level, making it opportune to run faster compared to being at high altitude, where there is less oxygen available. The INEOS 1:59 Challenge involved a total of 41 pacers that were rotated in and out of the race and were instructed to run in V formation in front of Kipchoge for maximum aerodynamics. Two pacemakers also ran behind him. These men were instrumental in sweeping Kipchoge to the finish.

A smile had spread across Kipchoge’s face as he sprinted with 200m remaining, pointing to both sides of the boisterous crowd. Sang was jumping up and down, flailing his arms above his head. This was the only time that he saw himself as being part of the race. There, at the finish line.

Kipchoge pounded his chest twice as he ran through the finish line in 1:59:40. The stunning and historic feat was described as a “moon landing moment” – a barrier-breaking achievement that few thought would happen in this generation, or ever. Notably, Kipchoge’s INEOS 1:59 Challenge generated 4.9 million YouTube views and reached more than 500 million TV viewers at the time, according to Sunset+Vine, a UK television sports production and media company that was the host broadcaster of the event.

Due to the rotation of professional pacers and the fact that the race wasn’t an open competition, Kipchoge’s sub-two-hour effort isn’t considered

RAPID RISE

Not so long ago, Nienke Brinkman's sporting focus was hockey. Since becoming "obsessed" with running in 2020, however, she has broken the Dutch marathon record and trained with Kipchoge. Now she has her sights set on Boston



WORDS: EUAN CRUMLEY

Initially, Nienke Brinkman thought it was some sort of joke. Barely an hour had passed since she had run the first official marathon of her life, in Valencia in late 2021, and the phone rang.

The 29-year-old's performance, a time of 2:26:34, had shown plenty of promise – it was the third-fastest marathon ever run by a Dutch woman – and the voice on the other end of the line had a question to ask. "How would she like to join the NN Running Team?"

As it turned out, the offer was deadly serious and it was in January 2022 that the woman who was born in Indonesia but grew up in the Netherlands began working with a set-up which includes the likes of men's marathon world record-holder Eliud Kipchoge, the great Kenenisa Bekele and serial global 1500m champion Faith Kipyegon on its roster of top-class athletes.



I REMEMBER CLEARLY LOOKING TO THE FRONT OF RACES AND WONDERING HOW THEY COULD GO SO FAST BUT NOW IT'S ME IN THE ELITE GROUP

It has been a lot to take in and Brinkman admits to still feeling a sense of disbelief, which is perhaps not surprising. Many more experienced runners would be feeling the same way but, when you consider that Brinkman only really began to focus on running in 2020, it becomes all the more remarkable.

She has been “super sporty” for as long as she can remember but her energies, in the main, were previously channelled towards playing hockey to a high standard in the Netherlands.

That changed when she discovered the sport was not taken quite so seriously in Switzerland, where she had moved for her studies. University became her priority, though she continued to stay fit through some cycling, swimming and running.

“It wasn't really until the pandemic that I started to run more – it was my daily thing,” she says. “Then I found that I wanted to do my [regular running] loops faster, or longer.

“I signed up for a marathon [with some friends] as a training goal. That's when we decided to do some more specific stuff, such as intervals.

“I really enjoyed seeing so much progression in the beginning and I liked it so much that when I came home, it was not finished. I tried to look up information [about running] and I started to get a bit obsessed. I have been doing sports my whole life. I had just never considered running as a [main] sport.”

The target race Brinkman had signed up for was the Amsterdam Marathon. When that was cancelled due to Covid, she and her friends opted not to let the training go to waste and ran the race virtually in Zurich. She ran 2:39. “That's when I realised I was quite good,” she adds. “I decided to contact a coach.”

Benjamin Ueltschi had been leading the university group of which Brinkman was a part and, besides being a good friend, he also became the subject of some further questioning from a runner with a huge appetite for information.

“I started asking him for tips,” adds Brinkman of the inquiries which turned out to be perfectly timed. “He was looking to get experience of training an individual and I was looking for a coach. It was a win win. We're still good friends and having a laugh sometimes but we're also doing the hard work.”

It's a recipe which is working. The pair joined forces in February 2021 and it was only a handful of months later that Brinkman further signalled her athletic ability by winning the Zermatt Marathon, an uphill Alpine challenge which is as difficult as it sounds.

Then came that run in Valencia, before last year saw her not only finish second at the Rotterdam

Marathon but also break the national record in the process, with a run of 2:22:51. Last summer brought the bronze medal at the European Championships in Munich, too, but the success didn't stop there. Brinkman secured more off-road honours by winning the Golden Trail World Series in Madeira.

The upward trend has continued this year, too, as she lowered her half marathon PB to 67:44 in Den Haag, but it is her next assignment which has raised her excitement levels most. She is about to experience a marathon major – in this case the Boston Marathon – for the first time. “I've heard so many stories about it,” she grins.

Not only will it be a chance to test herself against the world's best, it will be another chance to rub shoulders with her celebrated team-mate, Kipchoge, alongside whom she had found herself working.

During a trip to the NN Running Team training camp in Kaptagat earlier this year, Brinkman was enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation when the double Olympic champion appeared.

“He showed up with this tree and a nameplate,” she says. The plate had Brinkman's name on it. “There are many trees planted [in the camp] from different athletes who have their signs and now I was given my own sign. It was really cool.”

So, too, was the chance to plant the tree with Kipchoge and Kipyegon. The visit to Kenya, in fact, proved to be valuable for a number of reasons.

“It's really inspiring, because you realise how successful they are and how little they need to be that successful and how humble they are,” says Brinkman of the esteemed company she was keeping. “They just accept you and what I like is that it's a really basic routine, but it works.

“The attention is on the group and not just the individual. You are trying to listen to your body and nobody judges you if you go slower or nobody judges you if you go faster. I realised that there's no magic recipe [for everyone], you just have to find the magic recipe for your body.”

With her PhD in geophysics having been completed in December, Brinkman is now a full-time athlete and, allied with the support from the NN Running Team set-up, is noticing a big difference.

There are still some “pinch me” moments, though.

“No, I don't believe [how quickly I've progressed],” she says. “I remember clearly looking to the front [in races] and wondering how they could go so fast but now it's me in the elite group. I love it.” **AW**



MOVING

TARGET

PHOTO COURTESY OF WMTRC 2021 CHIANGMAI



Kris Jones explains to **Katy Barden** why competing across a broad spectrum of events – be it on the track, on the roads or in the mountains – keeps him motivated and means he’s always learning

"E

ven the very best performers, when they do a skill over and over, don't do it the same each time," explains international athlete Kris Jones, referring to his PhD elevator

pitch. "If you've got a golfer on a driving range and they're hitting shots, the very best golfers don't hit the same every time. It's about flexibility and adaptation and learning different options.

"Rather than just having one option to hit a certain shot, they have many different ways of doing it, whereas a beginner more often has fewer ways – so

if they end up in a slightly different position or a slightly different level of tiredness, they don't get the same result, whereas the better performer does."

Jones has never played golf, but his day job, which leans slightly more toward sports engineering than the biomechanics of his PhD, involves equipment research and testing for the R&A, a leading body within the sport.

He says it's good to have something to focus on outside of running yet, to the neutral observer, there are many parallels between what he's learned from golf and the theory behind his own training and success. ▷



BELOW: Kris Jones competing for Great Britain at the European Cross Country Championships

Jones, who has represented Great Britain and Northern Ireland in athletics (road, track, cross country and trail running) and orienteering, is an incredibly consistent and versatile athlete. Highlights in recent years include a 12th place at the European Cross Country Championships – contributing to team silver – and a personal best of 63:05 at the World Half Marathon Championships in 2020.

Over the last 12 months he has run a 2:17:51 debut marathon, finished fifth in the 40km trail race at the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships, and finished second as part of a team in the Sprint Relay at the World Orienteering Championships. He had placed third in the individual sprint event but was later disqualified.

Yet, in spite of some obvious highlights, he didn't achieve what he set out to in 2022.

The Dundee-based Swansea Harrier had been targeting Wales selection for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. He had the 10,000m standard – a PB of 28:23.50 from 2021 – which he backed up with a 28:48.33 in May 2022, but it wasn't enough.

He had also targeted the podium at the World Orienteering Championships, an event in which he'd never won an individual medal at global level previously, but his subsequent disqualification for not registering at one of the controls – "I was maybe 10m from it, I just forgot," he says – destroyed that ambition.

"I didn't achieve either of the goals, but I keep telling myself that doesn't really matter," he reflects. "They were both difficult goals and just trying was enough. Especially for me, you can go back and

look at my *Power of 10* profile from my early 20s and you'd never have picked me out as someone who would have been in the frame for a Commonwealth team, so just to be there... I think you have to look back to see that's pretty cool, actually.

"My 2022 was still a lot of fun. I pushed myself, learned a lot and made lots of great memories. I have more goals for 2023, but I'm here for the journey."

The 32-year-old is a prime example of pragmatism, patience and perspective. His ability to reset following a major championship or significant race and then refocus on the next challenge is admirable. It's an approach, or perhaps more of a mentality, that athletes of all levels could benefit from as they build towards personal goals and the inevitable comedown that follows.

The World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in Thailand hadn't been on Jones' plan, but his Commonwealth Games disappointment triggered a mindset change that brought off-road success before re-adjusting to the roads and a debut over 26.2 miles in Seville in February this year.

"I'd initially planned a season after the World Orienteering Champs where I was going to do a few track races [to build up to the Commonwealth Games]," says the self-coached athlete. "I basically decided I didn't want to do that. Mentally I wouldn't have been in the right place. I'd have felt like I was trying to prove myself to someone else. I'd have been racing with a chip on my shoulder and it would have been an unpleasant thing to do mentally."





KRIS JONES ON PLAYING THE LONG GAME

"If you look at me in my early 20s, I was a really good orienteer [GB level], but as a runner I was nothing special – I was a good club runner. I had this bucket list goal that one day I'd run for Wales. I think I got my first Wales vest around 2016 and a lot of the stuff I've done since then was never on my radar.

"If you look back at my training from that time it wasn't anything special. What I've realised in the last five or six years is that if you give it enough time and have the patience, you can do the things you'd never expect of yourself.

"I'm sure I could have run a better marathon in Seville had I been less conservative, pushed harder and done more mileage and bigger sessions, but it comes with a risk of getting ill or injured and I didn't want to take on any of that risk.

"I don't really mind because I know I've left myself a lot of stuff I can do in the future. If I'd gone into my first marathon and run 120 miles a week and done 15-mile tempos, I could have run a great first marathon, but where would I go from there, am I then having to run 130-mile weeks? I think that was my approach with the training, that I'm not training to run a good marathon now, I'm hopefully training to run a good marathon in two or three attempts."

ABOVE: Kris Jones competes across a range of disciplines

Instead, he entered the Scafell Pike Trail Marathon, a race he won by four minutes in a course record of 3:27:25. His primary motivation was that his wife was doing it, but it was also as far away from running on the track as he could get. He hadn't initially realised it was the trial race for the World Championships and he didn't think too much of it.

"I didn't go into it with the aim of getting selected," says Jones. "It was more just an aim of enjoying doing a race that was completely different and with a healthy dose of respect for the guys I was racing against. I knew that I had a lot of qualities that would make me good at it but, equally, this is their bread and butter.

"Once I was selected [for Thailand] I just looked at it as a great opportunity, something to make the most of, because you don't get to do things like that very often. When I think about why I run, it's like, yes I'm very competitive and I like to do well and win races and run fast, but equally, running has given me so many different experiences over the years and to be able to go to Thailand – I'd never been to Asia before – and do a race where there were so many unknowns...you've just got to realise what a great opportunity that is and just to enjoy it and try to run as well as possible."

His approach to training appears similar to the theory behind his PhD, and to quote his elevator pitch, "flexibility, adaptation and learning different options" are integral to his every move.

As an orienteer his ability to run on different surfaces has contributed to Jones' adaptability, but it's his commitment to the basics, making slight alterations to maximise his racing capability and options for execution, that works for him.

"If I can get good volume in the week, a good amount of threshold or tempo running, some strides and a good long run, then actually I'm pretty well prepared to go and do pretty much anything," he says.

"For Thailand the long run became a bit hillier, but for Seville the long run became a bit faster. You change small things. I've had this kind of approach for the last six months that it's not about the event, it's trying to nail the basics – good, solid B+ training – which will hopefully stand me in good stead in the future, rather than make it high pressure.

"Okay, maybe I'll get to things and I'll think I could have prepared a bit better. Thailand went better than I thought, Seville probably went a little bit worse than I thought, but it's aiming for the consistency, the good not great, and to try and learn and have experiences.

"I think what drives me in running is curiosity. You don't necessarily have to stick at the same thing. Maybe the orienteering gives me a bit more ability to do that, but you can focus on the track for a bit then go and run the hills, then the speed you gain from the track helps you on the hills, then the strength you gain from the hills helps you on the track. There's so much to do in running, I just want to find a thread that interests me and pull on it and see how far I can go." **AW**

BATTLING THE BARKLEYS

It's an event of just 40 runners which takes place in Tennessee woodland and was inspired by a prison break. So why has the Barkley Marathons captured so much attention? **Adrian Stott** speaks to two athletes who have come under its spell

In the world of ultra running, the Barkley Marathons in Tennessee has developed an almost cult-like mystique. First officially run in 1986, the profile of the event, which takes place in Frozen Head

State Park and was inspired by a prison break, grows every year – yet the size of the field hasn't.

The 2023 staging took place last month and sparked intense chatter throughout the global running community – quite a trick for a challenge which features only 40 runners starting in a small car park in the woods.

To complete the challenge, competitors must cover five loops of a gruelling course which has a total elevation gain of 60,000 feet and event creator Gary "Lazarus Lake" Cantrell claims is around 20 miles – though many believe it be closer to 26.

On top of that, during each loop – run in alternating directions – the participants visit checkpoints where there is a hidden book from which they must tear out numbered pages and return them to Cantrell. Only 17 people have managed to complete the task in the history of the event.

Among those taking on the Barkleys this year were British ultra athletes Damian Hall and Jasmin Paris. Hall, an ambassador for *inov-8*, completed four laps while Paris made it through three.

It is an intense experience unlike any other and seems to generate as much interest as the larger corporate events like the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc (UTMB), which features nearly 10,000 entrants in a week-long festival of eight races.

Hall and Paris have run both events so *AW* caught up with them to get their thoughts on how these tests of endurance compare. ▷

PHOTO: @INOV_8/DAVIDMILLERPHOTOGRAPHY

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**YOU ONLY HAVE
TO MAKE A SMALL
MISTAKE AND THE
CONSEQUENCES
ARE PRETTY HUGE**

Can you describe the start of the Barkleys compared with UTMB?

Damian Hall: The Barkleys is an almost intimate feeling. It just feels like a few friends have gathered together at a car park in the woods to go for a run. UTMB is so different, with thousands of runners and supporters lining the streets, all the commercial infrastructure of an urban location and music blaring out getting everyone too excited. I like the buzz at UTMB but it's so different.

