

SPORTS & NEWS



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Running man



PHOTO: SELENA MILLARD

Matthew Ely of Natick, Mass., won the 9th annual Run 4 Kerri 4-mile Road Race held on Sunday, crossing the tape in 19:56.6.

Ely takes crown in Run 4 Kerri

By Bill Koch
Independent Staff Writer

MATUNUCK — Two first-time competitors raced to individual glory at Sunday's 9th annual Run 4 Kerri 4-mile Road Race.

Matthew Ely was the overall winner and Jennifer Deal was the first woman to cross the finish line, leading home the field of more than 800 runners on a perfect summer morning at Matunuck Elementary School.

Ely entered the finishing chute down the Matunuck driveway with a comfortable lead, becoming the only person in the field to dip below the 20-minute barrier by crossing the line in 19:56.6. Ely, a native of Natick, Mass., managed to navigate his way through the rolling loop with some help from a pre-race tour by fellow competitor Matt Pelletier and some other

members of Rhode Island-based group Running Heritage.

"I had a good idea going in," Ely said. "The first two miles were slightly rolling, mile two to three was an uphill mile that took a lot out of everyone and then after that you just hold on until home. It was a good course."

Hot on Ely's heels was North Kingstown native Eric Lonergan, who improved on his third-place finish in last year's race by dropping almost 30 seconds off his time to come home second. Lonergan, the winner of the 2009 Cox Providence Willow Tree Half Marathon, clocked a time of 20:08.3.

"I felt pretty good," Lonergan said. "Between the second and third mile was pretty awful, but the last one was OK. It worked out."

