

Old Man Winter wins; half-marathon rescheduled

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

"We're gonna try for a hurricane this week," joked Craig Monahan, race director for Sunday's West Bloomfield Half-Marathon. Why not? They've had just about everything else in the seven-year history of this event. It might not be star-crossed, but it sure has been weather-crossed.

The 13.1-mile run was supposed to have been held last Sunday, but along came Old Man Winter, looking for a place to spend the spring and summer.

He moved on, but not before dropping six inches of snow in the West Bloomfield area to go with 20 m.p.h. winds and wind chills more worthy of January in Siberia than April in Michigan.

Except for the snow, it was the same kind of weather that hit the race last year. Thinking they would outsmart the Old Man, race organizers moved the race back two weeks this year. The Old Man moved his schedule back two weeks, too, and was right on time.

"I swore it couldn't be worse than last year," said Monahan. "But it was.

Last year it was cold and windy and we had rain the year before that."

The race had snow problems in 1978, too, but it was run in early March then as a full marathon. That year, with snow banked on the course to shoulder level, the race was moved to Belle Isle at the last minute. Sunday's postponement was the first in the history of the run.

MOST RUNNERS heard of the cancellation on the radio or by calling the

West Bloomfield police. One runner showed up, couldn't find anyone, ran the course anyway, then showed up Monday at the Parks and Recreation Department to demand his \$8 entry fee back.

"We gave him \$4 and his race packet, which included a T-shirt," said Monahan. "Anyone who entered and can't run this Sunday can come in and we'll give them the same deal. I think that's fair. They get a T-shirt and we cover our costs."

Monahan said that as of late Monday, only two or three runners out of the 939

entered had asked for refunds. Registration was reopened, closing Wednesday afternoon.

Monahan decided to call the race at 8:30 a.m. Sunday. "There was no way we could have run it," he explained. "We had to cancel early to let our volunteers know and to get the word out on the radio. Somebody could have slipped on the ice and broken a bone. It didn't seem like the right thing to run the race."

"It was bad enough for the runners, but I'll tell you this, the volunteers were REAL glad we canceled. They

were the ones who were going to have to stand around in the stuff."

Most of his 100 volunteers — to man aid stations and help at the finish line — are returning this Sunday, but more volunteers are needed. Anyone wishing to volunteer, or to get a partial refund, should call 334-5660 during normal business hours.

Despite his earlier call for a hurricane, Monahan went out on a limb for this Sunday. "Sunny and 60," he said. "That's what I'm predicting."

Sure. They must have moved the race to Key West.

Cosmos: a goal-oriented club

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Buerger (Rochester) each gained all-league honors last fall as sophomores on their respective high school teams.

The Cosmos open their tournament schedule May 21 in Midland. They play Sunday in a Bonanza League game against United at Bicentennial Park in Livonia.

Looking down the road, the state finals are in June, the Midwest regionals in July and the national championship in August.

The Canadian teams and teams from such states as Ohio, Virginia and St. Louis like to think they play some of the best soccer around," said Hama, whose team opened the season last weekend with a 3-0

shutout of Kalamazoo.

"We're kind of new to soccer here in Michigan, and we have a lot to pride when going to these other areas for tournaments. They don't think Michigan soccer is that far advanced."

"We have something to prove by beating those teams," he said.

S'fld store hosts marathon race winner

Greg Meyer, the winner of the fabled Boston Marathon Monday in the 10th fastest time ever run 26.2 miles, will be appearing Friday afternoon at the Total Runner store at the Franklin Shopping Plaza, Northwestern and 12 Mile.

Arranged before Monday's race, Meyer's appearance is a coup for the store's owner, Charlie Blanchard, as the winner of marathoning's most famous race, Meyer will be in top demand for clinics and appearances. Meyer's manager, Bill Squires, reportedly estimated the win as worth \$150,000 over the next year.

Though Meyer lives in the Boston area, his Michigan appearance Friday will be a homecoming of sorts. Meyer is a native of Grand Rapids, was a four-year trackman at the University of Michigan and won his first marathon in 1980 at the Free Press International Marathon.

Meyer will appear 4:30-8 p.m. There will be no charge, and the event is open to the public. Meyer won't be teaching a clinic, as such, meaning he will not make a prepared speech. He will be available to sign autographs, pass out posters from the shoe company that sponsors him (Brooks), and chat with the curious.

Meyer's time Monday was 2 hours, 9 minutes, a personal record. Though Alberto Salazar, who did not run Monday, is better known in marathon circles, it could be argued that Meyer is the best runner in the world right now. He has won four of his seven marathons; has won his last five races (at distances of 26.2 miles, 6.2 miles, 10 miles, 10,000 meters on the track and 30 kilometers); and set the American records for 15 kilometers (43:37) and 20 kilometers (58:26) within the last eight months.



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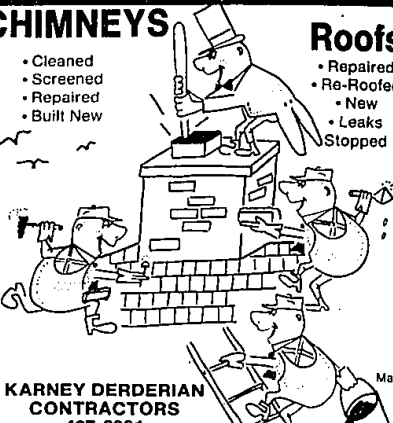
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