Jasmin Paris: I think the same kind of feeling. I prefer the more intimate feeling at the Barkleys versus the UTMB. UTMB is exciting, but the Barkleys is just a different challenge.

What sort of feeling do you get when you're out on the course at either event?

JP: At UTMB, you're rarely alone, which is odd for a race of that length. There is usually someone in front or coming up behind you, or there are spectators around. Even in the middle of the night there can be people with cowbells and an accordion on the top of a mountain. You don't have much time to get lost in the loneliness, whereas the Barkleys is different. In the first loop, you might be around people but the chance of being with people is slim. At the Barkleys, it's really quiet and still, there's lots of time for you to think your thoughts as you're racing on your own.

DH: The Barkleys is a much quieter, lonely experience. At UTMB, I've loved the crowd stuff and they have been motivating to me at times. The Barkleys is harder in that respect because there's almost no-one there to cheer you. It's quite a pure experience.

Compare finishing the UTMB and the Barkleys finish camp.

DH: The bit that stays with me is finishing the fourth loop at the Barkleys, knowing I would have time to start on a fifth. I just felt supported by people like Jared Campbell, the three-time finisher who was there waiting to fist-bump me. Honestly, it was like a dream. There were maybe 20 people at the absolute most. Very intimate. UTMB, with all the razz and music and people lining the streets, is so different and I like it in a different way.

JP: When I finished the UTMB, I was on that last summit and there was a massive storm and everybody disappeared. So there weren't very many people there at all. I didn't get that whole "running in through crowds of people" experience. I preferred the Barkleys finish. That race tests you in so many different ways. UTMB is a test of your running and racing ability. The Barkleys is testing you on lots of levels, especially the ability to push through when it gets really hard on your own.

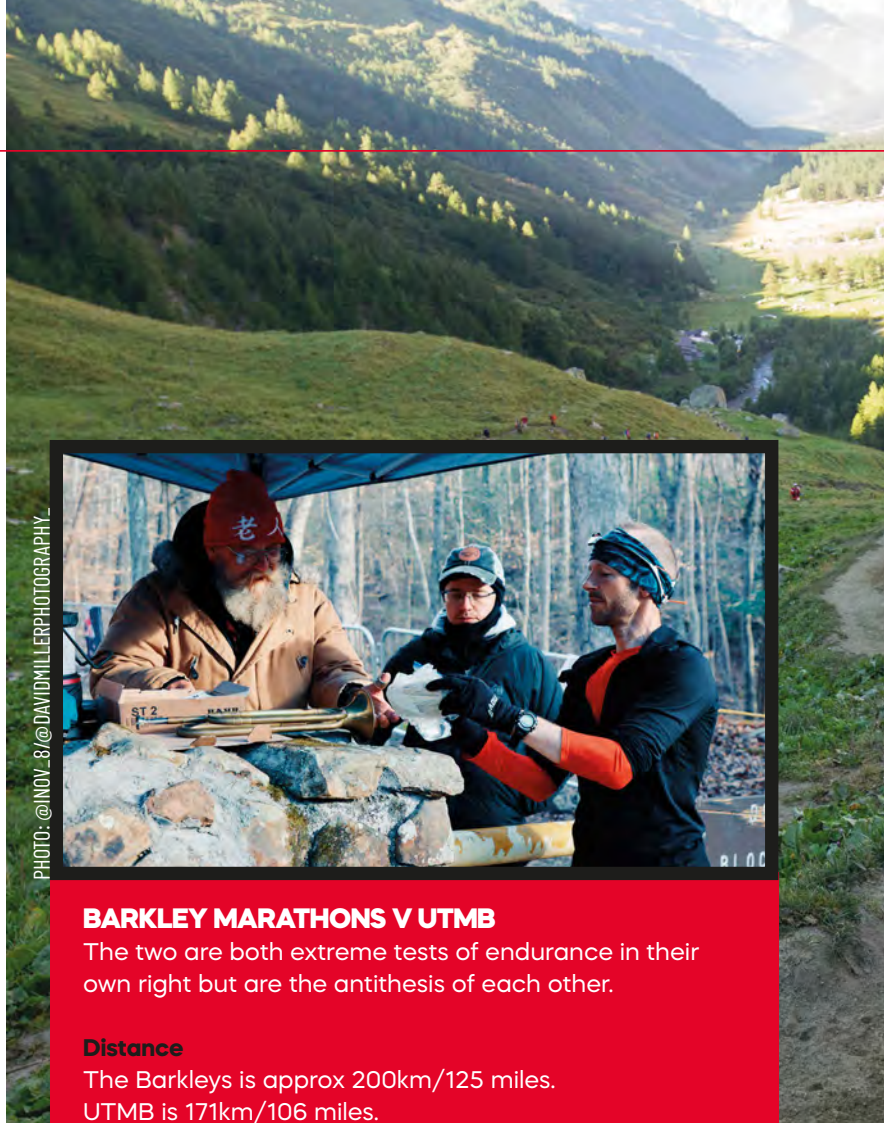


PHOTO: @NOV_81@DAVIDMILLERPHOTOGRAPHY

BARKLEY MARATHONS V UTMB

The two are both extreme tests of endurance in their own right but are the antithesis of each other.

Distance

The Barkleys is approx 200km/125 miles.
UTMB is 171km/106 miles.

Elevation

The Barkleys: 16,500m/54,000 feet.
UTMB: 9,963m/32,700 feet.

Time limit

The Barkleys: 60 hours.
UTMB: 46 hours, 30 minutes.

Competitors

The Barkleys: Maximum 40. Only 17 athletes have completed the full course in the history of the event
UTMB: Approximately 10,000 entries over eight races

Entry fee

Barkley: \$1.60 or €1.47
UTMB: \$387 or €355

The Barkleys doesn't have a website. Finding out how to enter is part of the challenge.

UTMB seems unashamedly corporate by comparison. Entry, unless you qualify as an elite, is a complicated system of collecting running stones by entering other UTMB series events around the world, or having a UTMB Index, followed by a lottery. Collecting more stones increases your chance in the lottery.

The courses are also wildly different. UTMB is a well-marked long circular route. It is a pretty runnable trail route, with well-stocked aid stations along the way. The Barkleys is an unmarked five-loop course where navigation skills are essential to finding the checkpoints. GPS watches and phones are not allowed. There are two water points on the loop, with support only allowed at the car park area at the end of each loop.



PHOTO: JAMES MACKEDDIE / INOY-8

As Damian said, there won't be that many people there but they're connected to you in some way and understand what you have been through. You have this affinity or shared experience that brings you close to people. I feel like, at the Barkleys, almost everybody that's there waiting at the finish line has been through what you went through in some way. It's so unique and different, it gives you this common ground that's difficult to find in life elsewhere.

I think when people run the UTMB they do feel something of that when they finish. A common feeling of finishing a big effort. At the Barkleys, that's magnified simply because the outside world doesn't understand what it is to run that race.

Which is the more challenging, UTMB or the Barkleys?

DH: Oh, it's got to be the Barkleys. It was the mental focus you need. At UTMB you can largely switch off and you don't have to do too much thinking. At the Barkleys, you have to be mentally alert all the time. The mental part is so hard, which is probably where I failed. Sixty hours of concentrating is huge. The terrain, too, as it's slow which makes it tough.

JP: I agree it has to be the Barkleys. You only have to make a small mistake and the consequences are pretty huge. On my last loop, I made a small error at the start of my descent that meant that I ended up in a completely different line and I wasted a lot of time,

then I hit the stream and I didn't know which way to go.

You're both involved with the Green Runners and looking at ways runners can reduce their carbon footprint. When you look at the Barkleys and then the UTMB, do you feel organisers care about sustainability? Or is the Barkleys like a local fell race where you turn up in a car park and you just put £2 in a Tupperware box?

JP: That's exactly what the Barkleys feels like and it makes the race's carbon footprint very low.

DH: With the caveat that I have just flown my first flight in four years, I think a lot of races, whether it's deliberate or not, don't seem to understand that the biggest element of their carbon footprint, sometimes 80 or 90 per cent, is the participant travel.

While getting rid of plastic bottles is good – and UTMB were one of the first major events to start encouraging bringing your cup or bottle and looking after the trails and the ecology – they're not nearly as worthwhile as trying to lessen emissions from travel, especially if flights are involved.

If races could incentivise travel by giving a discount entry for train or car travel that would be nice. Runners can also assess if there is an alternative to flying to an event.

JP: Another point I'd raise is that I understand that the UTMB system for getting an entry is that you have an increased chance of getting in the lottery if you've collected running stones. These are acquired by running other UTMB series races all across the world. That's one of the reasons I don't want to run the UTMB again, at least not until that changes.

I don't want to support a system where they're incentivising people to travel the world for multiple races. They might be exciting races, but I think we should be trying to focus on being more selective and travelling less. The Barkleys isn't asking you to fly around the world to do different races to get in as part of their race series. **AW**

FAR LEFT: Damian Hall hands in his book pages to Gary Cantrell

LEFT: Jasmin Paris tackling the UTMB

BELOW: the UTMB is far removed from the Barkleys



PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES



NEWS

Taking a look at the latest developments in the pursuit of improvement

OLIVE OIL BY-PRODUCT COULD HAVE BIG BENEFITS

New research has found that a natural by-product of olive oil production could potentially have antioxidant benefits and support exercise.

The study, led by nutrition researchers at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and published in the journal *Nutrients*, is the first to examine the benefits of natural olive fruit water for recreationally active people.

Olives contain polyphenols which have antioxidant properties, and a commercially available olive fruit water product, called *OliPhenolia* was used in this study, which involved 29 recreationally active participants.

They consumed either *OliPhenolia* or a placebo over 16 consecutive days, and the study found positive effects on several key markers of running performance.

OliPhenolia consumption improved respiratory parameters at the onset of exercise as well as oxygen consumption and

running economy at lower levels of intensity. Respiratory parameters at higher intensity were largely unaffected, but perceived exertion – how hard participants thought their body was working – was improved, as was acute recovery following incremental exercise.

Lead author Dr Justin Roberts, Associate Professor in Health & Exercise Nutrition at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), said: “For a long time I’ve been interested in the exercise benefits of polyphenols, such as those derived from cherries and beetroot. To gain similar benefits from olives you would have to consume large quantities daily, which isn’t realistic, so we were keen to test this concentrated olive fruit water.

“We now intend to carry out further research. We are also looking to investigate whether this product can be used for marathon training and recovery, as well as test its effectiveness in suppressing inflammation associated with exercise.”



PRESSURE IMPAIRS PERFORMANCE

Analysis of data from the Tokyo Olympics has shown that even world-class competitors are not immune to pressure affecting their performance.

During the 2021 Games, the heart rates of competitors in the archery competitions were measured and broadcast as they took their shot at Olympic gold. Analysis of this data by Yunfeng Lu (Nanjing University) and Songfa Zhong (National University of Singapore, New York University Abu Dhabi) and published in *Psychological Science* supported the theory that, when the heat is on, results can be impaired.

For this study, Lu and Zhong focused on individual competitions, during which the heart rates of 122 male and female archers were broadcast as they took 2247 shots. It

found that athletes whose heart rates were higher before taking a shot consistently scored lower on those shots.

While archers' age and gender were not found to significantly influence the relationship between stress and performance, a number of other factors did. There was a stronger relationship between stress and performance closer to the end of each match, for example, possibly due to the increase in pressure as athletes progressed in the competition, the authors wrote.

"Elite athletes usually receive training to manage psychological stress, but our results suggest that they continue to be subject to the influence of psychological stress," wrote Lu and Zhong, who intend to extend their work into other sports.

ALMONDS AID MUSCLE RECOVERY

A randomised controlled trial in *Frontiers in Nutrition* has shown that female and male participants who ate 57g of almonds daily for one month had more beneficial fat in their blood immediately after a session of intense exercise than control participants.

The fat molecule in question has a beneficial effect on metabolic health and energy regulation.

Corresponding author Dr David C Nieman, a professor and director of the Appalachian State University Human

Performance Laboratory at the North Carolina Research Campus, said: "Here we show that volunteers who consumed 57g of almonds daily for one month before a single 'weekend warrior' exercise bout had more beneficial 12,13-DiHOME in their blood immediately after exercising than control volunteers. They also reported feeling less fatigue and tension, better leg-back strength, and decreased muscle damage after exercise than control volunteers." **AW**



PRODUCT FOCUS



HYPERICE VENOM 2 BACK

Hyperice.com

£269.00

Having recently suffered from a "pull" in my lower back, this product proved very timely in its arrival for testing.

Designed to help provide relief from sore muscles, the Venom 2 uses both heat and vibration to increase circulation and improve mobility.

After visiting a chiropractor for some treatment, the Venom 2 was almost like having the practitioner on hand throughout the following days.

The adjustable wrap fits around the lower back and is powered by a built-in rechargeable battery.

It heats almost instantly and, with multiple levels of vibration available, the percussion effect is great at easing away the tension.

An app adds a great level of treatment prescription and such has been the device's benefit I've found myself using it pre-run to help with warm-up and stiffness from day-to-day activities.

Katy Barden speaks to a distance athlete who is keeping her options open after experiencing a rapid rise since bursting on to the athletics scene

HOW THEY TRAIN

SAMANTHA HARRISON

AGE: 26 **COACH:** VINCE WILSON

Samantha Harrison's performance trajectory continues to move upwards. The steep growth that characterised her explosion on to the athletics scene four years ago has been replaced with more of a gradual progression, but the top-end impact has greater significance.

Harrison will line up for this month's TCS London Marathon with the goal of running sub-2:26:50, the World Athletics qualification standard for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

It's considerably quicker than the 2:32:22 she achieved in 2021, but her circumstances have changed for the better since her impressive breakthrough over 26.2 miles. The Charnwood athlete is now supported by the England Athletics Talent Hub at Loughborough University and has reduced her working hours as a dental nurse to one day per week. To all intents and purposes, she is now a professional athlete.

"It's been a crazy few years, to be honest," says the 28-year-old who placed sixth in the 10,000m at the European Championships and Commonwealth Games last summer. "In terms of being an athlete, how much I've learned and how much I've progressed and developed, it's completely different.

"Now I've got no excuses not to do everything I should be doing – the warming up, the cooling down, the fuelling and the recovery – because I've got the time. I look back now [to working full-time] and I think, 'How was I able to do all of that and recover as well?'"

Harrison is coached by Vince Wilson, the man who has guided her since the start of her meteoric rise. They've gradually opened the doors of their successful partnership to welcome

other runners, including John Beattie and Calli Thackery, who can support her and help maximise her potential.

"Vince knows I perform better and I enjoy it when I'm in groups and I'm always open to training with people," says Harrison. "Sometimes I jump in a session with Rob Denmark's group alongside Melissa Courtney-Bryant and Amy-Eloise Markovc. When they're in their winter training they'll do slightly longer reps, like kilometre or mile reps, and I'll lead those out, then they'll lead the shorter reps out, so we're working with each other's strengths, really."

