

Piyush Gudka's Marathon 102

A Tribute to Great Marathoners

by Harsh Maroo

In addition to his 2 ultramarathons, Piyush Gudka has just finished his 100th Marathon in his home town, London on 28th April 2019, this being his 25th London Marathon.

We celebrate his achievements and take the opportunity to pay tribute to the great marathoners in the world.



My hero Piyush with Eliud Kipchoge

A Tribute to the Great Marathoners of the World

A conventional notion of a marathon is the long distance and varying degrees of accompanying struggle and lactic acid related pain in the legs. MarathoRn would be a more accurate name ! But it cannot be because the word Marathon is linked to the area or plain or place called Marathon, a town in Greece and the site of the battle of Marathon in 490 BC.

After the Athenian army defeated the Persians. Legend has it that Pheidippides, a Greek herald at the battle, was sent running from Marathon to Athens to announce the victory, which is how the marathon running race was conceived in modern times.

The long-distance foot-race or Marathon featured in the 1896 Athens Olympic Games. The current accepted distance for a Marathon has been fixed as 26 miles 385 yards (i.e. 42.195km) from 1908. At this standardised distance, Czech Emil Zatopek set a world record at the 1952 Olympic Games. This record has since set the stage for 'when the sub 2hours marathon will be run' and which athlete's name will be etched in history. It is interesting and surprising that the women's marathon was only added at the Olympics in 1984.

One cannot resist reminiscing about some of the great marathoners who included alphabetically - Abebe Bikila, Alain Mimoun, Almaz Ayana, Asbel Kiprop, Catherine Ndereba, Dennis Kipruto Kimetto, Eliud Kipchoge, Emil Zatopek, Frank Shorter, Genzebe Dibaba, Haile Gebreselassie, Kenenisa Bekele, Mary Keitany, Paula Radcliffe, Paul Tergat, Pamela Jelimo, Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot, Samuel Kamau Wanjiru, Spyridon Louis, Wilson Kipsang, and Vivian Cheruiyot.

The greatest of them all is also from Kenya

Eliud Kipchoge's recent 2 hour 25 second performance, his endearing nature, and humble lifestyle has added a new interest in marathons. The world is waiting and watching for the moment when the sub 2 hours marathon will be run and where and how. The analysis of that eventuality will reveal a few things the runners understand but what will be the magic combination for that day will be the a number of factors including body heat build up, outside temperature, running formations, pace setting, mind set, shoes, spectators along the way, training, and the 'go signal'.

Can you be a recreational marathon runner ?

Marathon running ability has its basis in human anatomy in terms of the short twitch (ST) muscle fibres one has. The final sprint 'kick' ability which a few athletes show especially from the Horn of Africa, may have reserve energies in fast twitch (FT) muscle fibres in their body.

Furthermore one can differentiate marathon runners into those running to improve running times and those doing the distance at a reasonably comfortable speed and minimizing unnecessary injuries. A section of the latter group who fall into what can be termed 'recreational runners'. It is this group that has grown and that draws inspiration from many sources.

It is this group who believe strongly that the 'time to live' is now, and to suffer now and feel like a champion for ever more. For them, running a marathon is a state of the mind which is fuelled by positivity, where pain is but a temporary sensation which gets converted into joy, legacy and a focused mindset in helping society at large.

Meanwhile, Ms Rupal Ramesh Shah, ex Moshi in Tanzania, now living in Boston, U.S.A., completed her 10th marathon - this one in the Antarctica, on 18th March 2019. "It was brutal", she admitted. So much for recreational marathon running , eh ? !