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## MARATHON NOTEBOOK: Lipsie takes home another masters title

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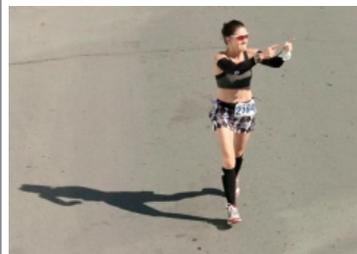
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Butch Comegys / Staff Photographer Rob Leiser of Nazareth was only the hand cyclist entered Sunday, his sixth Steamtown Marathon.



Jason Farmer / Staff Photographer BethAnn Telford, 42 of Fairfax, Va., points to the crowd as she nears the finish line in Sunday's race.



#### Steamtown Marathon

Coverage of the Steamtown Marathon with photos, stories and past winners.

Photo Gallery: Steamtown Marathon

Tom Lipsie might be getting used to the men's masters division winners' circle.

The reigning men's masters winner defended his title with a 2:35:10 performance, besting the second place finisher Henri Kursten by more than 20 minutes.

"It felt great," Lipsie, 44, said. "I like this course. I like the downhill."

It was the 42nd marathon for the Indiana, Pa., native.

Pedro Cerize traveled all the way from Sao Paulo, Brazil, and placed third in the men's masters.

Running in his first marathon in the United States, Cerize, 42, said he found the Steamtown Marathon after searching on the Internet for the world's best marathons.

"I liked the small marathons and it had very good reviews," Cerize said. "(The race) is very fast, but at the same time challenging, because if you make mistakes, you won't finish well."

Karen Dolge of Valatie, N.Y., took home the women's masters title, running her first Steamtown Marathon in 3:12:16.

"It was tougher than I thought. They claim to be a fast course - and it was fast in the first half - but I guess I wasn't prepared for the hills at the end," Dolge said.

Barbara Picard, 47, of Yardley came in second, edging third-place finisher Charlene Lyford, 45, of Emerson, N.J., by less than 30 seconds.

#### Running with cancer

She's done hundreds of marathons, most of them when others told her she shouldn't.

BethAnn Telford, 42, of Washington, D.C., completed her second Steamtown Marathon, running in memory of Adm. Kurt Kunkel, who died two weeks ago.

But she also has an inoperable astrocytoma brain tumor, and with Kunkel and a team, she has raised more than \$300,000 for the National Brain Cancer Institute.

"That's why I run - because I can," she said after the race. "It's my treatment. I get a high off it. It's my drug."

Her dad, Robert, was also at the race for her Sunday, and she carried his handkerchief with her along the route. Telford said it was the fastest she has run. Her time of 3:10:14 qualified her for the 2013 Boston Marathon.

#### Running with homeless

Dan Colameco couldn't wait to congratulate his friend, Matt Kusy, originally from Clarks Summit, after he crossed the finish line.

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Kusy set a personal record, finishing more than 21 minutes ahead of his previous best time.

"I feel incredible, it's the best feeling in the world," Kusy said. "I knew I was in pretty good shape, but this kind of blew my expectations out of the water."

But it's how Kusy got in shape that sets him apart from other runners.

"He trains with homeless people in Philadelphia," Colameco said.

Kusy joined a non-profit group called "Back On My Feet," which partners with homeless shelters around the city and helps homeless people build self esteem and confidence.

"I've been running with them for about two years," Kusy said. "I love running and I was looking for some way to give back to the community and I thought that was a great way to do it."

"It's been one of the most rewarding experiences for me."

Spectator sport

Runners who come here compliment almost everything from the race course to the food put out at the finish line. What doesn't get much attention is that it's a great course for spectators, a point expressed by Ridley Park's Elena Harsaw, whose husband, Robert, was running.

She's been to Boston and had to deal with the hassle of jumping on a subway to try to get from one point on the course to another.

So, being able to park 50 yards from the course, carry a folding chair to the edge of the Lackawanna River and enjoy a comfortable fall afternoon was an added bonus.

"He has run Boston a couple of times," Harshaw said. "This is my first time coming as a spectator at this marathon. I like the ease of access to the course and the scenery is beautiful."

"It's incredibly convenient and it makes the event far more enjoyable. It's well worth coming back."

Grandchildren

At miles 12 and 21, Bill Cook, 57, of Scranton had some extra special supporters cheering him on.

Sporting a shirt that read "Run Grandpa Bill," Cook ran his 14th Steamtown Marathon as seven of his grandchildren cheered him on along the route.

"It was great seeing my grandkids," he said. "There was just great support the whole way."

His seven grandchildren, whose names graced the back of his shirt - Connor, Emily, Meghan, Ethan, Erin, Noah and Caden - range in age from 8 months to 14 years.