After substantial performance gains in her first few years as a serious runner, Harrison, whose half marathon best is 67:17, is realistic about her future progression and event potential.

For the Olympic Games in Paris, her aim is to secure qualifying standards for both the 10,000m and the marathon by the end of this year, or the beginning of 2024 at the latest. In the short-term, she's hoping for a quick recovery post-London with a view to achieving the 10,000m qualifying time for the World Athletics Championships in Budapest this summer.

"Vince and I sit down every few weeks or few months and ask, 'What can we do now? How do we up this game?'" she says. "In the build-up to Paris next year, we're deciding what we're focusing on and it's like, 'How do we get from this to this?'"

"The marathon is such an unpredictable distance so I've not put all my eggs into one basket with London – or with the marathon itself – because I think I've still got so much to give over other distances. I really didn't think I'd run 30:50 [for 10km] so soon and now I have, so I feel like I've got to make the most of that... although I do think the marathon is something I'll probably settle on in the future." **AW**





A TYPICAL TRAINING WEEK

MARATHON BUILD-UP

Harrison, whose 30:51 10km in Valencia in January ranks her fourth on the British all-time list, says she's become mentally, as well as physically, stronger over the past 12 months.

"I learned a lot about character building during this race," she wrote on social media following the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon in February. "Grinding it out when the going gets tough is becoming one of my number one strengths."

She is also benefiting from a more structured approach to strength training since reducing her working hours and goes to the gym three times per week, in addition to her core running sessions.

- ◆ **Monday:** double run day at easy/relaxed pace around 6:30/mile pace. For example: (am) 12 miles; (pm) 4 miles
- ◆ **Tuesday:** easy day with one run around 14 miles (approx 6:15/mile)
- ◆ **Wednesday:** long tempo or track session such as 10 x 1mile on track off 60-70sec recovery
- ◆ **Thursday:** (am) 14 miles approx; (pm) 4-5 miles (both runs around 6:30/6:40 pace)
- ◆ **Friday:** 10 miles in the evening (after work) at easy pace
- ◆ **Saturday:** (am) track session such as 1km-1.2km-2km-2.4km-2km-1.2km-1km (recoveries get shorter as session progresses down to 30sec) or mile reps/400s, or 1km reps; (pm) 4-5miles easy/recovery pace (7-7:30/mile)
- ◆ **Sunday:** long run of 20-23miles. "The pace depends on who I'm running with or where we do the run," says Harrison, but it's usually between 6-6:30/mile.

Favourite session

"Mile reps and 400s such as one mile (60sec rest) - 4 x 400m (off 45-50sec) x 3-4 sets. It's brilliant, it's an anaerobic and aerobic workout."

Least favourite session

"Some kind of 5km threshold and then finish with 1km reps or something like that, just absolutely brutal," she laughs. "It feels great when you're finished your session, but when you look at it on paper you're like, 'oh wow, that's like race pace'."

RACING THE MARATHON

In this extract from his new book, elite coach and Olympian **Mark Coogan** offers his advice on how to realise your potential

It's often said that the marathon doesn't really start until 20 miles. I agree that most of the hard work happens in the final 10km. But you still have to run the first 20 miles!

I believe that you can't win a distance track race in the first 400m, but you can lose it then.

One challenge in the marathon is remembering that "the first 400m" in this case means something more like "the first 10 miles".

That's a long time to be patient but absolutely the right approach. If you go out too fast in a 5km or 10km, you'll slow by a matter of seconds per mile toward the end.

Running too aggressively early in the marathon can mean slowing more than a minute per mile for the final several miles.

Running even pace is your best bet if you're mostly focused on time. Some people advise running slightly faster than goal pace for the first half, to account for the inevitable slowing in the final few miles. I don't think it helps to put too much time in the bank like that. The risk of going too fast early on and then having to slow more than you planned is high.

Of course, your pace is likely to fluctuate, because of things like uphill and downhill

stretches, turns, wind direction, navigating to get drinks and the reality that few of us are metronomes.

If a mile split is suddenly 10 seconds slower than what you've been running, don't freak out. Stay confident and stay on task. If that last mile had a hill or headwind, then you're likely to make up that time later on a downhill or when the wind is at your back.

If, in the second half of the race, you're consistently slower than goal pace don't let it destroy your willpower. It can be hard to think clearly once you start to get really tired.

My first marathon was at Boston in 1994. I was running really well up until around 22 miles.

Then deep fatigue set in. I ran a 5:30 mile after averaging a little over 5:00 per mile, or 2:12 marathon pace, until then. I panicked. "5:30? That's like 2:25 pace. Am I going to run 2:25?"

Obviously, I wasn't going to lose more than 10 minutes in the last few miles.

But I was so tired that I didn't immediately realise that, and I went negative in my head. That hurt me because I lost some of that drive to bear down as best I could the rest of the way.

I still ran decently – 2:13:24, the second-fastest marathon of my career – but I might have been able to run 2:12 if I'd quickly realised my maths error and stayed positive. ▷

If you do a great job of pacing yourself early on, the first 18 or so miles shouldn't be a strain.

Hopefully you'll just feel like you're running under control, doing occasional body checks to keep your form relaxed, and staying upbeat with lots of positive self-talk.

Somewhere between 18 and 20 miles you're probably going to start getting tired. Dehydration and depletion will start to be issues, and you might start feeling a little muscle damage.

The best thing you can do from this point, when the free ride of the early miles is undeniably over, is to have prepared for it mentally.

Visualise this crucial spot before the race. Tell yourself: "I know I'm going to be tired around 18. I'm not going to freak out and think 'eight miles to go?'"

That's where I'm going to remind myself of all the hard work I did to get here and remind myself why this is important to me. I'm going to stay on top of it and stay positive, no matter how badly it hurts.

Then take the rest of the race one mile at a time. You'll be able to run stronger and stay more positive if you just concentrate on running your current mile the best you can.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking about the total distance that remains and how long that might take you.

Your energy level and enthusiasm will likely fluctuate in the final miles. Don't assume that a bad patch will stay bad the rest of the way. If you can weather those patches, soon you'll be able to tell yourself something like "just one more mile" or "just 15 more minutes." Then bear down and complete the job the best you can.

Marathon lessons

Marathons are tough to get right. One of my more memorable bad ones is the 1998 Chicago Marathon.

The problem for me at that race was that there was a very elite group up front who planned to set

out at world record pace, which I was never close to being able to run.

There were also a lot of guys with personal bests around 2:20, which was too slow for my plans. Rod DeHaven, who would go on to run the 2000 Olympic marathon, and I were sort of stuck in no-man's-land in terms of pace. We decided to run 2:11 pace (5:00 per mile) for as long as we could.

Rod and I were good friends and occasional training partners, and we agreed to take turns pacing, alternating who led every mile. Rod and I took turns doing this for the first 18 or so miles. In a perfect world I would never be the person trying to keep the pace at 5:00 a mile. I would hope to be able to just sit in a pack and run at a pace that seems comfortable and manageable.

When I made the Olympic team two years earlier, that's exactly what I did (more on that shortly). Rod's and my 5:00-per-mile goal pace may have felt comfortable that day if I didn't have to be the one making sure we stayed on it every other mile. But, with just the two of us, it became increasingly difficult to move in front of Rod and reliably hit 5:00 pace. Sometimes a mile would be into the wind or have a few turns in it.

I think by leading every other mile I used up lots of my willpower and mental strength early in the race. I became tired too early and the last 10km was a disaster.

I bonked. I think I ran the last few miles at 6:30-per-mile pace. I finished 20th in 2:15:33, two-and-a-half minutes slower than my PB, and more than four minutes slower than what Rod and I had hoped to run.

If I did this race again, I wouldn't try to run 2:11, even though that's what I think I was capable of running. Leading every other mile at 2:11 pace might be like running 2:08 pace in the back of a pack.

I was not a 2:08 guy! If I ran the race today, I would probably suggest to Rod that we run 2:15 pace for the first 20 miles, and then do a body check and see if we could pick the pace up the last few miles. I paid the price by forcing the issue in the race.

I didn't relax and run in a zone that would have been successful for me. I forced the issue and the marathon won. Sometimes it's best not to get so caught up on time and just race.

If I had done so that year in Chicago, it would have been a more enjoyable experience, and I would have wound up running faster.

The 1996 Olympic Marathon Trials was one of the best and most rewarding races I ran at any distance. I set myself up to succeed in that February 1996 race by what I did in 1995.

In March 1995, I won the silver medal in the marathon at the Pan American Games. I quickly switched to track-racing mode. That

RIGHT: Mark Coogan (left) celebrates his qualification for the 1996 Olympic marathon

BELOW: Mark Coogan's training group is based in Boston





THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO, WHEN THE FREE RIDE OF THE EARLY MILES IS OVER, IS TO HAVE PREPARED FOR IT MENTALLY. VISUALISE THIS CRUCIAL SPOT BEFORE THE RACE. TELL YOURSELF: 'I KNOW I'M GOING TO BE TIRED AROUND 18 MILES. I'M NOT GOING TO FREAK OUT'

June, I finished second at the US 5000m championship, which qualified me for the World Championships in August 1995.

After the worlds, I began my Olympic Trials build-up in the fall. I visualised a lot that fall and winter. I was trying to see myself making the team and racing smart.

The field was full of great runners, including former 10km world-record holder Arturo Barrios, 1993 world marathon champion Mark Plaatjes, and Ed Eyestone and Bob Kempainen, who had been on the 1992 Olympic Marathon team (Ed was also on the 1988 Olympic squad in the event).

I felt that Bob was the favourite after his 2:08 at Boston in 1994. I told myself that Bob always ran smart and wouldn't make a stupid mistake. When the race started, I fell into the lead pack and kept track of where Bob and a few other top guys were.

One person who wasn't really a favourite shot out to a decent lead early on, which made me a little nervous, because I didn't know who he was. I just kept telling myself: "You're good, he'll come back, just stay with the lead pack."

Eventually we caught the early leader and the race was on. Somewhere around 17 or 18 miles, Bob put in a surge that probably lasted about 800m. I immediately said to myself, "Give it a mile to reel him in; you're okay, Mark."

Once I got back up with Bob, he made another move, and I knew I had to match it because it was time to make the Olympic team.

After 20 miles, Bob, Keith Brantly and I were clear of everyone else. Bob threw in a 4:42 23rd mile, which is flying that late in the race.

It took everything I had mentally and physically to hold on. Bob eventually pulled away in the 24th mile – while throwing up! – and held the lead to the finish. So much for my track times giving me the edge over Bob late in the race.

Keith and I knew we were going to make the team and ran together until about half a mile to go. I kicked to claim second place and a lifetime best of 2:13:05.

I ran really smart in this race and stuck to my game plan. I knew it would get tough, and I was where I wanted to be when Bob made his move to win.

All the visualisation I'd done of that scenario was a big help, because when it happened in reality, I had already experienced it and knew what I was going to do.

Sometimes, things fall your way; you should try to capitalise on those opportunities. The Trials marathon was on a hilly course on a cold day, and I thrive on hills and love the cold.

Also, I got all my beverages during the race, and I never felt in danger of bonking. All these factors contributed to staying mentally positive the entire race and running the best marathon of my life. **AW**



Mark Coogan is a former Olympic marathon runner and is now coach to the elite New Balance team based in Boston. His book *Personal Best Running: Coach Coogan's Strategies for the Mile to the Marathon* is out now

HOW TO HIGH JUMP

Two-time world champion and double Olympic medallist Blanka Vlašić talks **Stuart Weir** through the intricacies of an event which requires speed, power, timing and great judgement



Being tall is not enough

There are many different types of high jumper. Compare Bohdan Bondarenko (1.98m tall) and Stefan Holm (1.81m). You have Kajsa Bergqvist (1.75m) and you have me (1.93m). Contrary to many people's opinion, it doesn't follow that if you are tall, you will be a good high jumper. You could equally argue that being tall makes it more difficult.

High jump is a technical, explosive event and one thing you definitely need is to be well co-ordinated.

Smaller high jumpers tend to need a faster approach, while the taller high jumpers don't need to be so fast because they have height. You might say some athletes are speed jumpers and others are power jumpers. Different body types have a different rhythm in approaching the bar.

Technique

The basic high jump technique is the same for everyone. There are some differences in style, but overall everyone is using the same "Fosbury Flop".

You have to obey certain basic rules. Take-off is from one leg – not two – and depending on whether you are right or left-handed, you approach the bar from the right or the left.

The power to jump is based on centrifugal force because you are running a bend. You are not running straight at the bar, you are leaning into the bend and using that centrifugal force during take-off.

It is important when running the bend to keep your hips high. It is like taking a stick and throwing it on to the ground to make it bounce. It will not bounce if it is broken, it has to be straight. You have to approach the

bar with your shoulders, your hips, your knees and your ankles aligned and straight.

Just before the take-off, athletes are trying to be a little bit away from the bar and that is the point at which you use that horizontal, centrifugal force and convert it into vertical force.

It is all about using your speed and your power in the right way so that on the approach you have maximum efficiency and everything you've had on the approach can be transformed into a vertical jump.

It is important to learn the technique early in your career as changing your technique later on is very hard. You need to practice, practice, practice in order to make your technique as automatic as possible because, during the competition, you don't want to have to think about detail. ▷



YOU ARE NOT RUNNING STRAIGHT AT THE BAR, YOU ARE LEANING INTO THE BEND AND USING THAT CENTRIFUGAL FORCE DURING TAKE-OFF

I would do 30 jumps per training session. Details are for training but, in competition, all I'm thinking is: "Are my hips high and am I running well? Am I too fast or too slow?" That is all. I'm trying to make every jump the same – consistency. If all my jumps are different it's impossible for my coach to tell me what to change!

In competition there is the temptation to be looking for more and to speed up but then you will probably completely lose your rhythm. It is such a technical event that you need to be as cool and relaxed as possible, keep to the same pace and rhythm and trust your technique. Do not try to change anything for a big competition.

The approach

The most important part is the approach – your rhythm and how you are running. If you are too fast there's a danger that your body will not handle the pressure of take-off, where the forces on you are around 300kg.

We train hard to be able to handle as much speed as possible but high jumpers are not

sprinters. You cannot sprint to the bar and still take off because you would create more force than you can handle at take-off. You start slower and over the last three or four steps make a progression towards the take-off.

High jump running is different from sprinting. We run with high knees and our steps are usually bigger than a sprinter's. When I came to the bar with my height of 1.93m, I was already pretty tall, so I never needed a really fast approach.

My run-up was 10 steps but it's all about personal style. The basic technique is the same for everyone taking off from one leg. More steps means that you develop more speed naturally. There should be a difference between the start, the middle and the end of your approach and at the end you need to be aggressive. Be aggressive on the last three steps when you need to push the surface.

If you push the surface hard it gives back to you. There needs to be gradual acceleration during the approach. Aggressive means that you are running with your feet intentionally grabbing the ground.

ABOVE: the approach to the bar is key in the high jump



ABOVE: Blanka Vlašić experienced great success throughout her career

Getting over the bar

People think that when you are over the bar in the bridge position you can still influence your result but actually it is too late by then. When you are in the air you are really just going with the flow, once you learn that technique over the bar.

