



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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## on the lighter side

# Actuaries are good sports, too, VI

In the June issue of *The Actuary*, marathoner Mike Cowell asked for stories from actuaries who also participated in the 100th running of the Boston Marathon. Kirk Paulsen, actuarial analyst at Minnesota Mutual in St. Paul ([usmmlsl@ibmmail.com](mailto:usmmlsl@ibmmail.com)), replied. Following are some excerpts from his story.

The start of the race saw a sudden surge forward of the masses, an abrupt stop, and then a gradual movement toward the line. About 2 minutes, 10 seconds later, I crossed the start line. The first four miles were jammed up, but after that I was able to move freely.

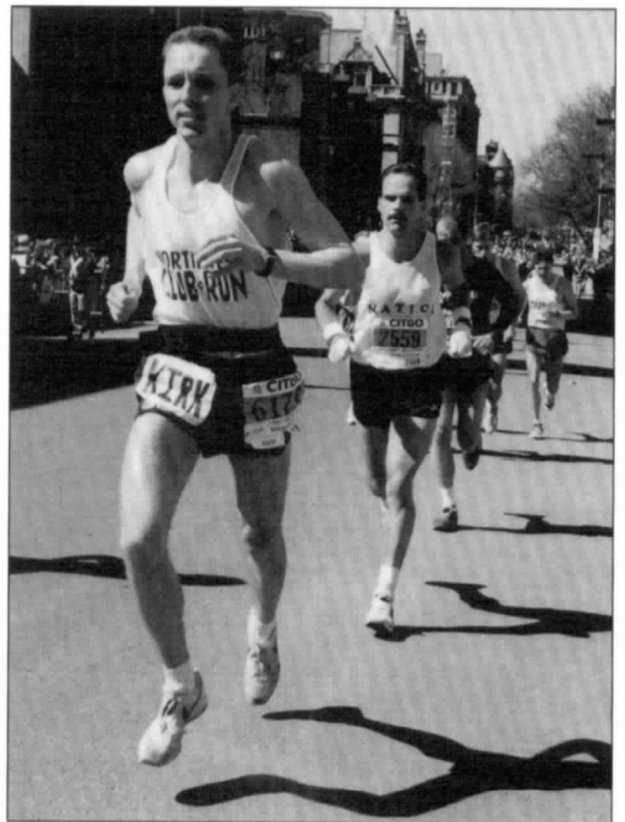
I knew I wanted to make my way further up. I had qualified with 3:00:10 at the 1994 Twin Cities, so my goal of running 2:45 meant that I would be passing quite a few people. By mile 2, I was already on pace, and by mile 4 it was no longer necessary to simulate a downtown Boston cab driver in traffic.

The race wound through at least seven communities, with each crowd trying to outcheer the others. I cruised the first 13 miles, very nearly clicking off consistent 6:10's. At about 12 miles, we passed the famous Wellesley College campus and the students (all women) lived up to their billing as the loudest supporters. They lined the right side of the road for a good half-mile, of which I spent the better part slapping hands with them on down the line. Mile 17 is the beginning of the three Newton Hills, the last the fabled "Heartbreak hill." It was especially memorable because there were two guys pounding as hard as they

could on two sets of huge drums about halfway up the hill. The pounding just pushed me up. Then, someone in the crowd singled me out. I was wearing my Northwest Club running singlet, and he yelled, "Hey! Northwest! Who do you answer to? This is *the* hill! Move it! Go!" It was quite inspiring.

Then the tough part — the downhills. They nearly got me. Only a quarter of a mile over the crest of Heartbreak, my hamstrings suddenly tightened into what felt like grapefruits. The same thing had happened to me in the 1994 Twin Cities, and I just couldn't believe it. I slowed to what must have been an 8 or 9 minute pace to try to relax them. My disappointment mounted quickly; I could see the whole event going on without me. This was right next to Boston College. The students saw me slow down and started yelling at me, "You can do it! You're fine — come on!" After about 30 seconds, my hamstrings released, and I slowly picked up the pace.

I concentrated on slowing on the steep downhills and picking it back up



*Hearing his name cheered by onlookers helped runner Kirk Paulsen make it through the tougher times of his run in the 100th Boston Marathon.*

again on the flat. The last 5 kilometers were tough mentally. I spent the whole time telling myself I could do it, watching for the mile markers to pass, and crunching on some Lifesavers. With one mile to go at the giant "Citgo" sign, I picked it up a bit and finished feeling strong. Finishing stats: 868th place, 2:46:47 official net time.