

Diet Helps Pain Doctor Run from Chess Club to Heartbreak's Crown

By Scott Sullivan

Heartbreak Hill marks some summit for a pain-management physician — especially one who, through diet, has managed his own pain and turns 55 this May as alive as he's ever been.

Mark Gostine, M.D., co-owner of Michigan Pain Consultants of Grand Rapids, for years dreamed of running the Boston Marathon. His road to Heartbreak was full of obstacles.

"To start, I had almost no talent," says Gostine. "As a boy, I joined the Detroit City Chess Club. That was as far as my athleticism went.

"At Detroit (now Warren) De La Salle High School, my homeroom teacher, Brother Joseph, asked us what sports we were going to play. He refused to accept any boy in his classroom who would not play sports.

"Brother Joseph was the cross country coach," Gostine goes on. "By default, I ran."

Gostine stayed with running while obtaining his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and his M.D. from Wayne State.

"It was a release for me to run after being on call, and during my internship," he says.

Life leads places: to Kansas City, then back to Michigan. Gostine finished the 1985 Detroit Free Press Marathon and planned to repeat the next year — but ran into complications.

"My wife and I had four children in four-and-a-half years, my practice was busy; my running sort of changed course," says Gostine. "I stayed with it, but no more marathons for a while."

Age brought other challenges. Ten years ago he had plaque removed from his carotid arteries. Gostine's family had a long history of heart disease; he was determined to not repeat it.

His running fell off due to right-hip problems. In the late 1990s he noticed ringing, diagnosed as tinnitus, in his ears.

"My specialist told me I couldn't do anything for the ringing," he says. "I added ginkgo and ginger to my diet, thinking something natural might help me. I still had tinnitus, but my hip pain eased. I could run again!"

"This started me on a nutritional odyssey," Gostine says. "By 2001 I was feeling so well I ran in the Free Press Marathon.

"I'm a medical doctor, but feel nutrition has more to offer me than medicine." (See Gostine's Anti-Inflammation Regimen, below).

Last year Gostine ran Boston at age 54.

Atop Heartbreak Hill stood son Andrew, a pre-med student at Boston College.

"Andrew had ice tea for me there. He knows how I like ice tea,"

What's next? "I'm planning to do the River Bank Run in Grand Rapids this spring," he says. "If I stay healthy, I hope to run the Chicago Marathon.

"I've run for so many years, though, I make concessions. I cross-train a lot, and obviously watch my diet. It motivates me to have a goal race, but if things don't work out, I keep going anyway.

"It's about release and a long-range, healthier life," he says.

Gostine's Anti-Inflammation Regimen

- Take five grams of fish oil per day. Get a brand high in EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid).



Mark Gostine ran the 2005 Boston Marathon at age 54.

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- Eat little dairy except for yogurt, which is very healthy. If you don't like yogurt, take an acidophilus supplement, the beneficial bacteria in yogurt. It comes in capsules and you can find it in the refrigerated section of the health-food store.

- A little bit of alcohol each day is good for your cholesterol, but no more than one drink a day.

- Increasing the fiber content of your diet is very important and will reduce the risk of colon cancer and heart disease by binding the cholesterol in your stool and preventing the reabsorption in the small intestines. Take Metamucil at least once a day.

- We now know insulin causes inflammation. Eat a low glycemic diet, avoiding bread, pasta, pastries, white rice and potatoes. Try to eat just high-quality protein like chicken and seafood with fruits and vegetables. Nuts, beans and whole grains are excellent. Eating a handful of nuts twice a week reduces your risk of heart disease by about 40 percent. Tree nuts like almonds, walnuts and pecans are best.

- Drink green tea instead of coffee; it helps unlock your metabolism. (Gostine drinks at least four cups of tea per day.)

- Season your food liberally with the herb turmeric, a yellow spice found in mustard. It has an earthy flavor like cumin and is used in curry, an Indian spice mixture. It has potent anti-inflammatory qualities, with more than 1,000 articles in the Medline Internet database that have studied its effectiveness.

- Drink one ounce of cherry juice concentrate in water a day, or better, eat dried cherries and blueberries. Colorful fruits help protect your brain and heart.

- Take 1,500 mg. of glucosamine sulfate per day for joint protection.

- Take a high-potency multi-B vitamin (heart protection), 1,000 units of Vitamin D (brain and bone protection) and one gram of calcium per day (bone protection). Solgar and Twin Labs are good brands here.