When you are over the bar you cannot do much. What happens then is the result of what you did on your approach.

If you take off too close to the bar, there is a danger that you will hit it with your shoulder, so the run-up needs to be just right to put you in the correct take-off position so that you have plenty of space to do all you need to in the air and to develop the height needed to fly over the bar. It is impossible to develop the height if you are too close to the bar.

High jump is based on centrifugal force. I am the object and I am already moving in this curved way. I also need to have this curved position, leaning away from the centre of rotation.

So during the take-off from my left leg, I am leaning away from the bar. If you watch it in slow motion you will see that the right leg goes up, also a little bit away from the bar, helping you turn your whole body so that your back is on the bar. And your second leg is like a twister which twists your body so that you get into the right position over the bar with your back.

Saving vital energy

When I was feeling confident in my technique I would take two, maybe three, warm-up jumps. I would start at a height of 1.85m and aim to reach 2.00m in four jumps, using as little energy as possible. Early in the season I would usually start at 1.80m but, later in the season, with more jumps in my legs, I would start with 1.85m.

I would start easy, not putting maximum effort

into 1.85m. With high jump, you need to be at your best at the end of the competition. You're spending two hours in concentration, trying to save energy for the psychologically demanding end.

Jumping a personal best

People sometimes say "you are in good shape, you could break the world record today" but there are so many factors which determine the outcome – such as the length and intensity of the competition.

Sometimes you're battling a competitor at 2.00m and that can be mentally exhausting, so you're not fresh enough to have a chance with a world record. When I jumped 2.08m it was my fifth jump that day in a small field.

Feedback from my coach

At the beginning of my career I needed more feedback than later. Just by seeing with which part of my body I hit the bar, my coach would be able to tell me the reason. Over the years we learned to communicate with signs.

He might hold up two fingers pointing back to indicate that I needed to take two steps back at the start of the run-up or if my speed was too fast or too slow or he might point to his hips to remind me to keep my hips high. With technical instruction it was very simple for him to indicate what I was doing wrong.

There is another role for the coach and mine was brilliant at it. He is a really calm person, even during the most intense competition. Sometimes I would approach him just to feel his calm and his confidence.

I am a confident jumper but you always benefit from a boost from a person who knows you well. You just need someone to tell you "you can do it". I could see that he believed it and then I would believe it. **AW**



ASK THE PHYSIO

Paul Hobrough answers your questions and helps to solve your injury problems

I've just run my first ever marathon and not entirely sure how I should recover. What advice do you have and how long does it normally take?

How long it takes is dependent on a number of factors such as how much you train, how prepared you were and how hard you ran on the day. Assuming you've just come through the finish line, the best thing to do is to not just sit down and stay still, so you'll want to keep moving as much as possible.

I think what the question relates to is how you recover over time. I just want to spend a moment on those people who have marathons coming up later on in the spring and wonder what do you do straight afterwards. Just keep the body gently moving and, every 15-20 minutes, just get up and stretch your legs.

In terms of waking up the next day, you're going to be stiff but the rules of delayed onset muscle soreness

(DOMS) are that it tends to be slightly delayed from 36-48 hours. If you did the marathon on Sunday, that stiffness and soreness might be even worse for you on Tuesday than Monday. I like to think about things outside of running such as going swimming or even cycling. That's really good rehab.

Gentle stretching is great, just to get those muscles moving. Muscles are built upon cells which have something called sarcomere in them. Within a sarcomere there are these sliding filaments that slide over one another. So when you contract a muscle and it gets bigger in the middle, part of that is because of that sliding and becoming more dense.

After you've run a marathon, they've been contracting lots of times (up to 50,000) so you just need to gently stretch them out to make sure they're not compacted. Also go for little walks because the longer you sit down and lie in bed, the harder it is to get up each time.

You must stay hydrated as refuelling is so important and plays a massive part in how you feel. You shouldn't be in a massive rush to get back to running and it's not always a great idea. Your muscles need time to recover so let your body naturally recover with little movements.

The final thing would be to get some extra protein in your diet. Once you've done all of that then focus on 5km and 10km runs a few weeks after and, if you are doing a marathon in a few months' time again, gradually build yourself back up. Don't stop running completely and don't lose that wonderful fitness you built up during training for the marathon. That will enable you to likely get personal bests in events afterwards and, if you focus on a 5km for example, it will be a change-up to those slower tempo runs you do for the marathon.

How long does it take to fully recover? The likelihood is two to three weeks.

Would you agree that static stretching before exercise is worse for you than dynamic stretching? Or is a bit of both a wise idea?

What do we mean by static stretching? That's typically where you put the muscle under a stretch and hold it for a designated amount of time – around 30-60 seconds on average. A static stretch, some science has shown, can reduce the strength of the muscle. It's fairly acute – that is, it doesn't last long – so doing static stretching before going off to do a performance-type run might not be the best idea.

In that case, dynamic stretching is a better plan and it's about increasing the range of movement with exercises such as heel flicks, high knees and hip circles – they're like drills to prepare your body. The more contractions you do, the more heat you get into the muscle and the more quickly your blood flows through the body. You can start to develop the lengths of those fibres and that's a much better warm-up than just static stretching.

The same thing goes for having a massage before competition. Anything that takes the tone out of the muscle

too much can actually create a reduced level of performance, so I'm not entirely convinced by massaging or static stretching right before a performance run.

However, if you are just going for a steady state run I think it's fine to do static stretching as well. If you are, for example, doing a maximum lift with some weights – where you'd need that dynamic element to stretching – that would be very different to doing a steady 20-30min jog where you weren't worried by how forceful the leg contraction was.

Stretching and performance aside, what about if you have an injury and you know you have a tight calf muscle or quad on one side? In this case the static stretching is going to help a lot more than a dynamic stretch. So, when you ask is a bit of both a good idea, I'd argue it is when you have a tight muscle and would advocate doing a static stretch of the muscle which is tight and then dynamically stretch the other one.

To sum it up, I don't have a problem with static stretching if you have a tight muscle or if you are not aiming for a maximal muscle output in a specific workout or competition. **AW**



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CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

Paul Freary tests the super shoe race day options which could take your marathon running to the next level

SAUCONY

Sportsshoes.com

ENDORPHIN ELITE

£280.00

Taking their racing line one step further, the Elite sits above the Endorphin Pro in the Saucony carbon-plated race day offerings.

With a new midsole foam – *PWRRUN HG* – the shoe has a familiar, high-energy return feel but at the same time is a little more stable and slightly firmer than the Pro. The new carbon plate has a more aggressive toe-off and, combined with the *Speedroll* technology in the forefoot, creates a shoe that feels like it's propelling you along the road. This all requires you to be operating at a decent pace to start with but, once up to speed, the Elite feels incredible.

The upper is striking, too, with a broad midfoot strap holding the foot in place and featuring large cutaway sections to reduce weight. It's a great fit and allows plenty of airflow.

While being one of the more aggressive models around it's probably the easiest of this kind to get used to. Within a few miles it felt very natural and capable of covering the marathon distance without issue.



PUMA

Puma.com

DEVIATE NITRO ELITE 2

£175.00

The first version of Puma's carbon-plated racer was perhaps a little rushed to market but this updated model builds on that shoe and makes minor all-round improvements. It's lighter and the ride feels a little smoother, while the cushioning and "energy-return" comes from the Nitrogen-injected foam which also proves to be durable.

The full-length carbon plate is still there but feels a little less aggressive than in some models in this category, which makes the shoe better for the longer distance on the road, whereas some marathon shoes feel like they're better suited to the 5km!

The super-thin upper keeps the weight down and is highly breathable, while the brand's *PWRTAPE* technology adds structure and support for a great fit.





UNDER ARMOUR

FLOW VELOCITI ELITE

Underarmour.co.uk

£225.00

This shoe may be the last of the big-brand carbon-plated racers to hit the market but it's already race-proven thanks to a New York Marathon win last year from Sharon Lokedi.

With a carbon plate sandwiched between PEBAX-based and nitrogen-infused layers of foam, the cushioning is soft and smooth riding, while the plate provides the added spring.

Again, the plate here isn't too aggressive but perhaps that reflects the brand's focus on creating both a marathon shoe as well as one more capable of more frequent use.

The upper features a minimal and highly breathable mesh, with taped pieces added to create shape and support.

HOKA

ROCKET X 2

Hoka.com

£220.00

Finally, HOKA has delivered a shoe that combines a full-length carbon plate with modern foam. The dual-density PEBA-based foam is similar to that found in many of the brands and gives the shoe a responsive feel that puts the Rocket X2 on a more equal footing.

It's certainly HOKA's best racing shoe ever and instantly feels faster and more responsive than previous efforts.

The relatively low 5mm drop in the heel, combined with the soft feel of the foam, does make it a little unstable at slower speeds but remember this is a race shoe so it feels much better when the pace is picked up.

The upper is a lightweight, translucent synthetic mesh with a relatively slim fit and, with midfoot straps incorporated into the tongue, it provides a snug hold on the foot.

There's enough coverage on the sole from the rubber to provide good traction and ensure durability without adding weight.

With an existing large customer base from their current racing shoes, the Rocket X2 will be a welcome update and should prove popular.

MIZUNO

WAVE REBELLION PRO

Emea.mizuno

£200.00

With a strikingly aggressive design, the Rebellion Pro stands out from the crowd.

While it features a carbon-infused plate running through the midsole, the propulsive effect comes largely from the geometry of the midsole with its cutaway heel and large forefoot rocker.

At its deepest part, the stack of the shoe measures close to 50mm but the clever heel design ensures it meets World Athletics regulations. This deep stack and the rocker help create a pivot point that almost throws the foot forward.

It's certainly a shoe that feels fast from the moment you put it on and one that requires you to get up to speed to get the most out of it.

This model is aimed at marathon runners and it has shown great promise with some early adopters of it. From our experiences with it so far, it's certainly a fast and propulsive shoe over shorter distances and one in which we're looking forward to venturing out over the longer event.





BROOKS **HYPERION MAX**

Brooksrunning.com **£160.00**

Whilst not carbon-plated, this model does feature a substantial nitrogen-injected foam midsole. The *DNA FLASH* cushioning has a great “energy-return” feel when on the move which, when combined with the shoe’s unique midsole geometry, creates a reasonably aggressive gait cycle.

This all combines for a fast-feeling shoe that can handle daily miles with comfort.

The nitro-foam used by Brooks isn’t as soft as many of the competitors but that makes it more stable – something that may be a blessing for many runners.

The upper is lightweight and features laser-cut holes for breathability, while it’s a great fit, too. This is a great option for those seeking a fast and stable ride from a shoe that can be used for more than race day.



NEW BALANCE

FUELCELL SUPERCOMP ELITE V3

Newbalance.co.uk **£220.00**

Much more stable than the previous version of this shoe, the v3 feels the best yet. The FuelCell cushioning feels a little firmer and the overall shape has been tweaked. The foot seems to sit a little lower in the cushioning, almost cradled, and overall it feels more under control.

The *EnergyArc* carbon plate has a specific geometry and, combined with the voids in the midsole cushioning, it is allowed to sink a little into this space to create a better energy return.

A bootie design to the knitted mesh upper is beautifully shaped and wraps the foot incredibly well for a sock-like fit. Overall the balance of carbon and cushioning here feels spot on for the marathon distance. It’s a soft but responsive ride.

MARATHON KITBAG

FUEL

Science In Sport – Beta Fuel Gel
From £13.80

Scienceinsport.com

Delivering 40g of carbohydrates per Gel, these are designed to help limit gastrointestinal discomfort. The new formulation of 1:0.8 of maltodextrin to fructose increases the amount of ingested carbohydrates per serving for a more efficient delivery of fuel.

Maurten – Gel 100
£32.40 (pack of 12)

Maurten.com

Made with a biopolymer matrix these gels avoid the syrup-like texture and the mess (sticky fingers). Each 40g serving contains 60 per cent carbohydrates for a high weight-to-energy ratio.

HUEL – Professional Fuel
From £53.50

Uk.huel.com

Designed to offer all the nutritional benefits of a normal meal but in a super-quick and easy-to-make solution, this is perfect for refuelling after a training session. With 30g of protein, 26 vitamins and minerals, one serving will provide a balance of fat, protein and fibre.





ASICS

METASPEED EDGE+

Asics.com

£225.00

With two very similar carbon plate models, the Metaspeed Sky+ and Metaspeed Edge+, ASICS say the former is intended for runners who increase their stride length to speed up, whereas the Edge+ is intended for those who up their cadence to gather speed.

Physically the Edge has a slighter higher heel drop, 8mm to the 5mm of the Sky, and the carbon plate of the Edge has a slightly more curve to it in the forefoot.

I've found the Edge slightly better than the Sky in that it feels a little more aggressive and, with that higher heel drop, a little more suited to the longer distance.

Otherwise, both shoes feature the same great fitting upper and weigh in at a super-light 200g. Whichever you choose for the marathon you'll have the edge over a regular trainer.



NIKE

ALPHAFLY 2

Nike.com

£269.95

Still arguably the fastest marathon shoe on the planet, the Alphafly holds that crown thanks to Eliud Kipchoge. A new third generation of the shoe is on the way but, for now, the Alphafly features every piece of technology Nike have to help propel athletes to record-breaking performances.

ZoomX cushioning is soft and springy and, combined with a full-length carbon plate and twin Air unit, makes this model the king of the spring!

EYEWEAR



Oakley – Corridor **£152.00**

Oakley.com

Designed specifically with runners in mind, these semi-rimless glasses blend style with high functionality. The sticky noseband is engineered to reduce bobbing and the arms have a no-slip grip to keep them securely in place.

The Prizm lens is typical Oakley, ultra-stylish and available in a range of vibrant shades, all offering premium protection.

KIT

Tracksmith – London Singlet **£70.00**

Tracksmith.com

Available as part of a spring '23 marathon collection in men's and women's designs, the London collection echoes red, white and blue tones. Built with performance in mind the fabrics used are lightweight and moisture-wicking for optimal performance and a stylish look. **AW**





PHOTO BY DAVID HEWITSON

George Wilson (1554) on his way to U15 victory in Loughborough

RESULTS ROUND-UP

OVERSEAS

AUSTRALIA SRI CHINMOY 48-HOUR FESTIVAL Canberra, March 24-26

Camille Herron was in world record-breaking form as she completed a distance of 435.336km/270.505 miles by covering 1088 laps of a 400m track at the Sri Chinmoy 48-hour race in Canberra, Australia.

The 41-year-old from Oklahoma passed the previous record of 411.458km/155.668 miles, set only six weeks previously by Britain's Jo Zakrzewski in Taiwan, a little over 45 hours into the race.

Overall: 1 C Herron USA 435.336km

Men: 1 J Mackett AUS 294.973km

GERMANY BERLIN HALF MARATHON, April 2

Eilish McColgan showed her London Marathon preparations are firmly on track with a British record 65:43 as she comfortably defeated Ethiopians Tsige Gebreselama and Yalemget Yaregal. In fourth place, Samantha Harrison also broke new ground with a run of 67:17. Sebastian Sawe won the men's race in 59:00.