Ely/B3

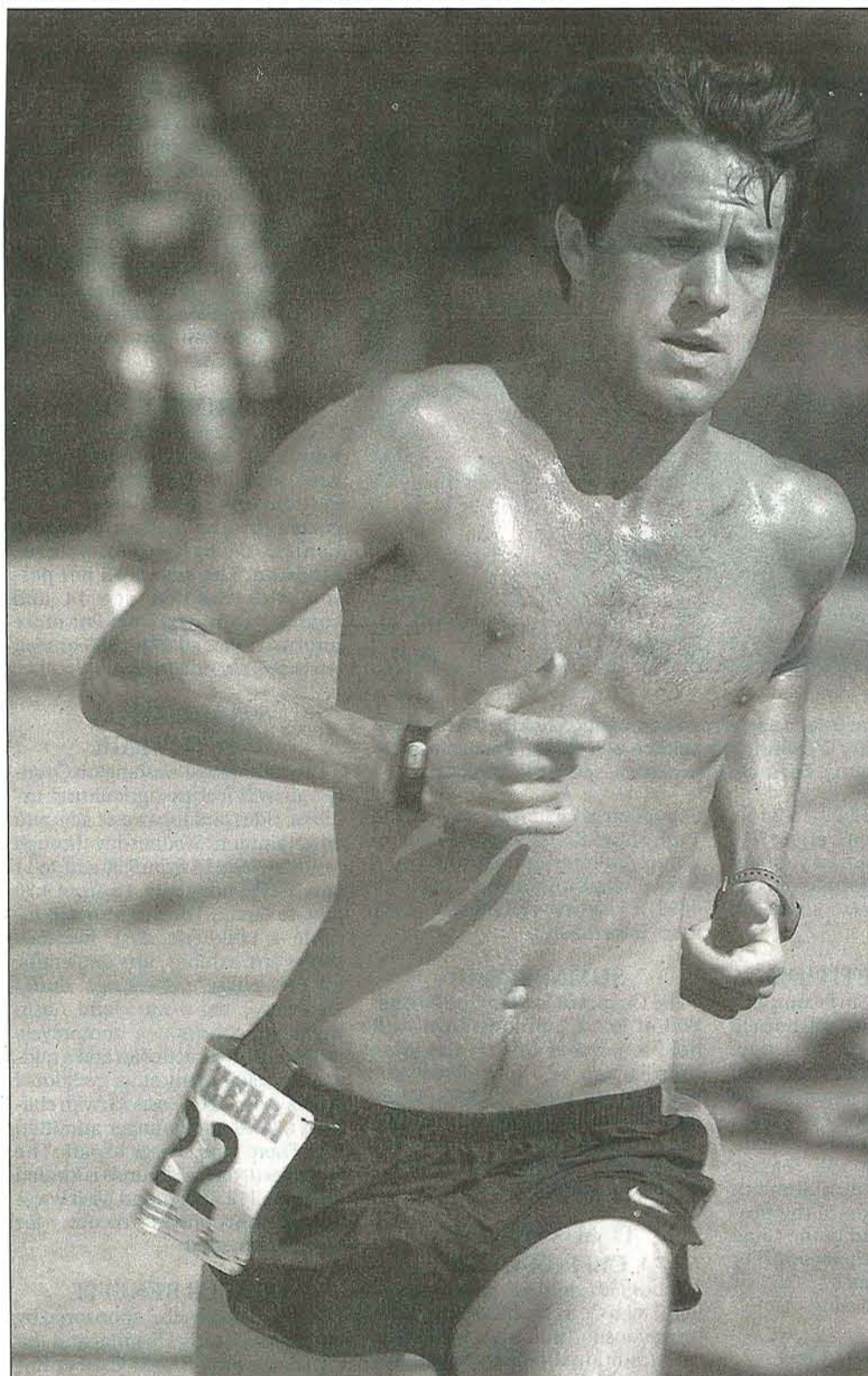


PHOTO: SELENA MILLARD

Narragansett's Brian McGovern was the third overall finisher in the 9th annual Run 4 Kerri 4-mile Road Race held on Sunday, clocking a time of 20:30.2.

Ely holds off NK's Lonergan

From B1

The uphill section of the course prevented Lonergan from getting any closer to Ely, who competes with the Boston Athletic Association and has enjoyed a strong summer season. He was able to fit the Run 4 Kerri into his schedule after receiving an e-mail from good friend Scott Bessette, who just happens to be one of the race organizers. Ely's recent results speak for themselves — he finished fourth two weeks ago at the Stowe 8 Miler in Stowe, Vt., and plans to enter the 10K race at the 32nd annual Bridge of Flowers Classic Races in Shelburne Falls, Mass., next weekend.

"I've just been sticking to road races, hanging on, trying not to get old," said Ely, 34. "It's a great social experience, not just between runners but also between the runners and the crowd."

Ely was happy to hold off Lonergan, who flashed some of the speed that he's been gradually building through workouts with former Brown University track and field director Bob Rothenberg.

"I've been trying to do some workouts at Brown with Bob Rothenberg and the Ronald McDonald House people," Lonergan said. "I've been on the track trying to get some speed, and the rest of the time I've been trying to bump up the miles."

Narragansett's Brian McGovern rounded out the top three by crossing the line in 20:30.2.

Deal was able to hold off Laura Brustolon over the final mile, crossing the line in 23:35 to take home the title. Brustolon was

second in 23:43.9 and Trish Hillery rounded out the women's top three more than a minute back at 24:52.4.

"It was a great race, nice weather — you couldn't beat it," Deal said. "It was a good morning."

Deal, a former Appalachian State University star and West Virginia native, relocated to Narragansett in January with her husband, Brian. She made the most of her first experience in the Run 4 Kerri, a race run in memory of former South Kingstown High School cross country and track and field standout Kerri Bessette. She died in April 2001 after contracting bacterial meningitis while in her freshman year at LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Pa. A pair of scholarships are awarded in her name each year to South athletes who best demonstrate the qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and devotion to their respective teams.

Top 10 men's finishers

1, Matthew Ely (Natick, Mass.), 19:56.6; 2, Eric Lonergan (North Kingstown), 20:08.3; 3, Brian McGovern (Narragansett), 20:30.2; 4, Jeff Howley (Providence), 20:42.1; 5, Brian Deal (Narragansett), 20:47.6; 6, Keven O'Neil (North Kingstown), 21:23.6; 7, Ryan Meehan (East Greenwich), 21:43.9; 8, David Hurley (Ashaway), 21:58.1; 9, Michael Macedo (North Scituate), 22:03.4; 10, Glen Guilmette (Narragansett), 22:05.

Top 10 women's finishers

1, Jennifer Deal (Narragansett), 23:35; 2, Laura Brustolon (Mystic, Conn.), 23:43.9; 3, Trish Hillery (Greenville), 24:52.4; 4, Stephanie Beaudette (Johnston), 25:29.2; 5, Kim Chala-Maguire (Cumberland), 25:37.3; 6, Laura Pagnozzi (Scituate), 25:54.2; 7, Claire Gadrow (South Kingstown), 26:01.9; 8, Mary Najarian (North Kingstown), 26:18.8; 9, Moira Kenny (Sherman), 26:32.2; 10, Alexa Mazur (North Kingstown), 27:16.5.