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FENWAY-KENMORE

Instead of post-marathon party: shock, grief at House of Blues

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 16, 2013 08:28 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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Many marathon runners and spectators were supposed to spend Monday night holding cups, toasting one another at the House of Blues.

Instead, more than a dozen people spent the evening holding onto their lives, while countless others across Boston struggled to hold it together after a pair of bombings killed three and injured scores.

The Boston Marathon's official post-race party was set to start at 6 p.m. at the House of Blues in the Fenway. Every runner was given a complimentary ticket when they picked up their bib numbers. Buses were scheduled to shuttle guests from their hotels.

Around mid-afternoon on Monday inside the party venue on Landsdowne Street, Mickey Lawrence led a team of about 40 people who hurried to set up the bash, dubbed "Boston Marathon Mile 27" and sponsored by Boston brewing company Samuel Adams.

The crew was "working so hard and rushing to get everything done in time to make the finishers feel extra special," she said in an e-mail Tuesday afternoon.

"We had Sam Adams beer and race footage and tweeting to screen and a photo

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booth," said Lawrence.

Light dinner was going to be served. The day's race was to going be rebroadcast on large screens. The winners and other top finishers were going to be recognized. A DJ was going to play music. There was going to be dancing.

"We were all having a great time planning for the runners celebration of their day's accomplishments," Lawrence recalled. "We were goofing around with the Sam Adams standees and enjoying the music sound check."

"And then there was the tragic news," she said.

Lawrence, who also helped organize and run the pre-race pasta dinner at City Hall Sunday evening, said she's produced marathon-related events for about 30 years.

"Terrorism was something we occasionally thought about especially after 9/11, but I was always pretty confident that being an international event we would be safe," she said. "Sadly, I was wrong."

She said while she and her team are "physically fine," they are "emotionally wounded."

"The Boston Marathon is such a good and joyful event. It's not about race or nationality or politics or money," Lawrence said. "It gathers people from all over the world to engage in a healthy endeavor either for competition or to raise money for charity, or parents who want to set an example for their children that anything you work hard for is possible. It's a place where ordinary people can do extraordinary things."

"How can anyone have issues with any of this," she said. "I just don't understand it."

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