Men: **HM:** 1 S Sawe KEN 59:00; 2 A Kibet KEN 59:11; 3 B Kiprop KEN 59:22; 4 Dominic L Lobalu SSD 60:17; 5 Z Mezngi NOR 60:39; 6 P Kiplimo KEN 60:57; 14 P Chelimo USA 62:22; 29 SAMUEL MOAKES GBR 64:24; 38 DEREK HAWKINS GBR 65:16; 39 DAVID DEVINE GBR 65:22; 42

CHRIS THOMAS GBR 65:40

Women: **HM:** 1 EILISH MCCOLGAN GBR 65:43 NR; 2 T Gebreselama ETH 66:13; 3 Y Yaregal ETH 66:27; 4 SAMANTHA HARRISON GBR 67:17; 5 L Chepngetich KEN 68:20; 6 CALLI THACKERY GBR 69:01; 19 KATE DREW GBR 73:05; 21 VERITY HOPKINS GBR 73:35

POLAND WORLD MASTERS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS (& outdoor, throws, cross-country and road races), Toruń, March 26-April 1

Hosts Poland topped the medal table from Germany, while Britain secured 49 golds and an overall medal tally of 156 to finish third in the table.

M60 John Wright won a 200m, 400m and 4x200m treble, with the highlight being his 24.28 200m world record.

Virginia Mitchell also won three golds and set a world W60 record at 400m, as well as becoming the oldest woman to break 2:30 over 800m. Her world record there only lasted a few minutes, however, as American Sue McDonald broke that mark in the W55 race after having turned 60 after the start of the championships.

Britain's W55 marathon record-holder Sue McDonald won the 10km and half-marathon and also picked up team golds in the latter and in the cross-country, where she also picked up an individual bronze.

Jane Horder won a triple gold at the W65 60m, 60m hurdles and 4x200m,

with the hurdles mark quicker than the listed world record.

Paul Forbes, a 1:45.66 800m man at his peak, won the M65 800m and 1500m double after a cracking race in the latter with Alastair Walker, who was ultimately disqualified for knocking a cone. Earlier, Walker had set a stunning world record of 34:18 at 10km.

Dean Richardson broke the listed world mark in the M50 1500m with a controlled gun to tape run.

Pick of the overseas winners and record-breakers was Nicole Alexis, who won a W60 sprint world record double of 8.33 and 27.34, having also set world records in her heat.

The performance that got the most attention was Hiroo Tanaka's W90 200m record of 38.79. Irish M70 Joe Gough also made a big impact after sprinting a 30-second last 200m in his 1500m win which also included a wave to the crowd.

M35: 200: 1 A Couffe FRA 21.90 (21.70 SF). **800:** 1 J Warne IRL 1:55.07. **3000:** 1 E Everard IRL 8:49.01. **HJ:** 1 T Turskis LTU 2.05; 2 TOM NICHOLS 2.00. **TJ:** 1 ANTONY DAFFURN GBR 14.75. **SP:** 1 R Kownatke POL 17.35; 2 CRAIG CHARLTON GBR 16.25. **PEN:** 1 E Gouron FRA 3638; 3 MAXIM HALL GBR 3387. **4x200:** 1 POL 1:31.32; 3 GBR 1:32.92. **HM:** 1 J Mahieu BEL 66:44

M40: 400: 1 I Pinero Guzman ESP 50.17; 2 RICHARD BEARDSSELL GBR 52.01. **800:** 1 R Borente-Gonzalez 1:58.65; 3 KEITH HUTCHINSON GBR 1:59.82. **3000:** 1 A Liuzzo ITA 8:42.18; 2 IAN WILLIAMSON

GBR 8:44.15. **60H:** 1 J Hinton CAN 8.15; 3 LIAM COLLINS GBR 8.90. **HJ:** 1 MARTIN LLOYD GBR 2.04. **LJ:** 1 L Sobora POL 6.84; 2 NEIL BARTON GBR 6.50. **TJ:** 1 Sobora 14.63. **DT/WT:** 1 JAMES TAYLOR GBR 45.46/17.45. **PEN:** 1 S Fricke GER 3762; 3 CLINT NICHOLLS GBR 3260. **3000W:** 1 J Aledo ESP 11:54.34

M45: 60: 1 L Martinez SWE 6.95 (WR); 3 DOMINIC BRADLEY GBR 7.12. **200:** 1 Martinez 22.42 (22.23 SF (WR); 2 BRADLEY 23.16 (22.84 SF, 22.92 ht); 3 GAVIN STEPHENS GBR 23.36 (23.10 SF, 23.09 ht)). **400:** 1 STEPHENS 51.30. **4x200:** 1 GBR (BRADLEY, STEPHENS, HARVEY, OSSAI) 1:34.06. 10km/8km **XC:** 1 K Mburu KEN 29:28/25:33. **LJ:** 1 J Beckford JAM 6.66

M50: 200: 1 J Mack USA 23.48; 3 MIKE COOGAN GBR 23.94 (23.83 SF). **1500:** 1 DEAN RICHARDSON GBR 4:06.02; 3 TONY O'BRIEN GBR 4:11.21. **3000:** 1 O'BRIEN 8:52.75. **60H:** 1 JOE APPIAH GBR 8.39; 2 GARY SMITH GBR 8.64. **4x200:** 1 POR 1:38.02; 3 GBR 1:39.74. **HJ:** 1 L Adkins USA 1.80. **LJ:** 1 Adkins 6.54; 2 CRAIG BEECHAM GBR 6.02

M55: 200: 1 C Fausti ITA 24.10. **800:** 1 F D'Agostino ITA 2:06.10 (WR) C Novak USA 2:06.37. **1500:** 1 Novak 4:22.67; 3 STEPHEN ALLEN GBR 4:24.55. **3000:** 1 J Figueiredo POR 9:24.07; 2 DAVE COWLISHAW GBR 9:27.52. **60H:** 1 Y Le Mouel CAN 8.86. **Hts:** D Pye USA 8.41 (WR). **PV:** 1 ANDY ASHURST GBR 4.05; 3 GLYN PRICE GBR 3.75. **8km XC:** 1 Figueiredo 28:21. **3000W:** 1 M Carvajal Ortega ESP 13:26.31; 2 DAVE ANNETTS

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GBR 13:26.75. **10kmW:** 1 Carvajal Ortega 47:58; 2 ANNETTS 48:22

M60: 60: 1 A Tissenbaum USA 7.71 (7.64 SF). 3 PAT LOGAN GBR 7.90 (7.83 SF, 7.81 ht). **200:** 1 JOHN WRIGHT GBR 24.28 (WR). **400:** 1 WRIGHT GBR 55.65 (ER); 2 MICHAEL VASSILIOU GBR 59.24. **800:** 1 X Lefay FRA 2:18.87; 3 DAVID CLARKE GBR 2:20.45. **1500:** 1 CLARKE 4:33.59 (UK rec, CBP). **3000:** 1 I Kasprzak POL 9:39.10; 3 CLARKE 9:52.20. **60H:** 1 V Zaniauskas LTU 9.34; 3 DES WILKINSON GBR 9.62 (9.46 ht). **4x200:** 1 GBR (WRIGHT, LOGAN, VASSILIOU, ILO) 1:43.66. **TJ:** 1 J Quinaliza ECU 12.04; 3 JULIEN GITTINS GBR 11.11. **DT:** 1 D Eriksson USA 56.17; 3 JOHN MORELAND GBR 48.80. **8km XC:** 1 Kasprzak 30:03

M65: 60: 1 V Barnwell USA 7.94. **200:** 1 G Zorn GER 26.00 (25.87 SF). **400:** 1 Zorn 57.99; 3 TENNYSON JAMES GBR 60.29. **800:** 1 PAUL FORBES GBR 2:22.84. **1500:** 1 FORBES 4:43.43 (UK rec); ALASTAIR WALKER GBR DQ (4:43.94). **60H:** 1 W Musial POL 9.68; 2 JAMES 9.78. **10km:** 1 WALKER 34:18 (WR). **3000/8kmXC/HM:** 1 J Kauppila FIN 10:14.37/31:38/81:37. **M70: 60:** 1 M Kish USA 8.24; 3 SIMON BARRETT GBR 8.54. **200:** 1 M Kish USA 26.91 (26.72 ht); 2 BARRETT 27.79 (27.63 SF). **400:** 1 M Soru ITA 63.20. **800/1500:** 1 J Gough IRL 2:29.61/5:13.84. **DT:** 1 GUY DIRKIN GBR 42.77; 2 M Gryc CZE 42.62. **4x200:** 1 GBR (FRANKLYN, HINDS, ESSEX, BARRETT) 1:54.14. **3000/6km XC:** 1 L Moser ITA 10:57.35/25:43. **3000W:** 1 J Lopez Camarena MEX 16:16.52; 3 IAN RICHARDS GBR 17:00.10

M75: 60/200: 1 C Allie USA 8.79/28.43. **HT:** 1 J Jablonski POL 51.88 (WR). **WT:** 1 A Busterud NOR 20.80 (WR). **6km XC:** 1 NORMAN BAILLIE GBR 29:25. **TEAM:** 1 GBR 1:33:03. **10km:** 1 BAILLIE 46:02; 3 ALAN APPLEBY GBR 49:37. **HM TEAM:** 1 GBR 6:03:27

M80: 60: 1 ALLAN LONG GBR 9.36; 2 J Tennesilim EST 9.77; 3 ANTHONY TREACHER GBR 10.03 (10.03 ht). **200:** 1 ALLAN LONG 32.51. **400:** 1 J Esnault FRA 77.52; 3 TREACHER 84.17. **800/1500/3000:** 1 Esnault FRA 2:59.17/6:31.58/13:43.17. **HJ:** 1 Tennesilim 1.27. **LJ:** 1 Tennesilim 3.96; 3 TREACHER 3.53. **TJ:** 1 Tennesilim 8.27; 2 LONG 8.06. **10km:** 1 G Maillard FRA 48:51; 2 PHIL BRENNAN GBR 52:25. **HM:** 1 K Trumper GER 1:56:50; 3 BRENNAN 2:01:00

M85: 400/800/1500: 1 A Cano Alcolea ESP 93.86/3:51.79/8:19.50. **60H/PV:** 1 P Makkonen FIN 14.10/1.90. **HJ:** 1 C Sarndal SWE 1.27 (WR)

M90: 60/200: 1 H Tanaka JPN 10.95/38.79 (WR). **400/800/1500:** 1 D Carr AUS 1:42.02/4:03.80/9:10.13. **JT:** 1 J Blair NZL 17.34

M95: HT/JT: 1 L Helle FIN 6.88/9.50

W35: 60: 1 S Wiss SWE 7.62. **200:** 1 Wiss 25.15; 2 STACEY DOWNIE 25.31. **400:** 1 A Ferra GRE 55.67; 2 DOWNIE 58.66. **1500:** 1 S Michalak POL 4:31.95; 3 LAURA HAGGERTY GBR

4:45.22. **3000:** 1 Michalak 9:43.67. **60H:** 1 N Chroudi TUN 8.84; 3 CATRIONA PENNET GBR 9.17. **HJ:** 1 A Widawska POL 1.76. **PV:** 1 E Rossi SMR 3.20; 2 DASH NEWINGTON GBR 3.00. **TJ:** 1 NIABARI RUTTER GBR 11.06. **4x200:** 1 USA 1:49.78; 3 GBR 1:54.38. **PEN:** 1 N Chroudi TUN 3942; 2 RUTTER 3261. **3kmW:** 1 E Varoquier FRA 58.26; 3 NEWINGTON 65:10

W40: 60: 1 A Dillon (IRL) 7.81 (7.70 ht); 2 LISA BOLAND GBR 7.83 (7.82 ht). **200:** 1 S Caravelli ITA 25.48; 3 BOLAND 25.85. **800:** 1 O Koppen GER 2:16.85; 2 ZOE DOYLE GBR 2:17.11. **3000:** 1 B Bieganowska-Zajac (POL) 9:43.81. **60H:** 1 Caravelli ITA 8.91. **4x200:** 1 USA 1:48.40; 2 GBR 1:49.94. **PEN:** 1 JODIE ALBROW GBR 3675. **8km XC:** 1 A Lund USA 30:33. **TEAM:** 1 IRL 1:34:18; 3 GBR 1:49:08. **HJ:** 1 A Plonka POL 1.60. **SP:** 1 M Slok Hansen DEN 14.89; 2 MARIANNE BERNDT GBR 10.70

W45: 60: 1 YVETTE HENRY GBR 8.03; 3 KAREN BURLS 8.09. **400:** 1 A Quaid IRL 58.51; 3 SUSIE McLOUGHLIN GBR 59.91. **800:** 1 Quaid 2:17.55. **1500:** 1 M Leech IRL 5:02.79. **PV:** 1 B Capellini ITA 3.00; 2 STACEY GONZALEZ BETANCOURT GBR 3.00. **HM:** 1 A Gortel-Maciuk POL 75:30; 3 SIBEL RECBER LATCHMAN GBR 84:34. **TEAM:** 1 IRL 4:12:41; 2 GBR 4:18:36. **8km XC:** 1 Z Quinn IRL 32:23. **TEAM:** 1 IRL 1:43:44

W50: 60/400: 1 E McGowan USA 8.32/60.83. **60H:** 1 T Schilling GER 9.66; 2 PAULA WILLIAMS GBR 9.71 (9.79 ht). **PV:** 1 IRIE HILL GBR 3.10. **HJ/LJ:** 1 T Schilling GER 1.55/5.23. **TJ:** 1 A Szirbucz HUN 11.69; 3 FIONA DAVIDSON GBR 10.09. **SP:** C Cayet FRA 14.22; 3 WILLIAMS 12.66. **JT:** 1 WILLIAMS 35.25; 2 A Zahn GER 34.67. **HM:** 1 C McCourt IRL 1:24:40; 2 LISA FINLAY GBR 1:25:49. **8km XC:** 1 C Primo ITA 31:44. **TEAM:** 1 IRL 1:40:36

W55: 60/200: 1 J Brims AUS 8.25/26.92 (26.60 SF). **400:** 1 E Colas SWE 65.14. **800:** 1 E Trost GER 2:23.11; 3 S McDonald USA 2:25.72 (W60 WR). **1500:** 1 M Rohl USA 4:53.07; 3 McDonald 5:08.88 (W60 WR). **3000:** 1 Rohl 10:27.11. **TJ:** 1 A Sandstrom SWE 10.96; 2 JO WILLOUGHBY GBR 10.06. **10km:** 1 SUE McDONALD GBR 38:53; 2 CLARE ELMS GBR 39:55. **HM:** 1 McDONALD 1:23:49; 2 ELMS 1:24:40. **TEAM:** 1 GBR 4:29:25. **8km XC:** 1 A Kealy IRL 33:01; 3 McDONALD 34:27. **TEAM:** 1 GBR 1:52:28; 2 GER 1:54:17

