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**1993 USATF Masters 8k Cross Country Championships**

BY FRED TRESELER

The Boston Running Club played host for the second year to the largest USATF National Masters 8k Cross-Country Championships ever held, on a brisk Saturday afternoon Nov. 20 at Franklin Park in Boston. This year's event, which was once again sponsored by Grand Circle Travel of Boston, attracted 363 athletes from over 15 states, almost doubling last year’s entrants. To further facilitate athletes travelling from out of town, the meet directors contracted a meet hotel, the Day Inn in Newton, which offered a special room rate to all athletes. The meet directors also provided a hospitality suite at the Days Inn Friday night before the event, which allowed for last minute entries, number, and T-shirt pick up, as well as a chance to mingle with other athletes from all over the United States. One athlete expressed her appreciation, "The hospitality suite on Friday was an excellent addition and was certainly the place to hang out in town that night. I think it's great to have the opportunity to meet a few of the out-of-town competitors."

The first race of the afternoon was the M40-49 race, which included a special guest athlete, the renowned Bill Rodgers, among the 163 master men who toed the starting line. Repeat winner, Charlie McMullen, 26:08, representing the Rochester TC of New York, took an early lead and was followed by a tight pack, which included Rodgers, who placed second overall in 26:30. Chris Farmer of the Sugarloaf Mt. Athletic Club followed Rodgers with a 26:36. Greater Lowell took the 40+ team championship by seven seconds over Maine Masters. High noon found the Boston Running Club’s 50+ seniors team once again defending their title against challenges from Greater Lowell and the Hartford Track Club. Although Greater Lowell's Doug MacGregor won the overall M50 race, the strong efforts by Roland Cormier (2), Chuck Keating (5), Gabriel Bernal (6), Kirk Randall (13), and Bob Clark (24) provided the outstanding depth for the BRC to win by two minutes.

The M55-59 race was won by Victory AC member, Bill Olrich, in a time of 30:00. He and his teammates had travelled quite a distance the night before, having experienced flight delays from Lexington, Kentucky, and still managed to reach the Hospitality Suite in time to register more teammates for the race. Despite inclement weather during the men's 50+ race, the sun promptly reappeared in time for the day's third and final race, 60+ men and all women. From gun to tape, Joe Fernandez, M65, of the Greater Bedford Track Club, and Rebecca Stockdale-Woolley, 42, of the Central Mass Striders keyed off one another and ran away from the field, averaging 6:18 and 6:19 per mile, respectively. Unfortunately, Fernandez had an incomplete team, and the Men's 60 team title went to the Syracuse Chargers with a time of 1:40:04 followed by the Maine Masters in second and the BAA in third.

Stockdale-Wooley’s CMS team of Sue Aronvitz and Peg Buxton captured the women’s team title by a comfortable six minutes over second place Run-To-Win Maine. Ann Igoe, returning to racing form, led the BRC team (Schmitt and Francis) with a swift 34:29. Miyazaki World Master Championships gold medalist Liz Szawlowski , who was still officially in active rest once again came away with gold winning the W60 age group. This race also featured the meet’s oldest competitors, Bob Boal, 81, Wake Forest, NC and 80 year-old Bill Brobston from Saugerties, NY.

BRC women's competitor, Anne Schmitt commented after her finish, "I know that it is not easy to put on multiple events and races, particularly as the competitors in each race need to feel that their event is as important as the ones that preceded it. The consideration we were given couldn’t have been higher. There was plenty of water and fresh fruit at the finish, not to mention cheers for us and the older men throughout the race. This was definitely a first class event; the Boston Running Club should be proud.” The meet directors and the host dub took great pride in fine tuning the course layout as well as providing abundance of course marshals. One competitor recognized, "The course was extremely well-marked this year, with no chance of anyone taking a wrong turn. I felt all that yellow tape helped considerably." Kirk Randall, team captain of the BRC SO + team and USA TF Masters LOR Chairman, commented, "I would like to pass along my appreciation to the meet directors and all the BRC volunteers who helped to make this championship a most successful event. It was undoubtedly the best National Masters Championship (LDR)of the year. Maybe we can attract a field of 500 next year; a worthy goal, don't you think?"