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Boston Marathon run fulfills lifelong goal for Pam Blair

Jon Kuiperij

Apr 18, 2004

Pam Blair is running down a dream.

After more than a decade of competitive running, Blair will fulfill a lifelong goal tomorrow (Monday) when she lines up to run in the 108th Boston Marathon.

The 40-year-old Burlington resident, a drama teacher at Georgetown District High School, has woken up at 5:15 a.m. the last 125-plus Saturdays to train for the race.

In addition to her weekend runs, which typically last between 2-4 hours and cover anywhere from 13-20 miles, Blair also completes six-mile and three-mile runs twice a week.

"I (tell friends) I'm a nervous wreck, but they say 'Pam, you've done all the work. The rest of it is easy'," Blair said Friday.

"I think it's the pressure of finally meeting (my) goal that is so nervewracking."

Blair completed her first four full-length marathons around the four-hour mark, a pace she termed as "decent", but trimmed nearly 15 minutes off her time after she began training with the Bay City Runners.

"I always thought dropping 15 minutes off seemed like a lot, but I was always



Ted Brown, Special to The Post

Pam Blair has spent a lot of early mornings training for tomorrow's prestigious Boston Marathon, a race participants must qualify for.

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training by myself," she said. "When I started running with a group of runners, most of (whom are) a fair bit older than myself, I started to cut back some of my time."

The club, which includes Nancy Barnes (who will also compete in Boston) and former Ironman competitor Kathy Coffey, meets at Cedar Springs fitness club during the week and at LaSalle Park on weekends. Bay City athletes jokingly refer to the Burlington Runners Club as the "afternoon shift" when the runners pass each other Saturdays at 8 a.m.

Blair has managed to balance her training with a busy professional and personal life. In addition to her teaching, she also coaches the Georgetown DHS swim club, teaches piano and vocals, is an aerobics instructor at Exclusively Women's Fitness Centre in Burlington, and works as host and producer of Sunday programs at 740 AM Radio in Oakville.

"It's taking its toll. I want this to be done," Blair said, noting her husband Jeff Turner and son Eli Pawliw have been very supportive of her endeavours. "Training for anything up to 18 miles is easy. Beyond the 18-mile mark is excessive, and (training for) 26 miles is a lot of time."

Blair earned the right to compete in the Boston Marathon by posting a time of three hours and 48 minutes at a qualifying event last fall in Corning, N.Y., two minutes under the maximum time limit for the women's 40-45 division. She hopes for a similar performance in Boston.

"I want to be able to run Boston the way I ran the qualifier. Under four hours would be nice," Blair said of her expectations.

"(Boston's) one of the toughest courses. It's very narrow, there's 20,000 people and the best runners in the world."

The Boston Marathon is scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m. and will be broadcast on U.S. national television by ESPN2.

- Blair is one of at least 17 Burlington athletes, including Kelly Carcuro, David Collins, Mark Collis, Mary Cousineau, Linda Haldane, Chris Jocelyn, Margaret Lagden, Cynthia Lays, Marlene Line, Ron Olsthoorn, Steven Pedersen, Andrew Pierce, Tosha Sarachman, Gregory Scace and Jackie Terry, competing in tomorrow's Boston Marathon.

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