W60: 60: 1 N Alexis FRA 8.33 (WR) (8.35 ht (WR)). **200:** 1 Alexis FRA 27.34 (WR) (27.70 SF - WR). **400/800:** 1 VIRGINIA MITCHELL GBR 64.55 (WR)/2:29.96 (Eur rec). **1500:** 1 E Pedrosa ESP 5:32:29; 3 ELKE HAUSLER GBR 5:40.44. **60H:** 1 M Escibano Checa ESP 10.46; 2 GAYE CLARKE GBR 10.85. **4x200:** 1 GBR (MITCHELL, KELLY, MITUSCH, GARLAND) 2:08:47. **PV:** 1 B Van de Kamp NED 2:70; 3 ROSALIND ZEFFERTT GBR 2.10. **LJ:** 1 MELANIE GARLAND GBR 4.44. **TJ:** 1 P Herrmann GER 9.75; 3 GARLAND

9.46. **DT:** 1 J Hole NOR 33.78; 3 CLAIRE CAMERON GBR 25.28. **JT:** 1 G Patla POL 41.14 (WR). **HM:** 1 M Slocum IRL 89:39. **8km XC:** 1 K Byrne IRL 36:46. **TEAM:** 1 IRL 57:41; 3 GBR 2:02:50. Mixed 4x200: 1 USA 1:53.30; 2 GBR 2:00.62. **W65: 60:** 1 JANE HORDER GBR 9.16; 2 K de Grande CAN 9.29. **200:** 1 K Del Grande CAN 31.18 (World W70 rec); 2 CAROLINE POWELL GBR 31.20. **400:** 1 CAROLINE POWELL GBR 70.55. hts: K Del Grande CAN 71.34 (W70 WR). **800:** 1 K Tolfes SWE 2:51.13; 2 ALISON BOURGEOIS GBR 2:51.16. **1500:** 1 ALISON BOURGEOIS GBR 6:02.5. **60H:** 1 JANE HORDER GBR 10.00. **PEN:** 1 A Akkerman-Smits NED 3377; 3 JEANETTE ASHTON GBR 2984. **LJ:** 1 L Vives-Jorba ESP 4.09; 3 CAROLE FILER GBR 3.97. **4x200:** 1 GBR (BUCKWELL, ASHTON, HORDER, POWELL) 2:12.16.

3000/10km/8km XC: 1 P Moran IRL 12:31.18/42:20/37:07. **HJ:** 1 E Wisniewski GBR 1.29; 3 CAROLE FILER GBR 1.25. **W70: 60:** 1 E Bartosik POL 9.93 (9.87 ht); 3 ANNE NELSON GBR 10.19. **200:** 1 A Micheletti ITA 33.68; 3 NELSON 35.69. **400:** 1 Micheletti 79.53; 2 CAROLINE MARLER GBR 82.71. **800:** 1 E Westphal GER 3:18.81. **1500:** 1 Westphal 6:47.15; 2 ROS TABOR GBR 7:08.97. **60H:** 1 E Piret FRA 12.07; 2 JEAN FAIL GBR 12.89; 3 MARLER 12.96. **PV:** 1 U Ritte GER 2.30; 2 SUE YEOMANS GBR 2.20. **4x200:** 1 GER 2:34.19; 2 GBR 2:34.35. **PEN:** 11 E Piret FRA 3537; 2 MARLER 3421. **3000W:** M Orlete Mendes POR 17:39.27 (WR). **3000/6km XC:** 1 M Goettner AUT 13:11.95/29:24. **TEAM:** 1 GER 1:33:29; 2 GBR 1:53:39

W75: 800/3000: 1 E Widelund SWE 3:43.56/16:16.57. **TJ:** 1 M Dahler-Stettler SUI 5.82; 3 PAT OAKES GBR 4.56. **SP/DT:** 1 M Gosztoi HUN 10.45/28.69. **3000W:** 1 A Tyshko UKR 20:02.57 (WR)

W80: 200: 11 R Dijkman NED 38.91; 2 KATHLEEN STEWART GBR 40.60. **400:** 1 STEWART 96.30; 3 IRIS HORNSEY GBR 1:51.52. **800:** 1 HORNSEY 4:22.62; 3 BETTY TRACEY GBR 5:11.90. **1500:** 1 J Flores POR 8:35.14; 2 HORNSEY 8:58.03. **3000:** 1 A Woodlock IRL 19:42.28; 2 TRACEY 21:08.99. **4x200:** 1 GBR (STEWART, HORNSEY, TRACEY, FRASER) 3:36.96. **HJ:** 1 Dijkman 1.13. **LJ:** 1 B Gadle SWE 3.08; 3 HOLDER 2.49. **TJ:** 1 K Viitanen FIN 6.10; 3 IRIS HOLDER GBR 5.56. **SP/DT:** 1 K Vitanen FIN 8.95/20.60.

6km XC: H Nagell-Dahl NOR 45:42; 3 TRACEY GBR 49:51. **Mixed 4x200:** 1 GBR (FERGUSON, HORNSEY, STEWART, LONG) 2:46.69

W85: 60: 1 S Yamakawa Imoto BRA 11.53; 2 DOROTHY FRASER GBR 13.89.

200: 1 J Rosinska POL 54.87; 2 DOT FRASER GBR 57.14; 3 ELIZABETH FINLAY GBR 91.91. **400:** 1 Rosinska 2:52.36; 2 FINLAY 3:22.92. **SP/DT:** 1 Yamakawa Imoto 8.27 (WR)/21.22 (WR)

W90: SP/DT/JT/WT: 1 G Krug USA 4.63/9.18/8.01/5.76

CROSS COUNTRY

CAU INTER-COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIPS (Inc BRITISH ATHLETICS CROSS CHALLENGE), Loughborough, March 11

Mahamed Mahamed and Grace Carson won the senior titles while Innes Fitzgerald and Tom Thake followed up their first English National title with their first British one.

Men (10km): 1 M Mahamed (Hants) 37:10; 2 T Evans (Leics) 37:39; 3 J Grey (Warks) 37:39; 4 Z Mahamed (Hants) 37:44; 5 J Millar (B&W) 38:18; 6 B Alcock (Beds) 38:25; 7 J Kingston (Kent) 38:28; 8 S Moakes (Derbs) 38:36; 9 O Bell (Herts) 38:41; 10 M Pearce (Herts) 38:41; 11 A McMillan (Yorks) 38:43; 12 N Johnston (NI) 38:45; 13 D Bebbington (Lancs) 38:47; 14 M Campion (Notts) 38:50; 15 A Howard (Kent) 38:50; 16 L Grattan (Staffs) 38:53; 17 M Knowles (Lancs) 38:56; 18 C McClean (NI) 38:58; 19 A Teuten (Hants) 39:04; 20 C Jones (Cornwall) 39:08; 21 M Hussein (Leics) 39:17; 22 D Hallam (Leics) 39:19; 23 R Slade (Bucks) 39:21; 24 A Watson (Leics) 39:26; 25 J Millar (Suffolk) 39:28; 26 C Bell (Yorks) 39:29; 27 L Taylor (Lincs) 39:33; 28 C Charleston (Essex) 39:35; 29 J McKenna (North East) 39:36; 30 S Eglen (Surrey) 39:40; 31 C Main (Leics) 39:40; 32 B Cole (Kent) 39:45; 33 J Shayler (Oxon) 39:47; 34 H Brodie (Beds) 39:51; 35 M Ramsden (Lancs) 39:59; 36 E Chuck (Surrey) 39:59; 37 L Smith (Norfolk) 40:00; 38 B Rushman (Herts) 40:01; 39 D Haworth (Derbs) 40:02; 40 C McCaughey (NI) 40:05; 41 F Slembeck (Surrey) 40:07; 42 L Milburn (Yorks) 40:08; 43 T Fawden (Middlesex) 40:10; 44 C McMillan (Avon&S) 40:11; 45 W Brown (Bucks) 40:13; 46 S Byrne (Wiltshire) 40:14; 47 S Goodchild (Cornwall) 40:15; 48 G Beardmore (Worcs) 40:16; 49 J Tuffin (Warks) 40:18; 50 T Butler (Herts) 40:18

U20 (8km): 1 L Birdseye (Berkshire) 28:25; 2 G Couttie (Yorks) 28:28; 3 E Primett (Herts) 28:44; 4 S Hodgson (Berkshire) 28:46; 5 B Brown (Hants) 28:50; 6 L Small (Kent) 29:01; 7 S Okrafo-Smart (Notts) 29:07; 8 C Harper (Scotland West) 29:08; 9 L Beagley (Scotland East) 29:08; 10 J Blevins (North East) 29:17

U17 (6km): 1 C Shennan (Scotland West) 20:19; 2 S Plummer (Essex) 20:22; 3 H Dover (Essex) 20:37; 4 J Stevens (Kent) 20:39; 5 B Pye (North East) 20:41; 6 C Bell (Scotland East) 20:46; 7 A Adams (Warks) 20:47; 8 M Waterworth (Sussex) 20:51; 9 D Stoneman (Avon&S) 20:52; 10 H Maxwell (Wiltshire) 20:53

U15 (4km): 1 G Wilson (Lincs) 14:10; 2 M Clark (Lancs) 14:13; 3 T Robin (Scotland West) 14:18; 4 O Calvert (North East) 14:20; 5 J Marwood (Cheshire) 14:27; 6 E Grime (Greater Manchester) 14:29; 7 J Alexander (Scotland West) 14:32; 8 A

Lennon (Surrey) 14:33; 9 J Sanderson (Yorks) 14:37; 10 L Culliton (Scotland East) 14:40

U13 (3km): 1 T Thake (Yorks) 11:53; 2 C Holmes (Surrey) 12:04; 3 N Homer (Warks) 12:10; 4 G Watkins (Essex) 12:11; 5 G Gilbert (Sussex) 12:14; 6 A White (Greater Manchester) 12:17; 7 W Delamere (Merseyside) 12:19; 8 R Laing (Victoria Park City of Glasgow AC) 12:20; 9 C Still (Merseyside) 12:33; 10 T Ford (Herts) 12:34

Women (8km): 1 G Carson (NI) 31:37; 2 G Steel (Leics) 31:51; 3 J Emmerson (Warks) 31:55; 4 P Williams (Yorks) 32:07; 5 S Adkin (Cumbria) 32:14; 6 S Tarver (Merseyside) 32:23; 7 I Lee (Hants) 32:37; 8 A Gummow (Herts) 32:42; 9 G Bruinvels (Surrey) 32:54; 10 S Green (Scotland East) 32:58; 11 H Viner (Middlesex) 33:03; 12 R Wiseman (Essex) 33:10; 13 K Olding (Middlesex) 33:18; 14 K Estlea (Hants) 33:19; 15 N Scott (Surrey) 33:22; 16 N Brown (Surrey) 33:23; 17 B Murray (Cumbria) 33:26; 18 M Davis (Cornwall) 33:31; 19 S Wallis (Lincs) 33:31; 20 J Potter (Notts) 33:34; 21 N Bartlett (Leics) 33:40; 22 D Corradi (Surrey) 33:41; 23 C Penfold (North East) 33:46; 24 V Hopkins (Sussex) 33:49; 25 Y Lock (Middlesex) 33:55; 26 S Monk (Surrey) 33:57; 27 H Seager (Leics) 34:02; 28 I Wood (Cornwall) 34:06; 29 B Penty (Yorks) 34:09; 30 R Harrison (Lincs) 34:10; 31 N Collier (Lincs) 34:12; 32 F Richards (Notts) 34:17; 33 S Green (Leics) 34:24; 34 A Kelly (Oxon) 34:27; 35 S Lavery (NI) 34:29; 36 M Jordan-Lee (Suffolk) 34:37; 37 A Garner (Hants) 34:44; 38 M Jordan-Lee (Suffolk) 34:45; 39 E McLeod (Yorks) 34:51; 40 E Renondeau (Cheshire) 34:53; 41 C MacDonald (North East) 34:54; 42 A Pearce (Yorks) 34:55; 43 A Wills (Hants) 35:02; 44 R Woodhams (Cumbria) 35:05; 45 H Fisher (Suffolk) 35:06; 46 E Smith (Leics) 35:06; 47 S Pyke (Merseyside) 35:06; 48 K Hughes (Cornwall) 35:06; 49 C Bishop (Essex) 35:09; 50 E Byram (Yorks) 35:10

U20 (6km): 1 M Harris (Essex) 23:09; 2 H Ryding (Scotland West) 23:17; 3 E Whitaker (Yorks) 23:41; 4 H Reynolds (Norfolk) 23:46; 5 O Martin (Oxon) 23:54; 6 P Roessler (Surrey) 23:58; 7 E Platt (Greater Manchester) 24:06; 8 E Greenway (Humberside) 24:12; 9 S Duval (Staffs) 24:21; 10 A Baines (Berkshire) 24:24

U17 (5km): 1 I Fitzgerald (Devon) 19:24; 2 Z Gilbody (Shropshire) 20:30; 3 R Flaherty (Yorks) 20:51; 4 L Russell (Middlesex) 21:05; 5 S Jacobs (Beds) 21:13; 6 E Nicholson (Kent) 21:15; 7 S Nicholls (Avon&S) 21:22; 8 H Haldane (Berkshire) 21:24; 9 A Lane (Yorks) 21:24; 10 G Bell (Cumbria) 21:28

U15 (4km): 1 Z Redmond (Scotland West) 16:09; 2 S King (Leics) 16:10; 3 B Trow (Shropshire) 16:21; 4 O Forrest (Essex) 16:22; 5 E Heavey (Cheshire)



Innes Fitzgerald takes victory in Nottingham

PHOTO BY GARY MITCHELL

16:35; 6 I McGowan (Oxon) 16:44; 7 O Steer (Devon) 16:47; 8 G Turner (Yorks) 16:47; 9 F Campbell (Scotland West) 16:49; 10 R Brook (Gloucestershire) 16:52

U13 (3km): 1 K Gorman (Bucks) 12:51; 2 I Buchanan (Sussex) 13:01; 3 K Scott (Surrey) 13:02; 4 C Wright (Team East Lothian) 13:14; 5 J March (Middlesex) 13:15; 6 S Smith (Essex) 13:15; 7 O Murphy (North East) 13:20; 8 Z Allan (Berkshire) 13:23; 9 M Davis (Oxon) 13:28; 10 B Boyce (South Wales) 13:29

ENGLISH SCHOOLS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS, Nottingham, March 18

Innes Fitzgerald provided the biggest victory as she won by 52 seconds.

