

Hale captures 5-miler

Perkins top woman in Pats' Day race

By TOM CHARD
Staff Writer

Greg Hale of Waterville, running in his first Portland Patriots' Day 5-miler, pulled away early and coasted to victory in the 61st race Monday.

Hale, 27, took command on Baxter Boulevard, running away from the lead pack that included Andy Palmer, Bob Winn and Bob Everett.

Sally Perkins of Kennebunk was the women's winner.

Hale was timed in 24 minutes, 36 seconds. Palmer finished second in 25:15. Perkins was clocked in 28:28.

Voted Maine's outstanding runner last year, Hale has been the hottest runner on Maine's roads. He was persuaded by Palmer to give Portland a try. Hale and Palmer are Madawaska natives and good friends.

"I haven't been around," said Hale, asked why he hadn't run here before.

"I've concentrated on other things in the past. The last few years it's been the Ekiden team races. Andy convinced me that it was an important race. My time wasn't super. It's early in the season," said Hale, who works for S.D. Warren as an engineer.

The race is sponsored by the Portland Boys and Girls Club. A record field of 900 runners ran the course in sunny 60-degree weather.

Despite the ideal conditions, the race record of 23:33 set by Sam Pelletier in 1984 was kept intact.

Winn led for the first mile with Hale, Everett and Palmer on his heels. Hale took the lead at the start of Baxter Boulevard and kept building his lead with a sub-5-minute mile pace.

"I wanted to wait and see who took the lead. After the first mile, I felt the pace was too slow. We had a tailwind down the boulevard, which was nice," said Hale.

Halfway through the race, it was clear Hale wouldn't be challenged. He ran alongside Winn on Forest Avenue but had a 30-yard lead on Palmer three-quarters of a mile later. At Payson Park, Hale had doubled his lead.

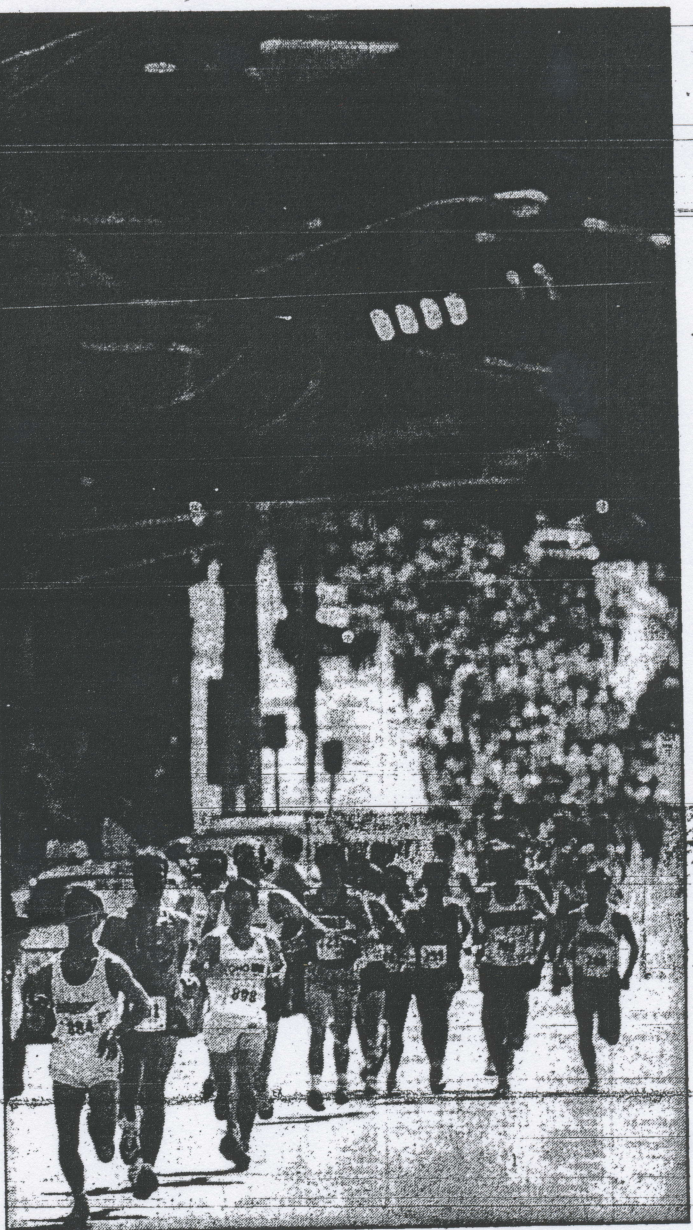
"When Greg went out with a 4:45 pace, I knew I wasn't fast enough to go after him," said Palmer.

Hale was greeted with a stiff headwind on Tukey's Bridge. That, and the fact he felt he wasn't in top racing form, ruled out any chance of breaking Pelletier's record.

Rounding out the top 10 were Tom Dann, Bob Sprague, Everett, Danny Paul, Winn, Ken Botting, Bob Wanamaker and Stu Hogan.

Winn looked strong early but faded, not being in the best racing condition. Paul, 36, a Greeley High track coach and Mr. Consistency, faded in the top 10 after the 4th time.

Defending champion Paul Hammond of Wilmington, Mass., failed to make an appearance although he had sent in an entry. Women's defender Wanda Haney Binette started, but dropped out.



Staff photos by Jay Reiter

A record field of 900 heads down Forest Avenue during the 61st Portland Patriots' Day 5-mile race Monday. Winner Greg Hale, right, pulls away at the 4-mile mark.

Hale's victory adds to the list of Aroostook County winners. He joins Pelletier, a three-time winner, and Palmer, a two-time winner. His next race will be a 5K at Northeastern University in Boston on May 6.

"I feel good about winning the race. Most of the guys aren't in top shape, but it's still nice to win. Andy and Bob Winn are excellent runners."

Perkins, a cross-country coach at Kennebunk High, took control early and was never headed. Edie Dubord was second in 29:47.

Rounding out the top 10 women were Gail Turner, Christine Braceras, Robin Rappa, Veronica Knight, Kelley Cullenberg, Susan Haynie, Deanna Hodgkin and Ellen Grant.

