

## Rob Rose Column - 2/18/08

I am writing this column shortly after returning from last Sunday's Old Fashioned 10 Miler in Foxboro. I have been at this race every year it has been held and it is an enjoyable occasion to be here. The Foxboro Co.'s cafeteria serves as the race headquarters and on this typical February afternoon, everyone is clustered within its close confines to stay warm. It is a great opportunity to socialize.

For many, the OFTM is their first race of the new year and an opportunity to see running friends last seen in the fall. There are so many people to greet and talk to that I sometimes find it an inconvenience to do what I came here to do; write the race story for this newspaper. But I manage to chat with many but not as long as I would like. In addition to fellow Wampanoag Road Runner members that I haven't seen for some time, there are also members of Colonial, Tri-Valley, Norfolk County, Runaways, Thirsty Irish, Greater Framingham, B.A.A. and more. I try to rekindle old friendships and begin new ones.

Four months from now I will be back in the Foxboro Co. cafeteria for another road race and the circumstances will be completely different. Although there will be more people here for that race, the Foxboro Against Diabetes 5K (FAD 5K), there will be one very large difference. I will know practically no one.

It's interesting how two road races that on the surface are the same can be so different. It all comes down to purpose. The OFTM is a road race first and a fund raiser second and the Foxboro Run Against Diabetes 5K is a fund-raiser first and a road race second. Under those circumstances, it's no surprise that the people who populate these events are also different.

The Old Fashioned 10 Mile started thirteen years ago for runners preparing for the Boston Marathon. It is always held eight weeks before Boston and runners use it to gauge their preparation for the 26.2 mile journey.

In contrast, the FAD 5K was a fund-raiser from day one and it has been phenomenally successful. Last year it had 707 finishers, the most of any local road race. Co-race director Rich Noonan once told me, "We believe it is because Foxboro is a tight knit community and the town's people are strong supporters of its fund-raisers." That's for sure. Last year over 300 Foxboro residents turned out in support.

Perhaps one with the best perspective on this is a Foxboro resident who has participated in both races. Kevin Coughlan was there on Sunday and has run the FAD 5K in the past. He brings an insightful eye to the discussion. "The OFTM tends to draw a more

avid runner than your typical recreational runner," he observed. "The runners that are in shape to run a ten mile race in February are typically runners getting ready to run a spring marathon or half marathon. Almost anyone can decide to run a 5K race as late as the day before. However, you need to be in better shape to consider running a ten mile race. The fact that the OFTM is a major race helps to draw a more elite field than you would typically have for a local race."

No doubt that the OFTM is a haven for the more serious devotee to come out to run distance in the depth of winter. But perhaps the biggest visible difference is children. At the OFTM, children are not present. In June at the FAD 5K, children are omnipresent as approximately sixty students from the Burrell, Taylor and Igo schools are circulating about wearing T-shirts with their school names embossed on them. The Foxboro schools conduct a physical fitness program in the early spring to prepare students for the race. Of course, that many students has a multiplier effect with numerous parents, grandparents and relatives accompanying them. That greatly expands the field and many of those people will walk the race, which points up another difference between the races. Walkers are scarce at the OFTM.

Coughlan cited another difference that only a Foxboro resident would note. "The Foxboro Diabetes 5K is heavily publicized locally in the newspaper and flyers around town," he said. "The OFTM is not publicized locally and I doubt that many Foxboro residents are even aware of this race. It is a great race and it would be good to have some more Foxboro residents involved."

Although the races exist in different spheres, there are a few similarities. Last year, nine runners ran both races and Cathy Campbell of the Boston Athletic Association has won the women's race of both the OFTM and FAD 5K in the past.

The two races will continue to operate in their own successful orbits and maybe some day I'll meet someone that I know at the FAD 5K.

Footnotes - There will be a fund-raiser for the late Bobby Doyle on March 1 at Bishop Hendrickson High School in Warwick, RI; Doyle was in the opinion of many, the greatest distance runner in Rhode Island history, winning several Rhode Island marathons and placing high at the Boston Marathon in the 70's and 80's; Doyle passed away recently at the age of 59 of a heart attack; contact George McLaughlin 401-273-3935 or seoirse49@cox.net for more information ... the Mt. Washington 7.6 mile road race will open its website ([www.gsr.org](http://www.gsr.org)) on March 1 for entry into the lottery for the June 21st race; there are only 1100 available slots and you need to return your lottery application by March 15 ...Sunday's Hyannis races closed out registration two weeks ago; the marathon, marathon relay, half

marathon and 10K reached their limits in the shortest time ever  
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