

Petroff retraces original marathon

BY RICHARD L. SHOOK
STAFF WRITER

If you're a golfer and find yourself in Scotland, you go play St. Andrews. Should you run marathons and find yourself in Greece, you shoot on over to the city of Marathon to retrace the route of the first famed long-distance run — even if you'd completed an Ironman event less than three weeks earlier.

Jim Petroff of Livonia did just that. Having competed in the Ironman event in British Columbia on Aug. 30, Petroff and his wife flew to Athens, Greece, on Sept. 17 with four other couples for a 10-day Mediterranean cruise.

"It was a Saturday night," Petroff remembered. "I was sitting around with one of the fellows, his wife and my wife, having a couple of drinks."

The friend, John Kowal, knowing that Petroff is a runner, jokingly suggested that what his buddy ought to do is retrace the route of the very first marathon run. After all, it's not like they had to go out of the way or anything.

"Aw, that's kind of dumb," Petroff replied. "Think about it," Kowal rejoined. "You might never have the opportunity to do this again. This is the course that the original marathon was run on."

One thing led to another and before they knew it they were down at the cabstand checking out how much it would cost to retain a cab for the trip to Marathon and back.

Turned out to be something like \$120, but what are friends for? They wound up splitting the tab.

So on the morning of Sept. 20, the families woke up and got on with it.

"I came close to saying it was a dumb idea," Petroff said. "But I finally decided that if I only made 5-10 miles, we'll jump in (the cab) and come back."

They were driven to the town of Marathon "and sure enough, there's this monument" to commemorate the historic event.

"I just started running, not knowing how far I'd go. I kind of went at my own pace. Five miles into it, I was still doing all right. They'd come up and give me a swig of water from time to time."

This wasn't an event, mind you, just the whim of a tourist with time to kill. There were no other runners, no support stations, no water, no cheering spectators.

"They stopped and got some wine and pizza," Petroff said. "We kept going, and the next thing I knew I was half way. And I was feeling pretty good."

Petroff just kept grinding it out and before long he was dodging traffic and pedestrians in Athens, headed for the Olympic Stadium, thanks to the cab driver, who knew the route.

"I took a lap," he said, "but they were hung up in traffic and they got there just as I was finishing. They had a bouquet of roses, so they told me, 'Now you've got to take your victory lap.'"

There was no time, naturally, but the group consensus was that Petroff put about 3.50 up on the taxi meter.

Not bad for a man of 67 who started running when he stopped smoking 17 years ago and didn't attempt his first marathon until the start of the decade.

"I was happy and proud I ran the Olympic

Marathon course," he said. "That afternoon, we got on the ship and went on a cruise for 10 days."

Petroff runs to keep fit and participates in perhaps 2-3 marathons a year. Not enough, though, because now he's branching out into triathlons.

A Ford Motor Co. employee, Petroff is a member of the Ford Athletic Swim and Triathlon (FAST) Club, which also plays golf together.

"It was kind of in the back of my mind," Petroff said, "that, 'Gee, I'd like to try a Triathlon.' I did a couple of years ago."

"I wasn't too sure about the swimming part. I figured I could do the bike and the run."

Sylvania, Ohio, hosts an Olympic-size Triathlon ("slightly under a mile swim, a 40K bike and a 10K run") and was encouraged by the result.

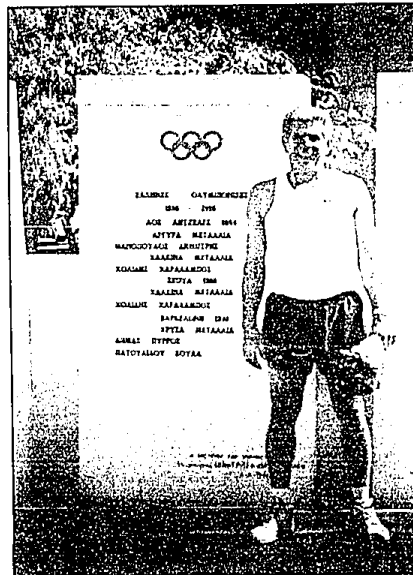
"I placed maybe third in my age group," he laughed, "which is not much because there are not that many in my age group."

A year ago some members of the club suggested they participate in the Ironman in British Columbia on Aug. 30. The Ironman compared to a Triathlon is a little like T-ball compared to baseball.

It's 2.4 miles of swimming plus a 112-mile bike race — all topped off by a full 26.2-mile marathon.

Some 25 members of the FAST braved temperatures as high as 100 degrees on the plains' side of the Canadian Rockies to take part in the Ironman. Petroff clocked 14 hours, 19 minutes.

"I held up pretty well at the end on the run," he said, "which made me pretty happy."



Feeling Olympic: Livonia resident Jim Petroff retraced the original Olympic marathon course on a recent trip.

Canton rolls past Livonia Franklin 35-0 for second win

BY NEAL ZIPSER
STAFF WRITER

Most football teams try to create balance between a passing game and running game.

Balanced? Who needs balance? Certainly not Plymouth Canton, whose running game was in top gear Friday as the Chiefs ran over visiting Livonia Franklin 35-0.

The Chiefs ran the ball 67 times and were able to cruise to the victory without any passing yards. The 390-yard rushing attack was led by junior tailback Nick Stonerok, who gained 163 yards on 18 carries.

