



Brian Reynolds (l) and Maryn Barrett with marathon legend Bill Rodgers.

Three Andover Residents Finish The Boston Marathon

By Amy Makechnie
For the Beacon

At 4:50 AM, in the middle of February, Sarah Lester was pulling on compression running tights and lacing up her shoes. It was a Monday and Sarah was starting another 50-mile weekly running goal.

When Sarah finished her morning winter runs, she still had on her head lamp. Even the sun was still sleeping. After the morning run, she'd do a core workout, and the next day she'd put in a swim. So much effort, months without sleeping in. It was worth it to Sarah. She was in training for the Boston marathon in April. "It's my dream," she said.

Dream fulfilled. On April 19, 2010, Sarah was one of three Andover residents who joined thousands of runners for the Boston Marathon, the most famed 26.2-mile race in the world. To run the marathon you have to have a competitive qualifying time or raise enough money for a charity. Sarah ran for the American Medical Association. "It was awesome," she said. Sarah ran a Personal Record (PR) of 4:07, four minutes faster than her PR in 1993.

One parent training for a marathon is tough, but two? Brian Reynolds, Sarah's husband, also ran the marathon this year after qualifying at the Disney marathon in January. "It was a juggling act," Sarah said. For example, often times on the weekend, when a long run (anywhere between 10 and 22 miles) was required, Sarah would start early and end up in Warner. Brian would meet her with the kids for breakfast, and then he would run home. They made it work.

Brian had trouble getting his training in this winter due to a very demanding work schedule, some bad colds, and a bruised heel. Even though Brian ran a conservative race, almost half an hour slower than last year, he still finished with a time of 3:52.

Maryn Barrett, the third Andover resident to run Boston, finished with a 3:23 PR. This equates to a pace of 7:37 mile splits. Boston, notorious

for its "Heartbreak Hill," slowed up Maryn, but not by much. She ran the first half with 7:30 splits and slowed only slightly for the hills on the hilly Newton, Massachusetts, miles.

While Sarah and Brian try to get as much outdoor time as possible, Maryn relies almost exclusively on her treadmill. Maryn runs after dinner and says she "watched a lot of movies" on that treadmill. To train, Maryn typically ran five days a week, with one long run on the weekend. She was running 45 miles in one week and ran three 20-milers for her weekly long run. "That was the most," Maryn said.

Her family is accommodating, but Maryn also concurs that training is a juggling of schedules and time when you've got a family. When her two boys have games, she attends and tries to fit her run around them. "They're supportive," she says. "They've all done 5Ks with me."

Maryn has a training partner she runs with once a week who encouraged her to give the marathon a try. She gave Maryn a four-month training plan, saying, "You'd be good at it." Maryn certainly was. Her "beginner's luck" marathon time was a 3:24 in 2008 in Washington DC.

The Boston marathon is a tough course and according to Brian, "really deceiving." The first 13 miles are rolling but downhill overall. "You get tricked into an early fast pace, which is bad," and it "really wears on your quads." From miles 13 to 22 the course is generally uphill, ending in Newton with Heartbreak Hill. "If you've gone out too fast and trashed your legs in the first half, it might as well be a cliff."

But with two miles to go, you begin to see landmarks. You know you're almost done, that you can make it. Maryn said she knew she was working hard but, "every step of the way, the entire 26 miles, there were people cheering you on."

"The atmosphere the whole weekend is amazing," Brian and Sarah both said. How to explain it? Sarah said, "It's like being at the Super

Bowl." Brian said, "No, it's like playing in the Super Bowl."

"Everyone is so excited and happy just to be there," Brian said. "Everyone has a serious goal, whether they got in by qualifying or as part of a charity program. They had a goal and worked hard to achieve it, and that weekend they are reaping the benefits."

And that only covers the runners. Boston is a big deal for even the spectators. The entire 26 miles, supporters hand out water, oranges, even shots of beer. Even though the winners had finished hours before everyone else, the fans continued to line the streets cheering.

With a long and grueling race be-

hind them, will these Andover runners train and try to qualify for Boston again? No question. Sarah said, "Oh yeah. We're already planning on next year. I'm already thinking strategy and how I can run it better next time."

This was Maryn's fourth marathon, and her second Boston experience. Will she ever stop? "Oh, I don't know. It's kind of addicting." She seems to smile as she remembers. "It's magical."

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