

Chris Stewart Wins the 1981 Baltimore Marathon; Kathy Heckman Sets a Record

By Kent Baker

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Chris Stewart charged away from the competition on the incoming "subway course" yesterday and won the first Baltimore City Marathon by nearly three minutes.

The 34-year-old Californian finished without a serious challenge in 2 hours 19 minutes 56 seconds while navigating a new all-city course rendered tougher by cold, swirling, 15-25 mile an hour winds.

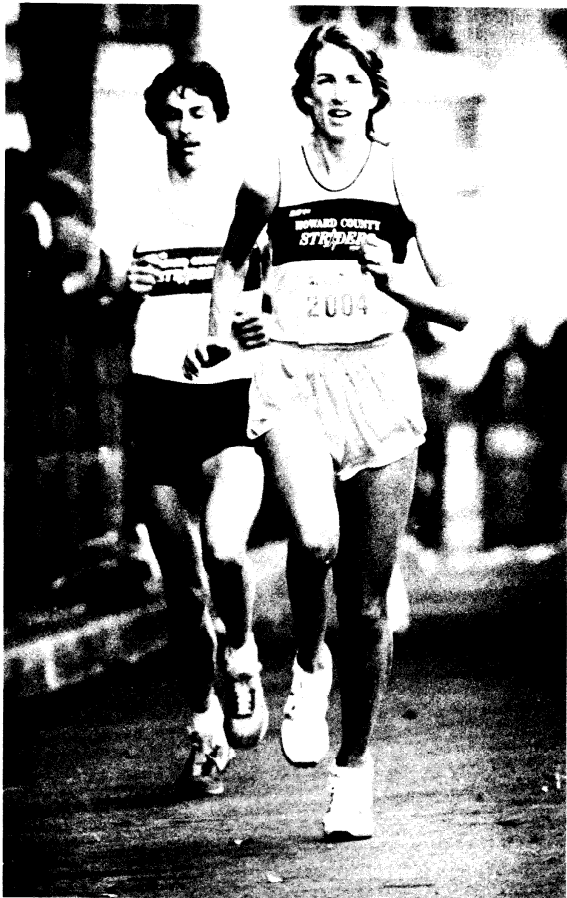
After the early pace-setters dropped like duckpins, Jim Hage, 23, grabbed second in 2:22:49. Only nine runners were able to crack the 2:30 barrier over a surprisingly resistant layout.

"Whoever decided that this course was going to be flat and fast should run it once," declared Fred Lebow, director of the New York City Marathon, who ran it in 3:50 and change. "It seemed like every neighborhood had its own Satyr Hill. I think Baltimore is going to be a marathon to reckon with."

Stewart's victory was a just reward for the British tradition that permeates Maryland's annual event. With Ron Hill and his Union Jack shorts absent for the first time in nine years, the transplanted Briton who now resides in Los Angeles provided the same touch of class.

With Bill Rodgers not a competitive factor, the favorites' roll was reduced to Stewart, California mountaineer Chuck Smead, Hagerstonian Terry Baker, and John Doub, of Waynesboro, Pa., a sleeper in the field. Besides Stewart, only Doub cracked a top 20 which included 11 Marylanders.

Stewart resolutely adhered to his pre-race strategy of laying off the pace, rejecting any temptation to steal the race, then turning on the after-burners on the downhill leg beginning on



Strophes Photo by Ted Knechtman

Women's Champion: Kathy Heckman approaches the finish line

Reisterstown road. He was in excellent shape after running what he described as an "easy 2.15" at New York last month.

"I felt it was going to be a grueling race," he commented after his second Baltimore triumph—the 10-kilometer Constellation Race was the other—within six months. "I knew the local boys would be good here, and I felt it would be close. So I played it by ear."

As the race developed, Baker and Doub battled for dominance through the rugged middle portion, but Stewart was lurking just behind, never out of contention.

Baker, the special education teacher, reported no re-occurrence of the tendinitis which had plagued his foot in recent races, but was claimed by another impediment. He said that after 20 miles "I felt I had to have more of a lead, but when I tried to get it, I got dizzy." The victim of a touch of influenza, Baker dragged in, 49th in 2:42:07.

Doub has been deadily at shorter distances, but grudgingly was forced to give ground yesterday after about 20 miles. Hage said he observed Doub walking at approximately that point. "I guess I expected too much out of myself," said Doub.

Smead, troubled by a stomach virus, was not equal to a repeat of the 2:13 he registered in Oregon recently. He struggled in at 2:36:25 in 27th place.

"People kept dropping," related Hage, "so I guess I kind of defaulted

into second. I, too, slowed down quite a bit the second half. I thought 'Oh, if this second half is like the first half, I'm in real trouble.' The (early) pack just split apart at 10 miles, but I just kept running my race."

Hage lives in Rockville and attends Boston University's law school. He has a 2:20:08 to his credit, but also a problem with a stress fracture that first occurred when he was in high school.

Maryland's honor was upheld in the women's race, 26-year-old Kathy Heckman, of Woodbine, shaving a second from the record set by Jean Kerr last year over the old course with a 2:49:12 effort.

It was the second victory here (also 1978) for Heckman, who beat Sue Crowe, of State College, Pa., into the Civic Center by almost four minutes. Kerr, the pre-race choice, was also troubled by sickness, but salvaged fifth place in 2:57:54.

She credited her recent training with Warren Ohlrich, a Columbia-based runner, for her relatively lopsided decision and ability to break her 2:50 objective.

"I started to worry at about 12 and 13 miles, because we were just running so slow," she appraised afterward. "There was no way I was going to be under 2:50 at that pace, so I just forgot about splits and started running for place."

By the 18-mile mark, she was confident everyone else in the women's race was a trailer. "I didn't worry about Jean (Kerr), but I kept my eye

out for her. I passed some girl who had stockings on, but I knew there was no way it was Jean Kerr, wearing stockings."

Carroll Myers, another threat, was put away on the trip up the JFX to the Druid Hill exit. Myers lagged in 10th in 3:07:27.

"After 17 miles, it was pretty easy," related Heckman. "I had run the subway race, and this was almost the same for the last 8 miles. I knew the wind would basically be at our backs, and it was fast from there down."

Weather conditions precluded a total and accurate assessment of the new course, with the prevailing winds, which reached unexpected velocity, playing a dominant role. Loss of time to the breeze was generally estimated at five minutes, leaving the course with a 2:14 rating, a tough one.

"This was a strong man's race," evaluated Stewart, "and that's one reason I was concerned with conserving my strength. The wind was tough and hard over the hills. The course was tough, up and down, but exciting. I'm just glad I had enough to do it at the end."

"The wind was a big factor in the beginning, and I figured there was no sense fighting it," added Heckman. "If it hadn't been for the wind, the course probably wouldn't have been as bad because the hills are pretty well spread out."

The 2,135 starters probably won't soon forget this experience. At the end, even Satyr Hill might have seemed almost tame.



Spectators await the runners. . .