Senior boys (7km): 1 G Couttie (North Yorkshire) 19:12; 2 L Birdseye (Berkshire) 19:17; 3 E Bird (Dorset) 19:18; 4 J Dargan (Hants) 19:33; 5 J Keir (Kent) 19:34; 6 D Galloway (Shropshire) 19:36; 7 N Campion (Beds) 19:41; 8 M Pickering (Surrey) 19:42; 9 W Rabjohns (Dorset) 19:42; 10 M Waterworth (Sussex) 19:42

Inters (5.7km): 1 S Plummer (Essex) 16:41; 2 A Lennon (Surrey) 16:59; 3 J Pearce (Surrey) 17:00; 4 A Burgess (West Midlands) 17:00; 5 H Maxwell (Wiltshire) 17:03; 6 L Conway (Cambridgeshire) 17:04; 7 O Calvert (Northumberland) 17:06; 8 M Clark (Lancs) 17:09; 9 E Busfield (Derbs) 17:15; 10 J Nugent (Notts) 17:16

Juniors (4.2km): 1 J Scanes (Kent) 14:04; 2 N Homer (West Midlands) 14:09; 3 P Aron (Greater Manchester) 14:13; 4 F Jones (West Midlands) 14:14; 5 E Grime (Greater Manchester) 14:22; 6 G Wagstaff (Hereford & Worcs) 14:22; 7 A Lane (Warks) 14:24; 8 S Collins (Notts) 14:26; 9 W Birchall (Dorset) 14:29; 10 E Withnall (Derbs) 14:35

Senior girls (4.5km): 1 I Fitzgerald (Devon) 15:21; 2 R Flaherty (West Yorkshire) 16:13; 3 L Russell (Middlesex) 16:22; 4 E Whitaker (North Yorkshire) 16:25; 5 A Lane (West Yorkshire) 16:27; 6 Y Kashdan (Sussex) 16:31; 7 O Martin (Oxon) 16:35; 8 H Reynolds (Norfolk) 16:36; 9 S Livingstone (Devon) 16:38; 10 S Nicholls (Somerset) 16:41

Inters (3.9km): 1 Z Gilbody (Shropshire) 11:50; 2 S King (Leics) 11:55; 3 I McGowan (Oxon) 12:10; 4 S Jacobs (Beds) 12:15; 5 B Trow (Shropshire) 12:17; 6 I Jones (West Midlands) 12:20; 7 R Brook (Gloucestershire) 12:22; 8 E Nicholson (London) 12:23; 9 L Harris (South Yorkshire) 12:25; 10 K Pye (Surrey) 12:29

Juniors (3.5km): 1 M Carvell (Merseyside) 12:16; 2 E Whitworth (Lincs) 12:17; 3 O Forrest (Essex) 12:17; 4 K Scott (Surrey) 12:18; 5 O McGhee (Warks) 12:20; 6 K Webb (Bucks) 12:22; 7 P Quinn (Devon) 12:23; 8 G Turner (South Yorkshire) 12:25; 9 D Stollery (Essex) 12:25; 10 J March (Middlesex) 12:30

BRITISH MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS Wallsend, March 18

Over 40s Jarlath McKenna and Juliet Potter dominated the main races. Overall, Scotland fared particularly well, winning all six men's sections between the M50 and M75s.

M65 Alastair Walker was particularly impressive as he won by almost a minute, despite needing to stop after having his shoe sucked off by the mud.

Women and M65 plus (5.8km): 1 Juliet Potter (Charn, W40) 22:04; 2 A Walker (Tev, M65) 23:18; 3 Jane Potter (Charn, W40) 23:42; 4 S Davies (Easin, W40) 24:03; 5 C Nic Fogartaigh (Kent, W45)

24:08; 6 K Stevenson (Tyne Br, W50) 24:08; 7 J Haynes (Bish S, M65) 24:12; 8 C Dover (York, W40) 24:39; 9 R Cooke (Buck&St, W50) 24:40; 10 S Maclean Dann (NSP, W45) 24:43

M65: 3 K Newman (Donc) 24:52. **M70:** 1 T Martin (Fife) 25:15; 2 S Owen (Salf) 26:14; 3 S Thorp (Oxf C) 28:50. **M75:** 1 A Sutherland (Innes) 28:00; 2 R Bloom (Herts P) 31:20; 3 A Wilks (Ayc) 32:25. **M80:** 1 M Barnes (N Masters) 37:49; 2 M Stephenson (SSH) 41:07; 3 B Brown (Heat) 46:13. **M85:** 1 I Barnes (Darl) 47:36; 2 W Ryder (Morp) 51:17; 3 P Norman (Wrex) 55:33

Additional Women: 9 E Reed (Heat, W35) 24:46; 10 K Grimoldby (Gate, W35) 24:57

W35: 3 C Harlow (NSP) 26:16. **W45:** 3 A Dargie (Tyne Br) 25:08. **W50:** 3 S Bulman (New M) 25:12. **W55:** 1 C Elms (Kent) 25:14; 2 J Murdy (SSH) 25:29; 3 K Davis (NSP) 26:15. **W60:** 1 C Page (Aln) 26:26; 2 S Cordingley (Bing) 27:03; 3 H Robinson (J&H) 28:55. **W65:** 1 C Wheelhouse (Donc) 30:21; 2 C Woods (Dur) 31:57; 3 M Hesketh (Prest) 35:35. **W70:** 1 L Nicholson (Lass) 32:27; 2 J Kilgour (Heat) 48:32. **W75:** 1 A Copson (R&N) 35:16; 2 D Henderson (Giff N) 38:00

Men M35-M60 (8.6km): 1 J McKenna (B&W, M40) 29:12; 2 G Jayasuriya (M&C, M35) 30:01; 3 S Jackson (Sun, M35) 30:31; 4 G Baillie (E Kilb, M40) 30:43; 5 C Franks (Gate, M35) 30:52; 6 J Tipper (Kent, M40) 30:58; 7 P Tedd (THH, M45) 31:11; 8 M Burrett (Leeds C, M45) 31:16; 9 D Richardson (Gate, M35) 31:44; 10 B Cook (NSP, M40) 31:48

M45: 3 A Buckley (Leeds C) 32:45. **M50:** 1 S Wylie (Cambus) 32:11; 2 M Parkinson (NSP) 33:24; 3 A Tatham (N Yks M) 33:48. **M55:** 1 W Henderson (C'nauld)

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34:11; 2 C Upson (Cambus) 34:24; 3 M Tennyson (G&G) 35:17. **M60:** 1 C Donnelly (L'aber) 33:52; 2 G Penn (NSP) 35:57; 3 C Feechan (Cambus) 36:22

SIAB SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL Sefton Park, March 25

England won the lion's share of titles, though Scottish champion Lois Macrae prevented a clean sweep of the main four individual and team titles.

Macrae, who set a UK under-15 indoor 1500m record of 4:30.57 in February, won the junior girls race from Olivia Forrest who had been third in the English Schools race the week before. Scotland also won the inter mixed relay. **Inter boys (6.2km):** 1 S Plummer (England) 18:01; 2 I Thomas (Wales) 18:16; 3 H Maxwell (England) 18:17; 4 T Robin (Scotland) 18:20; 5 O Calvert (England) 18:28; 6 J Alexander (Scotland) 18:29; 7 A McWilliam (Scotland) 18:30; 8 J Connor (Scotland) 18:31; 9 F O'Donoghue (Ireland) 18:38; 10 A Burgess (England) 18:43

Juniors (4.1km): 1 E Grime (England) 12:04; 2 A Wilkinson (Scotland) 12:12; 3 C Dick (Scotland) 12:12; 4 N Homer (England) 12:13; 5 P Aron (England) 12:15; 6 G Wagstaff (England) 12:28; 7 F Jones (England) 12:33; 8 A Lane (England) 12:36; 9 H Allison (Scotland) 12:38; 10 R Taylor (Scotland) 12:41

Inter girls (4.1km): 1 Z Gilbody (England) 13:07; 2 I Jones (England) 13:22; 3 C Gill (Ireland) 13:26; 4 S King (England) 13:27; 5 E Nicholson (England) 13:30; 6 E Bolton (Ireland) 13:30; 7 I McGowan (England) 13:32; 8 S Jacobs (England) 13:34; 9 Z Redmond (Scotland) 13:37; 10 R Brook (England) 13:54
Juniors (3km): 1 L MacRae (Scotland) 10:39; 2 O Forrest (England) 10:43; 3 O McGhee (England) 10:45; 4 K Webb (England) 10:45; 5 P Quinn (England) 10:48; 6 S Lawrence (Ireland) 10:50; 7 H Humphreys (Wales) 10:52; 8 M Carvell (England) 10:52; 9 E Whitworth (England) 10:52; 10 K Scott (England) 10:52
Inter Mixed relay: 1 SCO 19:36.4; 2 ENG 19:48.5; 3 IRL 20:16.0; 4 WAL 21:03.7
Junior Mixed relay: 1 ENG 20:03.0; 2 SCO 20:43.2; 3 IRL 21:20.3; 4 WAL 21:38.3

UK ROAD

ANGLO CELTIC PLATE 100KM Craigavon, Northern Ireland, April 2

Sarah Webster, in her debut at the distance, recorded 7:03:40 – an astonishing 23-minute improvement on the time of 7:27:19 set by Carolyn Hunter-Rowe, when winning the World Championship 100km in Torhout, in Belgium in 1993.

British Masters cross-country champion Jarlath McKenna, who went sixth on the UK all-time list after he caught Ollie Garrod, had set a recent world 40-mile track best but ran out of

energy in the closing miles.

Men: 1 J McKenna (B&W, M40) 6:37:19; 2 J Turner (C&C) 6:41:06; 3 D Rothwell (Swan) 6:43:25

Women: 1 S Webster (IOM) 7:03:40; 2 K Borland (Spring) 8:26:26; 3 E Murray (JSKintore) 8:26:36

BRIGHTON MARATHON East Sussex, April 2

Overall: 1 M Smith (Ashf) 2:24:07; 2 W Langdon (L Goat) 2:36:15; 3 J Pugh 2:36:15
Women: 1 H Reid 2:55:11; 2 L Barnes (Harl) 2:56:10; 3 F Hughes (UTS, W35) 2:56:42

2WISH GREAT WELSH MARATHON EVENTS MARATHON & HALF-MARATHON, April 2

Men: Mar: 1 B McWhirter (Swan) 2:28:48; 2 J Pickett (W&B) 2:30:12; 3 S Walker (Sarn Helen) 2:36:57
Women: Mar: 1 K Dicks (GWR) 2:58:28; 2 J Callan 3:04:13; 3 R Baxter (Stilton) 3:11:35
Men: HM: 1 D Griffiths (Swan) 63:48

READING HALF MARATHON Berkshire, April 2

Men: 1 O Lockley (Leeds) 64:35; 2 A Lawrence (VP&TH) 64:53; 3 B Alcock (Bed C) 65:08; 4 S Jamaal (Lon H) 66:25
M55: 1 A Leach 73:44
Women: 1 N Mitchell (Read) 72:12; 2 R Murray (Bed C) 72:39; 3 E Styles (Nun, W35) 75:31; 4 R Hughes (Leeds) 76:32

WATERS WILMSLOW RUNNING FESTIVAL ASICS HALF MARATHON March 26

Jonny Mellor won in a PB of 62:06.
Men: 1 J Mellor 62:06; 2 D Kipemboi Cheruiyot 63:15; 3 C Avery 65:54; 4 A Craig 65:54; 5 J Gilbert M40 65:58; 6 C Perry 67:04
Women: 1 L McNeil 72:00; 2 G Steel 72:36; 3 S Kipchumba 73:29; 4 L Heyes 73:37; 5 C McKnespiey 74:06; 6 G Malir 74:20; 7 H Townsend 74:37; 8 H Viner 74:42

BRECON CARREG CARDIFF BAY 10km, March 26

Men: 1 O Ahmed 29:01; 2 D Griffiths 29:58; 3 T Crockett 30:12
Women: 1 C Wikström SWE 32:54; 2 N Cockram 33:10; 3 H Irwin 33:16; 4 C Evans 33:26

ALDI ASHBY 20 Ashby-de-la-Zouch, March 26

Men: 1 D Bagley (Mans) 1:47:36; 2 O Corea (Bir, M45) 1:52:26; 3 O Matharu (Holme P) 1:53:36
Women: 1 A Halcarz (Ivan) 2:07:53; 2 R Gallop (Newk, W35) 2:11:15; 3 A Belcher (W'boro) 2:11:20

HASTINGS HALF MARATHON, St Leonards-on-Sea, March 26

Men: 1 C Brisley (NEB) 71:03; 2 A Clarke (AFD) 71:03; 3 L Grenfell-Shaw (B&W) 71:28
Women: 1 B Kidger (Phoe) 76:30; 2 A



Juliet Potter
won the
W40 British
masters title

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Millard (Inv EK) 78:05; 3 G Baker (AFD) 79:39

SALISBURY 10 Salisbury, March 26

Lucy Elliott set a world best over 10 miles of 60:16.

Men: 1 H Smith (Salis) 52:17; 2 A Winterbottom (Win) 54:08; 3 R McTaggart (Bmth) 54:09
Women: 1 C Thorp (Ports, W35) 57:16; 2 A Woolaston (And) 59:16; 3 L Elliott (Win, W55) 60:16 (World W55 best)

CARDIFF TAFF TRAIL HALF MARATHON, Cardiff, March 19

Angharad Mair won the women's race outright and her 85:28 was a British W60 best.

Men: 1 M Edwards (Card) 73:14; 2 A Phelps (Stroud) 73:15; 3 O Morris (Les C) 74:49
Women: 1 A Mair (Les C, W60) 85:28; 2 T Jenkins (Porth, W50) 89:07; 3 E Keetch (P'pridd R, W40) 91:49

EASTLEIGH 10km Eastleigh, March 19

Men: 1 J Cornish (HW) 30:11; 2 W Bryan (Soton) 30:24; 3 A Lawrence (VP&TH) 30:33
M70: 1 M Sheridan (Newb) 40:19
Women: 1 L Small (AFD) 33:34; 2 M Gadsby (Norw, U20) 33:52; 3 H Hall (Win, W35) 34:21

ROBERT TOMLINSON HALF MARATHON Buxhall Stowmarket, March 19

Men: 1 K Clements (SB) 65:21; 2 S Williams (S'mkt, M35) 72:02; 3 H Ahdich 72:15
M60: 1 C Ridley (Col H) 80:22
Women: 1 E Moyes (AFD) 77:45; 2 M Jordan-Lee (AFD) 78:41; 3 R Walker (W40) 88:47

CHESTER 10km Chester, March 12

Men: 1 J Mellor (Liv H, M35) 29:20; 2 O Ahmed (Bir) 29:36; 3 C Hulson (Dees) 30:09
M40: 1 S Overall (B&B) 31:22
Women: 1 K Longley (Liv PS, W45) 35:33; 2 C Davies (Prest, W35) 35:41; 3 J Marsden (Cheshire Dragons, W40) 36:40
W55: 1 S Avery (Cheshire Dragons) 38:59. **W60:** 1 M Williamson (Leam) 40:22. **W75:** 1 A Copson (R&N) 51:33

INVERNESS HALF MARATHON, Inverness, March 12

Men: 1 F Stewart (Cambus, M35) 65:24; 2 L Rodgers (Fife) 65:38; 3 H Hickey (Centr) 65:46; 4 L Fanottoli (Centr) 66:18; 5 M Ferguson (TVH) 66:23; 6 K Wilson (Moray) 67:29
M70: 1 T Martin (Fife) 88:56
Women: 1 N Phillips (Dund H, U20) 71:56; 2 F Ross (Shett) 72:17; 3 V Barrand (Metro) 74:03

LAMBERT AND FOSTER PADDOCK WOOD HALF MARATHON, Paddock Wood, March 12

Men: 1 J Grace (AFD) 65:52; 2 N Dawson (B&H) 67:51; 3 D Seddon (Candy Racing, M35) 68:56
M60: 1 S Mills (Uck) 80:21
Women: 1 C Baker (B&W) 75:41; 2 R Brown (Belg) 80:12; 3 H Gaunt (Ton, W40) 80:15
W55: 1 S McDonald (S Lon) 85:03. W65: 1 J Quantrill (S Lon) 1:43:15

RUNTHROUGH SURREY HALF MARATHON, Woking, March 12

Men: 1 E Shepherd (W&EL) 66:50; 2 P Martin (Wley, M40) 68:55; 3 O Garrod (Belg) 69:07
Women: 1 R Woolfe (THH) 77:31; 2 E Hawthorn (Strag) 78:17; 3 S Holt (Strag, W40) 78:25

A LAP WITH...

