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Tim Bayliss

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CENTRAL TEXAS RUNNING: BROM HOBAN

Bayliss shaves minutes off marathon best with new training plan

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

Tim Bayliss had run five previous marathons and then suddenly lopped 13 minutes off his previous best when he completed No. 6.

Bayliss, of Austin, was the top Texan at last week's California International Marathon, finishing in 2:45:25. Among Austin's 60 or so runners who competed in the event, Peter Rauch (2:45:28), Patrick Hall (2:46:18), Larry Bright (2:49:16) and Michael Woo (2:48:55) all broke the 2:50 barrier.

Bayliss attributes his breakthrough to the focused plan he used, running with Rogue Training Systems.

"I had run Dallas White Rock Marathon in 2:58:44 a few years ago, but I never had anyone coaching me," said Bayliss. "When I started running with Rogue back in the beginning of June, things really changed. I had never experienced a strict training program— I just based on advice and what I knew. The team aspect at Rogue helped a lot, too."

A 4:44-miler at Stark High School in Orange, Bayliss returned to running about five years ago when he took the position as girls cross country coach at Lockhart High School, where he teaches biology.

"As a coach, I had the basic understanding of how to train, but it's a hard thing to do to coach yourself," said Bayliss. "It's a lot easier when someone is telling you how to do it."

Bayliss figures that running your best marathon comes down to three main factors: your training, the marathon course and the weather. Two of those you can control, and if you're lucky, the weather will cooperate.

For Bayliss, who placed in the top 10 at IBM Uptown Classic this past fall in 34:47, all three came together.

For starters, he picked a marathon course with one of the best records for fast times. "And 21 of the 25 years they have had it, it's been perfect weather," he said.

Most important, Bayliss and his Rogue training partners did a long, progressive marathon build-up, beginning in June. "We ran a lot more 20 and 20-plus milers than I had done in my previous marathon build-ups," said Bayliss.

He even threw in a 28-miler four weeks before race day, running a 7:15 per mile pace. As a final confidence builder, Bayliss ran a 24-miler with 10 miles at 6:15 pace three weeks before the marathon. That was the last hard workout before he tapered down.

"In the last couple of weeks before the race, we still ran some tempo runs to keep leg turnover fast, and I ran Thundercloud Turkey Trot a week before, to stay sharp and to make sure I could feel very comfortable at marathon race pace," he said. "I knew I could run 2:50 or better and decided 2:45 would be a reasonable goal."

Race day was ideal — about 40 degrees, with some fog and no wind. The course, which rolls along with a progressive loss in elevation, features a second half that is downhill to flat.

The plan was to run the first 19 miles comfortably and up the pace for the last seven miles to post negative splits. That's exactly what Bayliss did, running around a 6:20 per mile pace for the first part, and dipping under six-minute pace for miles 20 and 21.

"I felt really good. At Mile 25, I was pretty fatigued but hung on with a 6:35 mile. The last couple of miles of a marathon are always hard no matter what your race plan is," he said.

"It was a perfect day, a perfect race, and perfect training going into it. All of the hard work and planning really paid off."

Elsewhere ...

Sean O'Neil won the MADD Jingle Bell 5K on Sunday in 17:04, ahead of Andy Yaeger's 17:29. Chris Kimbrough was first woman in 17:46, with Cassandra Henkiel second in 18:01.

On Saturday in Spokane, Wash., at the USATF National Cross Country Championships, 49-year-old Carmen Troncoso picked up a national masters title in a 6K field that included fellow Austinites Sebastian Villalva, Mac Allen and Ricardo Troncoso.

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