

How They Train – New England Style

Mike Grant

by Michael A. Musca mmusca@maine.rr.com

How can I ignore Mike Grant? Since we share the same birth date and served military time on the same isolated Pacific Island in the same time period, we joke with that we were separated at birth. True to some degree. Just as we ran this year's marathon together until mile eighteen, there comes a point where our paths diverge. Mike went on to become one of two "old fart" MIT marathoners to run under three-hours for the first time this year. Mike is a relative newcomer to this sport. He's made some amazing strides since his debut in 1996. I'll let him tell his remarkable story...

"I was not a jock in school, and besides having a fairly active job, I got very little exercise. When my daughter became a freshman in 1996, she wanted to run on the roads. I was concerned about her doing this alone, so I started jogging with her. I looked in the mirror and figured I looked pretty fit, as long as I ignored the beer gut. My first time I ran a tad over 2 miles in 22 minutes. What I remember most from that day was lying on the living room carpet with tanned rison, gasping for air. Soon I was running 2 or 3 miles every day, but I took the whole winter off, as I figured that no smart adult would run in the snow.

One of my accounts I serviced was Shaw's in Windham, where Don Hebert was the produce manager. He was probably the one person next to my daughter who got me interested in racing. He was always more than ready to talk about running or racing. He told me there was a race in Windham on Oct 10 (1997). I went in my work truck straight from the job. There were only 54 people there but to me it looked like the Olympic Trials. I finished 9th with a time of 21:23, and even got an age division award. (I had turned forty only 8 days earlier) The New Years Day 5k 1998 was my first time under 20 with a time of 19:48. What I remember the most was that at the start it was 5 degrees below zero. At the Literacy Volunteers 5k on June 28 1998 I ran a 18:36. I had run my first marathon in Vermont a month earlier and learned the benefit of a good endurance base. The same race in 1999 was my first 5k under 18 with a 17:48. The same race in 2000 I ran a 17:16. The Literacy Volunteers race has been my measuring stick for improvement. Up to this point the improvement curve has been good, but it's starting to flatten out. 2000 was the first year that I really hit the track hard during the week, and I would like to think that it was of fair benefit to me.

Before I started running, I weighed 20 lbs. More (with all of it around the waist), and drank quite liberally. I gradually drank less as I ran more, and I'm happy to say that I haven't had a beer in almost 2 years."

Name: Mike Grant
Age: 43;
Affiliation: Maine Track Club

Best Marks:

5k: 16:58;
10k: 36:42;
Marathon: 2:57:52



Mike Grant

Personal Statistics:

Birth Date: October 2, 1957
Birthplace: Portland, ME
Height: 5'7"
Weight: 140 lbs.;
Marital Status: Married with one daughter
Years Running: 4
Pre-Training Warm-up: 2 easy miles
Stretching: light before run, 2 or 3 times throughout day after run.

Log Book: I use Runner's World training log. I write in all the particulars of the run or workout, including the weather, how the workout felt, who I trained with. It more resembles a diary. I also use the back of my race bibs as a race summary for future reference.

Daily Workouts:

Monday: off
Tuesday: 5 or 6 easy
Wednesday: Speedwork
Thursday: 5 or 6 easy
Friday: Tempo run or hill repeats
Saturday: off or easy run, depending on how I feel
Sunday: long run (length depending on training program)

Mileage: 35 regularly, 55-60 for marathon training

Favorite Workouts: 8x400 w/40sec. recovery; Mile repeats for marathon training. I like to start with 6@ 20 sec. faster than race pace w/ 80 sec. recovery, and work up to 12@ 25 sec. faster w/60 sec. recovery.

Favorite Races: Great Pumpkin 10K, Vermont City Marathon, Cape Mid-Winter 10 mile Classic

Favorite training course: People's Beach to Beacon 10K. It has a little of everything, and the miles are marked.

Favorite running route: The woods trails by my house. Trail runs are a great way to mentally "clean the clock".

Running Heroes: Steve Prefontaine, Regina Jacobs

Who inspired you to run? My daughter. I took it up to find out why she enjoyed running and competing so much. I found out.

Why do I run? - For both the relaxation and the satisfaction of being fit. I also greatly enjoy the camaraderie runners show each other. It's great to see how people compete with, and at the same time support each other at the races.