Pacing with Cook most of the way was his friend Susan Steinbach, 47, of Clarks Summit, who, along with her husband Bill, helped Cook train.

"I stayed with Bill until about Mile 18," Steinbach said. Then, Cook added, he waved her on to run the rest of the way.

Pinned to Steinbach's shirt was a photo of her brother, Russell Pinkerton, who died six years ago. "I'm running for him," she said.

Wheeling away

Sunday's warm temperatures didn't seem to bother Rob Leiser.

In fact, Leiser said they aided him.

The 56-year-old Nazareth native won his sixth wheelchair division title, completing the course in 1:41:27.

"When it's warm like this, I ride a lot stronger and I thought I carried a pretty good pace right on through," Leiser, who has arthritic hips and knees, said. "The warmer it is, the looser my joints are."

Leiser said the terrain slowed him down at the Rails to Trails portion of the course, but otherwise it was a smooth race.

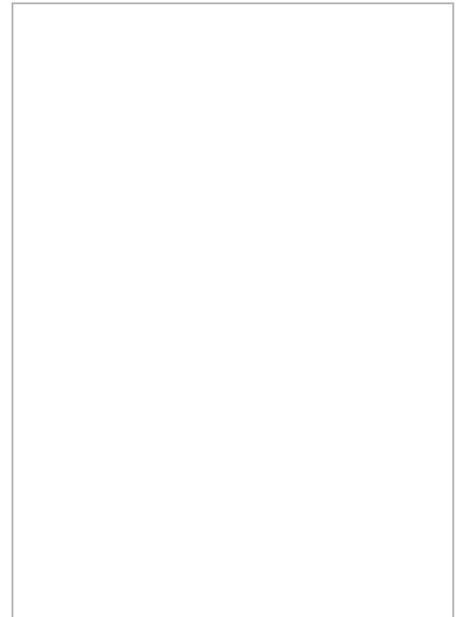
"I keep on trying to pass the sheriff's (escort) car. One of these years I'll catch it," Leiser said.

Who's on your shirt?

Many of the elite runners in the race wear their sponsor's apparel, but no one donned a top like 23-year-old Seth Einterz, who recently moved to Scranton from Indianapolis.

His "sponsor" was St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen, where Einterz works.

"I'm working there currently and I appreciate all the support they've given me the first few months I've been living here and working there," said Einterz, who finished eighth in 2:39:44. "I just wanted to give back in my own way. I do my best day-



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by-day, but this is a special way to get their name out there and just say thanks."

Einterz came here through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, which places recent college graduates in a volunteer setting.

"It's been wonderful coming here," Einterz said. "I had the great luck to come to this community. Luckily I was able to get into the race. I love being here, I love racing here. It's a fantastic opportunity for me."

How hot was it?

Of the 1,910 runners who started, only 49 dropped out, an incredible number given the 80-plus degree heat by early afternoon, according to assistant race director Jim Cummings.

"No one was sent to the hospital," Cummings said. "We got everybody out under their own power."

The oldest runner in the race was also the last to finish. Richard DeVan, 79, of Norristown, finished in 7:11:48.

Name game

Carly Savastano, 25, of Honesdale had many spectators along the course route cheering for her.

Perhaps the bright pink shirt with "Carly" emblazoned on the front helped.

"Last year I did it, too," she said. "It really bumps your energy up to have people cheering for you, shouting your name."

This was Savastano's second Steamtown.

Kinds of training

As Kris Mitchell of Old Forge boarded a school bus to Forest City on Sunday morning, she looked back on her training.

Sure, you have plenty of training for the actual race itself.

It's a little more difficult to train for the long ride to the starting line. That ride that feels like the slow ticking uphill climb of the roller coaster before the car freefalls.

"I still feel like, what am I doing here?" joked Mitchell, for whom 2011 marked her 10th Steamtown Marathon. She finished in 4:03:39.

Riding the route

Nathan Barrett, a Scranton School District director, spent his day along the 26.2 miles of the race course.

But instead of running it, the first-time Steamtown volunteer rode as one of the members of the bicycle units patrolling the course.

His main job was to find the lead female runner and keep the rest of the workers along the course apprised of that race.

No experience needed

Women's marathon winner Renee Skelly and runner-up Samantha Snead never ran a race longer than 10 or 13.1 miles, respectively, prior to Sunday.

Skelly, however, was a distance all-American at North Carolina State. Snead was a soccer player until joining cross country her senior year at North Pocono High School, where she was a solid but not spectacular runner.

The one year she ran at Penn State-Worthington Scranton campus (2008), she won the Pennsylvania State University Athletic Conference title, but didn't pursue running after transferring to PSU's main campus.

"I started running with friends and training friends, and now I train with a lot of people at the National Running Center," Snead explained. "I think this year, running with them, my training was a lot stronger."

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