WEYNAY GHEBRESILASIE

Katy Barden speaks to the marathon man who is looking to stand out on the streets of London once again

The London Marathon is a special race for Weynay Ghebresilasie. He made his debut over 26.2 miles on the streets of the British capital in 2019, clocking 2:17:21 off the mass start. Last October the 29-year-old ran 2:11:57 to finish first British athlete in ninth overall. While a frustrating and recurring hamstring issue compromised his ability to attack in the latter stages of last year's race, it's not something he dwells on.

"My legs are fine now. I'm a better runner [than I was in October] and I think I can go faster in April for sure," says the Shettleston Harrier who has been training with the Fqru Alemseged-coached group in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for the last three months. In a competitive environment that fosters progression, he has at last worked his way up to the "top" group.

Ghebresilasie's story is well documented. He was born in Eritrea and sought political asylum in the UK following the London 2012 Olympics, where he competed in the 3000m steeplechase. He joined Sunderland Harriers before moving to Birchfield Harriers in Birmingham, and then, like others before him, moved north to join Shettleston Harriers in Glasgow's East End. He has been eligible to compete for Great Britain and Northern Ireland since January 28, 2021.

His family – his wife and three young children – live in Birmingham, but Glasgow will always hold a place in his heart. "John is my dad," he says of Shettleston's John Mackay, a hugely respected club coach, stalwart of Scottish athletics and a friend and mentor to the many



PHOTO: LONDON MARATHON EVENTS

athletes who have joined the club with little or nothing but talent. It is the ultimate compliment.

Ghebresilasie misses his own family of course, and in addition to a sub-2:10 marathon target in London, there is the incentive of a trip back to the Midlands. "It's not easy for my wife to take three children to London, but after the race I will go to see them because I really miss them," he says. "They call me every day to tell me they love me and to ask when I'm coming home."

Training, says Ghebresilasie, has been going well. In the build-up to London he has been running between 180-200km per week, comprising mostly double days and made up of shorter easy runs, big-volume sessions on the track or grass, long runs of up to 45km and hilly off-road runs through the forests around Addis Ababa.

"When I come here [to Ethiopia] I'm happy to be around the athletes who live here. I compare myself to them, but I'm a little bit different," he says, referencing his British citizenship and UK home.

He has high expectations and was disappointed with his 64:30 performance at the EDP Lisbon Half Marathon in March, a result undoubtedly impacted by a less-than-straightforward journey from Ethiopia to Portugal.

Now it's time to focus on the goal he set himself when the UK became home.

"I learn from myself, I learn from other runners and I think that I have the potential to compete with the best runners in the world in the marathon. Why not?" says the man who is part of the scottishathletics Marathon Project.

"The marathon is a special distance and London is very special for me. I just want to run my best and try for under 2:10. I want to qualify for the World Championships and the Olympics in Paris. That's my goal." **AW**



Q. If you could choose one person to train/compete with, past or present, who would it be and why?

A. Kenenisa Bekele is my favourite runner. There are many strong athletes like Kenenisa, but he is my favourite. I've met him before and we talk about life and training. He tells me to keep going and not to give up.

STARTER FOR 10



- 1 How many runners celebrated their birthday on London Marathon day in October 2022? a) 25 b) 35 c) 45 or d) 55
- 2 What is the average finisher's time (men and women) for a marathon?
- 3 Famous faces. Who are these four marathon and wheelchair marathon athletes?
- 4 In which year did a runner first don the famous Rhino costume in aid of *Save the Rhino* and how much does the costume weigh?
- 5 Tim Peake ran the London Marathon in April 2016 but what was unique about his participation?
- 6 Who was the first woman to complete a marathon?
- 7 In which year did the millionth person to cross the London Marathon finish line – and what was her name?
- 8 Who holds the record for the slowest marathon in history and how long did it take?
- 9 In which year was the first wheelchair London Marathon held?
- 10 From which film score does the London Marathon take its theme tune?



Answers in the May issue of AW

MARCH ANSWERS: ❶ 600m, in a time of 1:23.41 at the Bryggen Sports event in Manchester. ❷ Sir Mo Farah and Eilish McColgan. ❸ Two (one man and one woman). Bence Halász finished fifth in the men's hammer, while Xénia Krizsán did not finish in the heptathlon. ❹ Holly Bradshaw. ❺ 1.99m. The previous record was 1.98m held by Katarina Johnson-Thompson. ❻ Men's 20km race walk. ❼ Four faces: Tobi Amusan (2022 world 100m hurdles champion), Aled Davies (2022 Commonwealth Champion F42-44/61-64 Discus), Amos Kipruto (2022 London Marathon winner), Kelsey Lee-Barber (2022 Commonwealth Champion javelin). ❽ Four metres. ❾ Twice. 1900 and 1924, both in Paris. ❿ Trinidad and Tobago, from August 4-11.

AW LETTERS

HAVE YOUR SAY



GET IN TOUCH:

Email us at
**haveyoursay@
 athleticsweekly.com**
 or via our social
 media channels

Let the athletes speak

Ben Bloom made some excellent points in his article which featured in the March issue of *AW*. How refreshing it would be to see more athletes showing a little more of their character and also saying what they really think.

These are the individuals at the heart of the action, so they should also have much more of a voice. If we don't know much about the people on the track or in the field, then how is the watching public supposed to engage with them and become more invested in the sport?

The fact that Ben's previous employer, *The Telegraph* has decided they no longer need an athletics correspondent should be ringing alarm bells for those in charge of the sport.

The more ways we can bring in a new audience, the better.

Stephen Houston

What would you do?

AW recently asked "If you were in charge, what one thing would you change about athletics?" on social media.

In my view, the biggest priority in the UK is adequate, accessible facilities, indoor and out, operated by people and organisations who understand the sport and are sufficiently funded to run them as per their intended use.

Ian Halliday

Environmental impact

I noted recently how a number of athletes had publicly urged European Athletics to end their sponsorship agreement with petro giant Shell and I believe it's vital that more individuals air their environmental concerns and highlight how we need to change our habits.

Athletics is a wonderful sport but it will have to play its part in the climate crisis.

I love the London Marathon and the wonderful things it does, not just for those taking part but also for the vast sums of money which are raised for charities. I am conflicted, however, when I consider what the environmental impact of these marathon majors across the world must be.

I know London is working hard to mitigate such problems but it will need a buy-in from everyone – from those in charge to those running and coming to watch – for it to really make a difference.

Elaine Hunter

Coe's in charge

I know Sebastian Coe has his critics, but the World Athletics president has shown impressive leadership in guiding the governing body through some very difficult issues during his time in office.

Whether it was cleaning up the untold mess left by the Diack family, Russia's state-sponsored doping regime and then invasion of Ukraine – and now the matters surrounding transgender and DSD athletes – the response has been clear and decisive.

He has stated he wishes to stand for a third term at the helm of the sport and I can't think of another candidate I would rather have in charge for the time being.

Margaret Wood



PHOTO: LONDON MARATHON EVENTS

WHAT'S ON

APRIL 15

- Liverpool Throws and Jumps
liverpoolthrowsjumps.co.uk

APRIL 16

- Adidas Manchester Marathon
manchestermarathon.co.uk
- Great Ireland Run, Dublin
greatirelandrun.ie
- Rotterdam Marathon
nnmarathonrotterdam.org
- BMAF Open 10km Road Championships, Grangemouth
bmaf.org.uk
- Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow Spring Open Meeting
wseh.co.uk

APRIL 17

- 127th Boston Marathon
baa.org

APRIL 19

- Watford Open Graded
watfordharriers.org.uk

APRIL 21-22

- Payton Jordan Invitational, Stanford
pac-12.com

APRIL 22

- TCS Mini London Marathon
tcs-london-marathon.com
- Loughborough Open inc BUCS 10,000m
lboro.ac.uk

- North Belfast Harriers Afternoon of 5000s
athleticsni.org
- Centurion Track 100, Bedford
centurionrunning.com

APRIL 23

- TCS London Marathon
tcs-london-marathon.com
- Hamburg Marathon
haspa-marathon-hamburg.de
- Vienna City Marathon
vienna-marathon.com

APRIL 26

- Thames Ring 250
challenge-running.co.uk

APRIL 28

- GAA / BMC Regional Races (Inc Scottish 10,000m Championships) Glasgow
scottishathletics.org.uk

APRIL 29

- Drake Relays, Iowa
godrakebulldogs.com

APRIL 29-MAY 1

- BUCS Outdoor Athletics Championships, Manchester
bucs.org.uk

APRIL 30

- Belfast City Marathon
belfastcitymarathon.com

MAY 3

- BMC Regional Races Brighton
britishmilersclub.com

MAY 5

- Wanda Diamond League Doha
diamondleague.com

MAY 6

- Track Festival – World Athletics Continental Tour Silver, Los Angeles
worldathletics.org

MAY 7

- Great Birmingham Run
greatrun.org
- Wings for Life World Run Various
wingsforlifeworldrun.com
- Prague Marathon
runczech.com

MAY 10

- BMC Gold Standard Races, Birmingham
britishmilersclub.com
- BMC Regional Races Wormwood Scrubs
britishmilersclub.com

MAY 14

- Great Bristol Run
greatrun.org

For all the latest athletics news and updates, visit athleticsweekly.com



WHEELIE IMPRESSIVE YOUNGSTERS

The talented offspring of former athletes are not only enjoying success in track and field but also cycling. While runners like Eilish McColgan and Jake Wightman have followed in the footsteps of their fleet-footed parents, there are several who are making their mark on two wheels instead.

Freddy Ovett (pictured above) will already be familiar to many *AW* readers. The son of 1980 Olympic 800m champion Steve enjoyed teenage running success before taking up cycling and has been a pro rider for much of the last decade, most recently for the Legion of Los Angeles team.

Lukas Nerurkar, 19, rides for the Trinity Racing team in the UK and is the son of 2:08:36 marathon runner Richard. Lukas's godfather in fact is Haile Gebrselassie, who is good friends with Richard due to the latter living in Ethiopia for several years.

Then there is Sebastian Grindley, the son of David, who was sixth in the 1992 Olympic 400m final and ran 44.47 as a 19-year-old.

Seb rides for Garden Shed UK Ribble Verge CX and recently won the British junior men's cyclocross title in Milnthorpe. Still only 16, last year he won bronze at the European Youth Olympic Festival in Slovakia, too.

EMBRACING THE SUPER SHOES

Eamonn Martin won the London Marathon in 1993 without wearing a watch or even socks. He then raced for his club in the 12-stage national road relay six days later, which is about as old school as it gets.

But he says he has no issues with the current super shoes which are propelling athletes to ever faster times.

"I grew up working in engineering where we would bring out the next car or a new material that would be better than the previous ones, so I've lived in a world of progress," he says.

"I also play tennis and the rackets have changed a lot over the years. Athletics tracks have improved and shoes got better during the 1980s due to the big marathons that took off. The javelin has also changed, so progression in technology is something that I expect and embrace."

It seems most runners agree. A recent study by ARRIS Composites found that 41 per cent of Americans consider themselves runners and that 92 per cent of these runners believe the shoes they wear can impact how far and how fast they run.



STEWART PLANS TO DELIVER

Royal Mail driver Ian Stewart is attempting to run the fastest marathon dressed as a postal worker in London this month.

Stewart, who is from east London, hopes to put his stamp on that record (3:45:06) and raise a sackful of money for the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

It will be his debut marathon and he says: "When I found out I got a place I was hoping to complete the marathon in under five hours. But now I've set my eyes on beating the world record I've got to get that to under three hours 45 minutes."

He is unlikely to become the fastest postie in history, though. In 2004 *AW* featured runner Chris Davies on the front cover wearing a Royal Mail uniform with the headline: "First class – the flying postman destined to reach the Olympics".

While the Telford athlete didn't reach the Olympics, he ran 13:38 for 5000m and set a record for the short stage in the national road relays.



Of those who consider themselves "serious runners", 52 per cent own super shoes with their favourite qualities of the footwear being light weight (68 per cent), comfort (64 per cent), being able to run longer (55 per cent), helping with pain (50 per cent) and running faster (36 per cent).

As for what improvements people would like to see in super shoes? Style and colour top the list, followed by longevity, support and flexibility. *AW*

If you have a potential Dip Finish story, email: jason.henderson@athleticsweekly.com



BOOST YOUR RECOVERY

Beet It are taking exercise recovery to the next level with the launch of the Regen Cherry+ shot. The shot combines antioxidants from sour cherry juice (prunus cerasus) concentrate (58%) and beetroot juice concentrate (42%).

Unlike other sour cherry juice products, Regen Cherry+ does not need to be diluted with water, making it a convenient and novel recovery shot. It contains no preservatives, flavourings, or additives of any kind. The shots are Informed Sport certified, are gluten free and vegan.

According to the International Olympic Committee, sour cherry juice concentrate, when dosed as 30ml of concentrate for 2-3 days after exercise, has been shown to have anti-inflammatory effects, including reduced symptoms of, or enhanced recovery from, muscle damaging exercise (ie., delayed onset muscle soreness).

Jonathan Cartwright, Beet It Brand Manager commented: "Sour cherry juice has long been known to be an effective recovery aid and there is now evidence that suggest beetroot juice may hold similar effects through its phytochemicals, such as betaine – it's the exciting plus factor of our Regen Cherry+ shot!"

The launch of Regen Cherry+ follows the success of their better known, multi-award-winning, Beet It Sport range of concentrated beetroot juice products which are widely recognised as the 'gold standard' natural nitrate brand among research teams and athletes – supplying more than 300 universities and 150 professional sports teams around the world.

The new Beet It Regen Cherry+ shot brings Beet It into the exercise recovery space and continues their mission to provide athletes with all-natural, evidence-based products.



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