

Palmer digs out win as Bostonfest debuts

By JOHN CONNOLLY

AT the 21-mile mark in yesterday's inaugural Bostonfest marathon, the course winds back up a steep grade on the Jamaica way, levelling off for a few hundred yards before reaching Jamaica Pond. It was at this point that Mark Kimball, the former BU All-America who had led the race from three miles to that point, came to a decision.

"I felt like stopping," Kimball would say afterwards.

In point of fact, Kimball did stop briefly, before glancing over his shoulder at the spectre of Needham's Andy Palmer, who had been cutting big chunks out of Kimball's (at one point) seemingly invincible one minute, 40-second lead just two miles earlier.

As the duo reached Pond Street near the boathouse, Palmer, who grew up in Madawaska, Maine (Pop. 5,000), passed a tired, dehydrated Kimball, patted him on the behind, and moved efficiently to the finish line in the race run in near perfect conditions in two hours, 16 minutes and 25 seconds. Palmer's winning time was a lifetime best, his second big marathon victory (Seattle, 1981) and, more importantly, qualified him for the 1984 U.S. Olympic Trials Marathon scheduled for Buffalo next May.

Two other male finishers, hard-charging runnerup Mark Skinkle (2:17.01) and third place finisher James Miller (2:18.48), qualified for the Trials while Methuen's hard luck Paul Oparowski missed the qualifying standard by just seven seconds (2:19.11) in fourth.

First-time marathoner and former University of Virginia star Martha White won the women's division in 2:39.40. Harvard's Kate Wiley, who won the Ivy League title at tough Van Cortland Park on Friday, entered the race under her coach's name with an intent to run a 20-mile training jaunt. The Toronto native felt so good she ran the entire distance to grab second place in her first-ever marathon with 2:43.00. Both women qualified for the Trials as did third place finisher Pat English (2:44.11) of San Anselmo, Cal.

Belmont's Bob Hall won the wheelchair division in a sparkling 2:16.01, beating race winner Palmer in the process.

But the story of the race, at least early, was Kimball, or more correctly, the Brothers Kimball. Mark, 23, and older brother Dean, 25, an ex-UNH standout, and Brighton's Vin Fleming, led the field of almost 2,000 down Charles

Street from the Common and onto Storrow Drive.

The trio stayed that way covering the first five miles in 5:10-pace when just past the Harvard Business School, the

brother act moved to the front. They opened a 100-yard lead on the field—passing six miles in 30:45. As the course wound around the Fens, Mark surged and gained



Martha White

a 15-yard lead on Dean and another 300 yards on the second pack.

"I got into a rhythm," Mark would say later after struggling in 55th place in 2:36.52. "But it was just too fast. I set myself up. I guess I was too impatient."

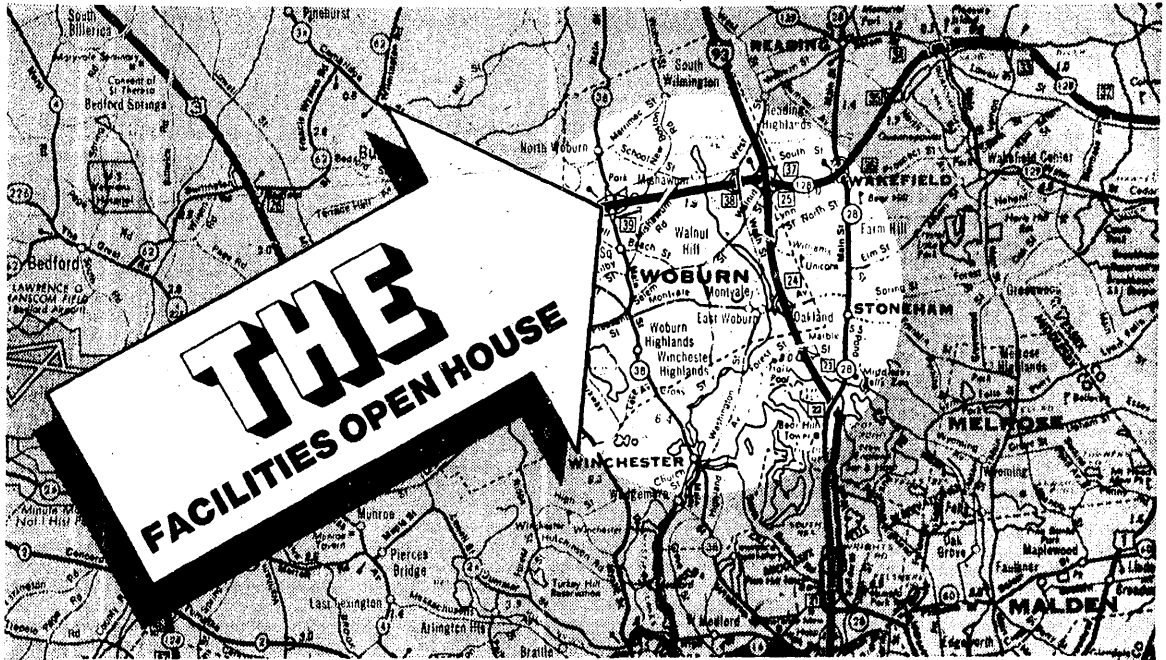
Mark Kimball passed 10 miles in 50:33 with Dean at 50:45 and Palmer, now in the midst of a group of six or so runners, trying to draft

off his pace. Reaching the Faulkner Hospital half-way point in a quick 1:06.20, Kimball again led brother Dean but Palmer had taken sole possession of third, clocked at 1:07.50.

Palmer caught Dean and began to close on Mark ("I was out there by myself from three miles to about 21 and it was tough," Kimball said). He cut 30 seconds off

Kimball's lead in the 19th mile and 29 more seconds in the 20th mile before catching him just before the former James Michael Curley homestead at 21.6 miles.

"Hey, I'm not going to beat Rod Dixon, but it was a real competitive field and I just wanted to run evenly," said Palmer, the women's cross-country coach at Brandeis.



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