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117TH BOSTON MARATHON

Boston Marathon runners put carbs before the course

Premarathon meal draws thousands

By **Matt Rocheleau and Sarah N. Mattero** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS APRIL 15, 2013

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MATTHEW J. LEE/GLOBE STAFF

Greg Meyer, 1983 Boston Marathon champion, served pasta to Dave Lombardo of Eau Claire, Wis., at the prerace dinner at City Hall on Sunday. Organizers expected up to 15,000 people.

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Greg Meyer is a connoisseur of the premarathon pasta dinner ritual.

The last American man to win the Boston Marathon, Meyer has loaded up on carbohydrates countless times in his running career.

Usually, the food at such dinners is average at best, he said. It's consumed more for fuel than as a gourmet treat.

But Meyer was all raves Sunday evening at this year's pasta dinner for registered runners of the 117th Boston Marathon at City Hall, calling the meal "one of the best" prerace meals he's tasted.

"This is terrific — unbelievably good," said Meyer, who won the men's division in 1983. "I feel like I'm in the North End."

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At the same table, fellow former Boston Marathon champion Jacqueline Hansen, 64, agreed.

“It’s all delicious,” said Hansen, who won Boston in 1973 and has set 11 running world records in her career. “Gourmet level.”

She also noted that along with carbs, the meals provided to the hungry Boston marathoners included a proper amount of protein and other important nutrients that she said are sometimes overlooked by runners.

“They’ve got the formula right,” she said.

Under arcs of blue and yellow banners, race volunteers lined up in two rows outside of City Hall, greeting guests with trays, napkins, and utensils.

Marathoners and their friends and families were served from buffet tables filled with penne pasta with chicken meatballs, white lasagna, salad, sausages and onions, and bread rolls. For the second year, drink offerings included Samuel Adams’s Boston 26.2 Brew, named in honor of the race’s distance.

Between 12,000 and 15,000 people were expected at the feast, said the dinner’s organizer, Mickey Lawrence. With only 2,400 seats, guests were served in several waves over 3½ hours. The average plate weighed about 1½ pounds, she said.

The grocery list for such a mammoth dinner party called for: 800 pounds each of penne, sweet Italian chicken sausage, and no-boil lasagna sheets; 600 pounds of chicken meatballs; 300 pounds of ricotta; 250 pounds of grape tomatoes; 200 pounds each of sliced onions, sliced peppers, parmesan, and mozzarella; 200 three-pound cases of mesclun; 200 gallons each of marinara and alfredo sauces; five pounds each of basil and oregano, and 24 bunches of



EAT AND RUN

800

pounds of penne

800

pounds of lasagna noodles

200

gallons of marinara

600

pounds of chicken meatballs

200

pounds of mozzarella

5

pounds of basil

200

gallons of alfredo

parsley.

SOURCE: Boston Athletic Association

The dinner not only provided fuel for marathoners, but also for some of the 8,000-plus volunteers, like George Guins, who keep the race running smoothly.

This weekend marks the 42d time that Guins, 70, has traveled from Ohio to Boston for the marathon.

Guins ran Boston 30 times, his first in 1969 and his last in 1999, and has come back nearly every year since to volunteer.

“I just love Boston,” he said, between mouthfuls of pasta and salad on Sunday afternoon. “Every year you see something you haven’t seen before.”

Guins sat with several other volunteers who met each other over the years while running and volunteering

at the race. On Monday, they will perform varied tasks, including greeting and helping runners at the finish line area near Copley Square.

“You get people who are excited because they finished. People who are upset because they didn’t do as well. Others who are really hurting,” said Abington resident Joan Hanely, 54, who is volunteering for the 12th year.

“What’s nice is to be here with the runners and talk to them and encourage them,” she added. “Getting to know everyone here is a lot of fun and it’s really inspiring.”

Albert Zulps, 51, plans to run the Hopkinton-to-Boston route for a fifth straight year on Monday.

On Sunday evening, the East Boston resident ate the prerace dinner with his daughter Lola, and nephew, Ty, who have watched him from the sidelines each year.

“I do it for my daughter,” Zulps said of running the race. “It teaches perseverance, since running can be boring at times.”

Dave Peterson of Woodbury, Minn., has run four marathons in the past five years, but Monday will be his first in Boston.


Before he and his wife, Katie, sat down to Sunday’s dinner at City Hall, they also sampled one of the city’s treasured cuisine — a cannoli from Mike’s Pastry in the North End.

“I’m excited. And nervous,” he said of the race.

But Peterson has been receiving some long-distance cheers of support from his three boys back home in Minnesota, who have posted “Run Daddy, run!” on his Facebook wall.

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