- Take moderate doses of antioxidant vitamins: Vitamin E as mixed tocopherols, 100 units (Solgar brand); extended-release Vitamin C, 250 mg. per day (any brand); selenium, 100 micrograms per day (Solgar).

- Avoid red meat; get most of your protein from chicken, seafood and the new eggs now in the grocery store that advertise they are high in Omega 3 oils.

- Get rid of all cooking oils except olive oil. Try to substitute it for butter.

- Drink two glasses of soy milk per day. Silk brand vanilla flavor is the tastiest and available at almost all grocery stores.

- Eat seven helping of fruits and vegetables, which are high in antioxidants that help relieve inflammation. Apples, berries and dark greens like spinach are very beneficial.

- Lastly, you may never run a marathon but get out and walk two miles a day. You will feel better. **MR**

KC Ridge Run: Thrills, Chills, Hills

By Daniel G. Kelsey

KENT CITY (3/25/06) — A wealth of record-book and personal firsts warmed a chilly day at the second annual Ridge Run.

Despite contending with an icy wind over the front half of a hilly course, men's and women's victors in the 15K and 5K races quickened the event's speed standards.

Melinda Palinkas negotiated the roller-coaster 15K course in 1:02:57, besting Gayle Kuipers' record by more than a minute. Angelina Bauer, the distaff half of husband-and-wife champions, strode the swells of the 5K course in 20:26, eclipsing the mark of Rachael Steil by almost a minute and a half. Matthew Denhof, 29, of Caledonia, rolled home in 17:56, undercutting Ryan Powell's record by 49 seconds.

Rick Bauer, with a clocking of 54:53 in the 15K, missed the mark of Jimi Minnema by a little more than two minutes.

Rick, 26, of Holland, the masculine half of the husband-and-wife champions, said he'd begun his running season only a couple weeks earlier. "I just came to run this race as a workout," he said.

The former Central Michigan University runner and current employee of Endurance Sports in Muskegon, a Ridge Run sponsor, got a surprise in the country north of Kent City.

"I didn't expect the hills," he said. "Every mile had a serious hill in it."

Angelina Bauer, like her husband, had just begun training for the racing season. The 24-year-old Saugatuck schools Spanish teacher praised the hilly course in one word: "Neat." She took the long climb in the opening half-mile in stride.

"I didn't mind it at all," she said. "I'm pretty good at hills."

Palinkas, 15, of Saranac, liked running the gravel roads, even though she didn't exactly take in the country scenery.

"It was kind of a blur," she said.

Her Ridge Run championship and record time came despite inexperience at the distance. "This is the longest race I've done," Palinkas said.

The Kent City event was a first time out for other competitors. Dan Hill, 33, of Plainwell, a Harding's store manager, made the Ridge Run 5K his first race of any kind. After taking up running the previous September, Hill had been training about 12 to 15 miles in three or four outings a week. His race time of 22:22, a 7:12 pace, rewarded him with an age-group medal.

"For the hills, I was pretty pleased with my time," he said.

Adam Brown, 15, of Muskegon, made the Ridge Run 15K his first distance test. Brown followed the same pattern of preparation as with his two other races, a pair of 5Ks in 2005, starting his training about two-and-a-half weeks before the event. Prior to the Ridge Run he'd logged about 40 miles all told.

He covered the rolling country north of Kent City in 1:07:48, a 7:17 pace. According to Brown, the first six miles were tough, especially mile five, with some steep climbs.

"Then I got a second wind," he said.

Race director Jill Evers-Bowers, Kent City High School boys and girls cross-country coach and girls track coach, featured a 15K race in late March on purpose. The timing offered an early tuneup for runners eyeing the Fifth Third River Bank 25K Run in Grand Rapids May 13. The hills gave the race an added draw.

"It's definitely rolling," Evers-Bowers said.

Because a registration of about 290 competitors in the first annual running swamped organizers, Evers-Bowers added timing services from Great Lakes ChampionChip for 2006. The addition helped warm the day for 346 runners and walkers, 307 of whom crossed the finish line. Their entry fees benefited Kent City running programs.

Evers-Bowers added a perk for hardcore racers the second time around.

"We were proud this year to be a part of the points races for the Muskegon Running Club," she said. **MR**



Photo by Daniel G. Kelsey

Melinda Palinkas won the Ridge Run with a course record 1:02:57.