Canton improved to 2-6 overall and 2-3 in the Western Lakes Activities Association. The Chiefs also doubled their win total from last season with the victory.

"The team is developing chemistry and the guys are having a ball," Canton coach Tim Baechler said. "They're going to practice and working hard and doing what they have to do to improve."

The Patriots dropped to 0-7 overall and 0-5 in the league. However, the team is keeping a good attitude, according to coach Rick Lee.

"Canton has learned how to win, which is something we're still trying to learn," Lee said. "We had all 35 players return to practice this past Monday and no one has quit. The team is still holding

together."

The Chiefs wasted little time taking control of the game and asserting its ground attack by scoring on their opening drive. Junior Emmanuel Etim (eight carries for 78 yards) capped a 76-yard, nine-play drive with a 46-yard scamper.

Etim broke a tackle at the line of scrimmage and was able to outrun the Franklin secondary. Junior Gus Meike kicked the first of his five extra points to make it 7-0.

Franklin failed to move the ball on the ensuing drive and was forced to punt. Sophomore Jerry Gaines blocked the kick, however, and the Chiefs got the ball at the Franklin 30. Gaines also was a key figure on offense, collecting 65 yards on 14 rushes.

Field position was an advantage for Canton the entire game. The average Canton drive started on its own 39, compared to Franklin's average start from its own 22.

Four plays after the blocked punt, the Chiefs made it 14-0 when senior quarterback Jay Schmitt scored on an 18-yard keeper.

The Chiefs extended their lead to 21-0 midway through the second quarter on an explosive three-play drive. Gaines began it with a 23-yard run to move the ball to the Franklin 41. A play later, Stonerok broke loose on a 37-yard jaunt.

After a scoreless third quarter, Stonerok added to Canton's lead with a 1-yard dive on a fourth-and-goal play.

The Chiefs ended the scoring with 1:11 left in the game on an 8-yard run by senior Tom Mazur.

Franklin's offense struggled throughout the game. The Patriots converted only one-of-11 third down attempts and gained just 47 yards on the ground.

"We did a great job on defense and came into the game very well prepared on the third-and-longs, thanks to our coaches," Baechler said.

Patriot sophomore quarterback Joe Ruggiero showed flashes of brilliance, but was hurt by several dropped passes. He completed 8-of-19 passes for 78 yards.

"He's got a great arm," Lee said. "Our pass blocking was very solid tonight. The offensive line did a good job and the running backs picked up the linebackers. Our receivers were running good

routes tonight as well."

Franklin ran 31 plays on offense, compared to Canton's 60. The Patriots struggles were evidenced by junior Jeff Job, who was their top rusher with 28 yards on 10 carries.

Junior Ian Hiley led the stellar Canton defensive effort with an interception.

The Franklin defense was led by sophomore linebacker Jesse Edmunds, who recorded seven tackles. Sophomore Joe Meier and junior Joe Jendrusiak added six tackles apiece.

Even though Schmitt didn't complete any of his three passing attempts, he didn't make any mistakes and kept the Franklin defense confused with good fakes.

"We realize that passing isn't something we do that well, but you'll rarely find any team — college or pro — that can do both well," Baechler said. "We try to get the ball to our tailbacks evenly. Perfect play calling would be 15 carries each."

Golfers hit stride at state finals

BY C.J. RISAK
SPORTS EDITOR
cjrisk@ec.homecomm.ni

Except for a few exceptions, the Class A state golf tournament that started Friday at The Emerald at Maple Creek in St. John's was a bust.

Not just for local teams.

The course proved to be a tough test for just about everyone. No Oberverland team made the first-day cut to advance to the final round, Plymouth Salem and Westland John Glenn came closest, each shooting 329 to tie for 14th (the top 12 advanced).

"It was a rough day," admitted Rocks' coach Rick Wilson. "We had two guys who shot poorly, which was very uncharacteristic for them. You just can't do that in a tournament like this."

Wilson certainly was-

n't laying blame on any individuals. And none of his players were, either. "All these guys are taking it on themselves," he said.

If there was an exception to that, it would have to be Erik Krueger, Salem's hottest golfer the past two weeks. Krueger, who earned medalist honors at the Western Lakes Activities Association Tournament and tied for first at the state regional, continued his torrid play by firing a 76. That earned him a trip as an individual (the top 12 golfers also advanced) to Saturday's round.

He and Livonia Stevenson's Steve Polanski — who's 74 tied him for second behind opening-day leader Dave Nichols of Rochester Adams (the shot 71) — were the only Observer golfers to advance.

"It hurts a little bit

right now," said Wilson.

"But we're happy for Erik. He's had a great two weeks. And it's important that at least someone from Salem got to the second day."

Midland Dow led the team standings going into Saturday's round with a 304. Traverse City Central was second at 305 and Bay City Western and Birmingham Brother Rice tied for third at 309.

Kalamazoo Central was the 12th, and final, team to qualify with a 325. Okemos was 13th with a 328, with John Glenn and Salem next at 329.

Redford Catholic Central shot a 397, and both Plymouth Canton and Stevenson finished with 338s.

Wilson had figured his team's average for eight 18-hole tournaments it played this season to be in the 315 range. "Our highest (individual) average was 80.6," he noted.

But at The Emerald, only Krueger and Adam Wilson, who shot an 80, bested that average.

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