



MARATHON & Beyond

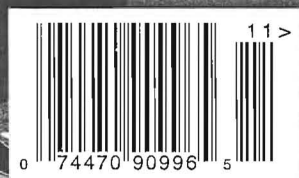
**Celebrating
Life at the
Oklahoma
City Memorial
Marathon**

**Why Long
Distance Is
Still King**

**Leaving
Las Vegas**

**Dean
Karnazes
Runs
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What, No Porta-Potties?

There's More to a Good Marathon Than Fancy Finisher Medals.

BY JAMES L. DOTI

There I was, at the appointed time, under the clock tower in Arusha, Tanzania, to run in the Mount Meru International Marathon. Said to be at the midpoint of Africa between Cairo and Cape Town, the clock tower is where the marathon information directed runners for the start of the race. But where were the porta-potties and thousands of people I had come to expect after running the likes of the Chicago and Los Angeles marathons?

I saw only about 50 Kenyan and Tanzanian runners and a small band that inexplicably played music that sounded vaguely like Dixieland jazz. There were also a handful of nonlocals in racing garb. Seeing my puzzlement, one of them approached me and introduced himself as Don Harris, a sponsor of the marathon. He assured me that this was indeed the starting place and suggested I not worry about small things like porta-potties.

He then proceeded to introduce the other three members of his relay team. I was startled when the last runner he introduced said, "You know me, Jim. I'm from Orange County. You even tried to get a donation from me for Chapman University."

I did, indeed, know John Michler, a local engineer. Because I'm president of Chapman University, it's not surprising that I had asked him to give to my favorite school. But to meet him like this in the middle of Africa was quite a shock. The poor guy must have thought my persistence as a fund-raiser led me to tail after him all the way to East Africa.

It turned out that John, Don Harris, and the rest of his relay team are members of World Runners. They explained that this group raises funds to further the mission of its parent organization, Global Partners for Development, which provides educational opportunities and supports projects to promote self-sufficiency in developing countries like Tanzania. The team members would run the race knowing that they would be helping to accomplish things like providing educational opportunities for young people and developing clean water systems and nutrition programs for the villages.

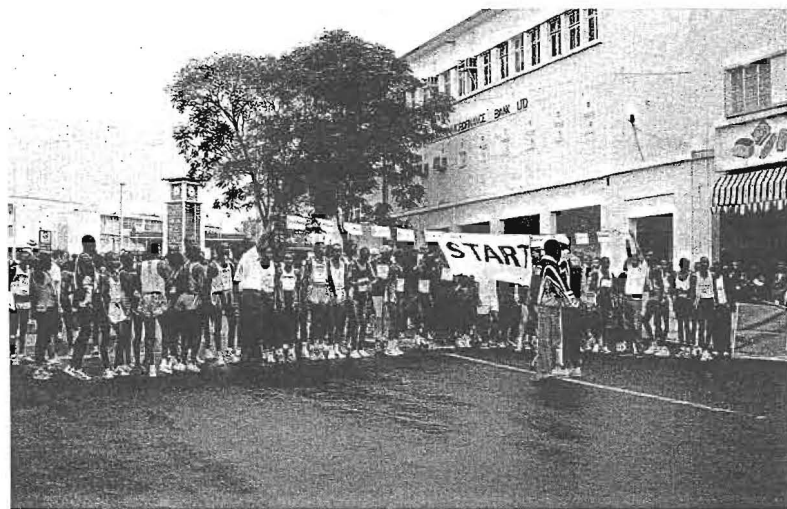
At this point, however, my attention was focused not so much on the valuable work of Global Partners and World Runners as it was on my competition. In addition to Don's relay team, there were 50 or so litesome African runners who all looked like they were easily capable of a sub-3:00 marathon. And then there was me, a relatively new marathoner, who at age 57 would be happy to complete the race in four to five hours.

Because of my concern, I asked whether the stadium where the marathon ended would stay open for late finishers. They assured me it would and not to worry about it. "Don't worry about the porta-potties, either," John added. "There are plenty of places to pee in bushes along the road. Just wait until you get out of town."

