

BY PENNY WEICHEL

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Yesterday hardly anybody knew who Jack Fultz was. Today many people know who Jack Fultz is.

Winning the Boston Marathon tends to make people famous, and yesterday that's what Fullz, a 27-year-old Franklin High School graduate did.

The Associated Press reported that Fultz, a senior

at Georgetown University, overcame a blistering heat to win the annual event. It also reported that he was overlooked in a field of 1,893 starters, but covered the 26-mile, 385-yard course from Hopkinton to Boston in 2 hours, 20 minutes and 19 seconds.

Fultz's closest challenger was Mario Cuevas of Mexico in 2:21.13 followed by Jose de Jesus of Puerto Rico in 2:22:10 and Jack Foster of New Zealand in 2:22.30.

Foster was the pre-race favorite in a field that was expected to be dominated by foreign runners because of the heat. That's one of the reasons Fullz didn't challenge the meet record of 2:09.55 set last year by Bill Rodgers. The temperature was 116 degrees at the starting line outside Hopkinton High School.

"After one or two miles I was 30th or 40th; after five miles I was about 15th and after 10 miles I was 10th," Fullz said last night in a telephone interview from Boston. "About the halfway point I started to pick up." Fullz, who accepted water, ice cubes and an occasional hosing from spectators along the route, said he took the lead at about the 18-mile mark when he passed Richard Mabuza of Switzerland, one of the early pace-setters along with Radames Vega of Mexico.

This was also the point where the hills of the marathon begin. There are four of them, including Heartbreak Hill, which have doomed many runners in other years. But Fultz handled them easily, and gradually pulled away from the pack.

He said this was the one part of the race he had been training particularly hard for - and he's been training for the race since last fall, the college indoor track season over the winter interrupting his work.

At the finish line he was crowned with the traditional laurel wreath and given the gold sunburst medal by Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis and Boston Mayor Kevin White.

"The heat affected me, it slowed me down." Fullz told AP. "I just kept drinking as much as I could without cramps. "I was fresher at the finish than I thought I'd be."

In fact, he said he'll probably be doing some running today, and will log 60 miles this week in all, which, he said, is down from his normal running total of 100 miles per week. The victory qualified Fullz to run in the Olympic Trials in late May in Eugene, Ore. Fultz's brother, Frank, a teacher and coach at Franklin High School, said had Jack not qualified for the Olympic Trials, the Boston Marathon probably would have been his last race.

"He and Slevey Blair were just two real good hard competitors," recalled Franklin head track coach Larry Schrecengost. "He never thought anything about running from here (Franklin) to Two-Mile Run and then to Oil City and back."

From Franklin Fultz went to the University of Arizona for a year, and then joined the Coast Guard. This is where he really got into longer distance running, marathons and road racing.

In the Coast Guard, where he was stationed in the Washington D.C. area, he was the one-man Special Services Unit; i.e. he was the track team. His track performances in the service, and that he became friends with a lot of people from Georgetown, helped Fultz win a full scholarship from the Hoyas in track. Fultz had a solid career for Georgetown in both track and cross country.

He captained the squads, and set some school records, but he said his big disappointment was that he didn't make All-American.

"This was something I've always wanted to be," Fultz said. His last chance came during the indoor season this past winter in which he took fifth in the 3-mile run in the 1C4A meet.

His eligibility at Georgetown is finished, so he has gone back to concentrating on marathon running.

Yesterday was not the first time he had run in the Boston extravaganza. He also performed there in 1971, '72 and '73 for the Coast Guard, and in '71 ended up 12th, his best finish before yesterday.

Did Fultz think he could win the thing? "Well, I was sure I'd be in the top 10," he answered. Fultz said he wanted to go out and take a refresher course on what the track looked like Sunday, but it was raining, and he didn't have any transportation and nobody wanted to go but he said as he ran the course yesterday, everything came back to him after the two-year layoff from the Boston event.

A finance major at Georgetown who will receive his degree next month, Fultz said he enjoys running, comparing it to being like an artist on stage, although the 99 percent of it is practice before no audience at all. He said it gives a person an opportunity for achievement, and added that one can never stop trying for improvement. "I still haven't stopped learning about distance running," he said.

Meanwhile, back in Franklin, the Fultz family is ecstatic. Jack is the son of Ray Fultz of Buffalo Street. Frank said he didn't find out until late yesterday afternoon when Peg Feldman, a retired English teacher who substitutes at Franklin, heard it on KDKA. Fultz said he called a local radio station to verify the results.

Word eventually spread through the news and by word of mouth. "His objective was to be a big name runner," Frank of his younger brother. "I'll tell you something," he added.

"Bay (Lawrence) made it great. Ted Marchbroda made it great and now Jack.

Franklin's really on the map now. "It's just a dream come true."

"It will probably be the biggest thrill of my life," the runner Fultz said of his Marathon victory. "No matter what I do in the Olympics, I don't think anything can surpass it."

Fultz is a 1966 graduate of Franklin where, naturally, he was a member of the track team. He ran the 100, mile and two-mile relay for the Knights. He held the mile record at one time (which has since been broken by Randy Wilbur) and was a member of the team that held the relay mark. Franklin didn't have cross country then, but Fultz was a member of the football team. He credits head coach Joe Stewart as being one of the great inspirations of his career. "He taught a lot about motivation and intestinal fortitude," Fultz said.

But Fultz, listed on the roster as a 140-pound fullback, wasn't a football star. Actually, on the first play of the first game against Erie Academy, Fultz was hit in the thigh where he developed calcium deposits. Fultz didn't see any more action in football that season, and some doctors told him he'd never run again. But that spring he was back on the track team setting records and qualifying for the state meet.