

ASK MILES

As the apostrophe in the RW logo, Miles learned all about the etiquette and lore of running. Got a question? He's got the answer.



UNCOVERING OLD CLUBS >> SNEAKING A BITE >> BOWING OUT OF A RACE



DEAR MILES,
What's the oldest running club in the country?
 —Les P., Sarasota, Florida

That honor goes to the Boston Athletic Association. Established in 1887, the BAA was started to—don't blame me, this is a quote from its 1890 Constitution—"encourage all manly sports and promote physical culture." The first BAA clubhouse had such "manly" amenities as a gym, a bowling alley, a shooting range, and Turkish baths. In 1897, the BAA put on a 24.5-mile race that 15 runners attempted (10

finished). That little event grew to become the Boston Marathon, the crown jewel of the BAA—and, some say, of the running world.

DEAR MILES,
Can my friends and family eat the postrace food while celebrating my finish?
 —Ken C., Colorado Springs

Sure, and while they're at it, why don't they go ahead and help themselves to a finishers' medal, too? I understand that spectators can work up an appetite with

all that cheering. But that chow is intended for the people who have finished running—not watching. The exception: *If* there seems to be more leftovers than at Thanksgiving dinner, *if* it appears that runners have had their share, and *if* you ask a volunteer if it's okay, then, well, your entourage can grab some bananas. Just do me a favor and make sure they're polite. If they're going to be sneaky or greedy, then they should be spectating for a different sport.

DEAR MILES,
I told a friend I'd run a marathon with her, but I don't have the time to train. How can I back out without disappointing her? —Jamie B., Charlottesville, Virginia

You are going to disappoint her, plain and simple. So instead of worrying about it, fess up and then focus on what else you can do to make it up to her. Ask how her training is going. Offer to run the last five of her 20-miler with her. Send her flowers the week of her race. Take her to a postrace dinner. I'm sure there are plenty of good reasons why you had to ditch the race, but that doesn't mean you have to ditch her completely.



Have you ever backed out of a running commitment? Share your story or ask a question at runnersworld.com/askmiles.

HEY THERE, TRACK STAR

A RUNNER SPURS A HIT SONG

POP TUNES POWER PLENTY OF finish-line kicks, but it isn't often that runners inspire music. When Tom Higgenson, front man of the Plain White T's, met Delilah DiCrescenzo, then a steeplechaser at Columbia University, the singer-songwriter fell hard. In 2004, he gave her a copy of the band's soon-to-be-released CD, which included "Hey There Delilah," a ballad about a long-distance romance. "It was really flattering," says DiCrescenzo, now 25 and an assistant coach at Bryn Mawr College, near Philadelphia, even though she and Higgenson are "just friends." Last summer, the song resurfaced—"Hey There Delilah" topped the charts. The timing was serendipitous for DiCrescenzo, who was sidelined from the USA Track & Field Championships. "It helped me not be so down about my injury," she says. December brought happy news, when the track star won the USATF National Club Cross-Country Championships and the song scored a pair of Grammy nominations. She hears her song at the gym but doesn't like running to it. "Frankly," she says, "it's too slow-paced." —ADAM BUCKLEY COHEN

THE MUSE DiCrescenzo is training for the Olympic Trials in June.

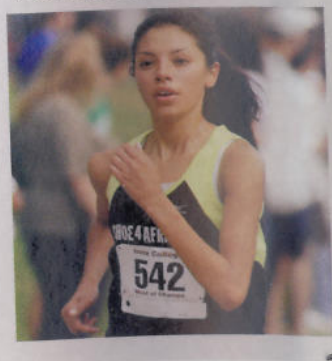


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