WHAT? NO CHAMPIONCHIPS?

So with that last admonition, I lined up in back of the Kenyans and Tanzanians and told myself it was too late to back out now. In front of us stood two officials, one on each side of the street, with a string held high in the air and pulled taut between them. Suspended from the center of the string was a large piece of paper with the word "START" written on it. For any runners who might still be confused, as I had been, the start line was now clearly designated. A horn sounded, and we were off!

About five seconds into the race, I was all alone, except for some early-Sunday-morning traffic. Evidently, there was no traffic control for the marathon. Carts pulled by people, donkeys, or cows assumed the right of way.



Courtesy of James L. Doti

▲ The author at the "START," with the clock tower in the background.

▶ The "Dixieland Band" entertained runners along the way.

Thankfully, I had a secret weapon. I had contracted with a local guide named Martin to drive my wife, Lynne, and son, Adam, ahead of me through the race. They would provide me with water every few miles and also make sure I stayed on the marathon course. Since I had been warned that the route was poorly marked, it was a comfort that Martin knew the way. As I left the city outskirts on the main road, it was a great relief to see



Courtesy of James L. Doti

the three of them waiting for me. Martin alerted me to a turn I needed to make onto a dirt path bordered on either side by coffee plantations.

Running through coffee plantations may sound somewhat idyllic. Unfortunately, the path was about 10 miles long and filled with huge potholes. Avoiding them required as much attention as I could muster. Once again, I was happy to see my pit crew waiting for me about halfway through the 10-mile stretch. As I ran toward them, Lynne exclaimed: "You were pretty brave back there not quickening your pace with that huge bull charging you." Since I had been fixated on the potholes and oblivious to the close proximity of any agitated bovine creatures, I replied, "What bull?"

I quickly concluded that to make it to the finish safely, I would have to widen my range of vision and be a little more aware of my surroundings. I noticed, for example, a small doglike creature bound out in front of me. Martin, an incredibly knowledgeable expert on anything flora or fauna, later told me, "That wasn't a dog. It was a tdik-tdik, the smallest antelope in the world. You were lucky to see one. I didn't think there were any in these parts."

After negotiating my way through the potholes, bulls, and tdik-tdiks, I found myself on the main road again, headed back toward Arusha's city center. People

appeared along the side of the road and seemed to wave and smile at me. Lynne later explained that my fans were actually making hand signals that communicated their belief that I was *mjenga* (“crazy” in Swahili). But at the time, I was happy that I was no longer alone. Not only did I have what I thought were enthusiastic supporters, but also in Pied Piper–like fashion, I had attracted a group of kids who joined me in the marathon. While I was running in the latest running gear, these kids ran barefooted or in flip-flops. Amazingly, they kept up with me, and several even rotated their hands in the universal signal to speed up. Since I was nearly at mile 20 at this point, I responded with the universal shrug that said, “Sorry, I’m doing the best I can.” At least I didn’t take the walk breaks I had planned. These kids probably wouldn’t have fully appreciated the efficiency of the Galloway run/walk plan.

WHAT? NO GAGGLE OF LEADERS IN SIGHT?

Nearing the outskirts of the city, I finally saw in the distance an actual marathon runner. Suddenly, I remembered a story Jeff Galloway had told during a running school he had held at Chapman University several months earlier. Jeff related the inspiring story of Dave Wottle, one of his teammates in the 1972 Olympics. Although an injury had hindered his training for his 800-meter competition, Dave was just barely able to qualify for the final race. Well into that race, he was

40 meters behind the field. Still, he did not give up. Dave decided he wanted to finish next to last rather than in last place. He focused on the runner just ahead of him and overtook him. He followed that strategy, runner by runner, until he was just behind the gaggle of lead runners. Suddenly, right at the finish, there was a parting of the gaggle, and Dave dove through to break the tape and win the gold medal.

My goals were less ambitious. If I could only overtake one runner! Feeling pretty good now that I had fan support and my small running partners, I imagined I was in the final stages of the Olympic marathon. Gaining ground, I soon noticed that I was back in the city. But unbeknownst to the townspeople of a dramatic turn taking place in their city’s marathon, they were going on about their daily business.

