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Supporters help keep runners' spirits up

By **Kevin Rothstein**/ Boston Herald
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As far as Katie Barramb is concerned, her mom's run from Hopkinton to Boston was one for the record books.

"It's cool because it's 26.2 miles and she's the only mom who ran the marathon," said the Beverly 8-year-old sitting on a curb on Stuart Street while her mom Kate recounted the race.

"It feels great because the pain ends," said Kate, who credited her youthful cheering section with getting her through the heat.

Each of the 20,000 registered runners who crossed the Boston Marathon finish line on one of the hottest race days on record had a story to tell.

To Dr. Neil Hayes, an oncology fellow at New England Medical Center, finishing his first official race was a seminal event.

"It's one of the most meaningful experiences in my life," the Cambridge doc said, adding he was dedicating his run to his cancer patients. "The marathon is a good metaphor for so many of the things you do."

Karen Bryant trained in the Sunshine State for the marathon so the heat was not as dramatic for the Floridian as for other runners. But the Boston race packed in another challenge: hills.

"There's not as many hills in all of Florida as this," she said.

Chicago runner Nicholas Baer blamed a bus delay - the first one broke down, and the replacement's driver couldn't find the starting line - for adding an hour and 8 minutes to his qualifying time.

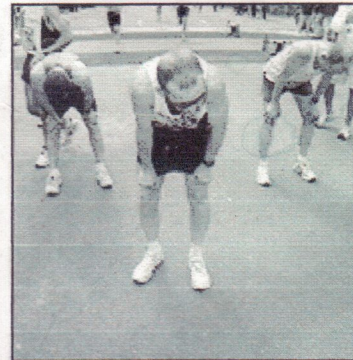
"I got on the lineup as soon as the gun went off," he said, his hair and face streaked with salt.

Sporting a nasty blood blister on a little toe, Michigan marathoner Bill Crosby, 29, said a similar delay in reaching the start line didn't put a damper on his race.

His bus didn't drop off him until 20 minutes before the starting gun.

"At the end of the day," he said in Copley Square, "the race is great and the fans are great."

PHOTO GALLERY



Runners take a break at the finish line.
(Staff photo by David Goldman)

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