It was clearly apparent that Sunday is Arusha’s big market day. The congestion was far worse than earlier in the morning when I started the race. I was now running in traffic congestion that rivaled anything I’ve experienced in Southern California. In spite of that, I ran on, still focused on the runner who was now just slightly ahead of me.

A burst of speed finally got me ahead of a Kenyan runner who looked to be about 80 years old. Nevertheless, I wouldn’t be last, or would I?



Courtesy of James L. Doti

▲ The author—the Pied Piper—and his running partners.



MARATHON
MOBILE • ALABAMA
JANUARY 13, 2008
Time: 7:30 A.M.
USATF CERTIFIED COURSE

Full & Half-Marathon • 5-Person Relay • Pre & Post Race Meals
Walkers Welcome (7-hr. Limit) • Relay Teams Welcome
Packet pickup, expo, pre & post race meal, race start & finish all at the host hotel. Special rates for runners!
Marty O'Malley 251/476-8732
firstlightmarathon@hotmail.com • www.firstlightmarathon.com

Martin was no longer keeping up with me, and with a sudden dread, I realized there would be no way for him to get through all this traffic. Cars, carts, and wagons were darting out here and there, and even on foot it was a struggle. To make matters worse, I had no idea how to get to the stadium where the finish line waited. I realized I could let the octogenarian Kenyan overtake me and then follow him in, but my pride wouldn't allow for that.

Luckily, the stars were aligned in my favor. The World Runners relay team had completed the race a half hour earlier and figured I might need some help. John Michler kindly came out to meet me and ran the final mile a second time in order to escort me to the finish.

My finish time: 4 hours, 36 minutes. Place: 43rd out of 44 runners.

The winner of the race was a Kenyan, David Kipligat Kwino, who finished in 2 hours, 15 minutes. His prize was a Samsung cell phone handset worth Tsh 300,000 and talking airtime valued at Tsh 100,000 (a total equal to about \$400 USD). Unfortunately, the airtime will be of little value to David since the local cellular phone services provider, CelTel Tanzania, doesn't offer coverage in Kenya.

The winner in the women's category, in 2 hours and 40 minutes, was Fabiola William, a Tanzanian from the Kilimanjaro Police. So happily she will be able to actually use her airtime.

WHAT? NO MEDAL?

After the race, Martin and the rest of my pit crew joined me. They were there to hug and congratulate me as I received a signed certificate of completion. There was no medal! Nor was there any food to restock my depleted glycogen stores. So when Martin suggested we go into town for lunch at his favorite Chinese restaurant, Shanghai Gardens, I readily agreed, not even thinking about whether Chinese food was on Jeff Galloway's list of acceptable postrace foods.

While we dined on what tasted to me like the best Chinese food I had ever had, Martin and Adam argued over whether Phil Collins or Elton John sang the background song being played in the restaurant. Here I was in the heart of Africa in a Chinese restaurant hearing a debate between an American and a Tanzanian over the song stylings of two English singers. We truly do live in a global society.

I learned a great lesson in competing in the 19th annual Mount Meru Marathon. Up to now, I had evaluated marathons not unlike those who critique marathons on the Web sites I always check before entering a race. It's always about how many water stations there were, the variety of performance drinks offered, the clarity of mileage markers, the postmarathon smorgasbord of bananas and bagels and energy bars, and, perhaps most important, the weight and attractiveness of the marathon medal. Now I know that a marathon's real value is the sights, sounds, experiences, and, most of all, the people that form memories that will last a lifetime.



JAMES L. DOTI is an economist trained at the University of Chicago. Since 1991 he has served as president and as Donald Bren Distinguished Chair of Business and Economics at Chapman University in Orange, California. Jim started running in 2002 as training for mountaineering. He enjoys running so much that he has completed 15 marathons, including the Boston Marathon in 2005 and 2007. His running helped him successfully summit Mount Whitney, Mount Rainer, Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Aconcagua, and Mount Elbrus, along with his son, Adam.