

Reno Stirrat Named USATF-New England Athlete of the Month for April



Photo: Scott Mason

BOSTON – Reno Stirrat, age 56, who lives in Dorchester, MA, and competes for the Whirlaway Racing Team, has been named USA Track & Field – New England’s Athlete of the Month for April 2010. At the 114th running of the Boston Marathon on April 19, Stirrat won the M55 division title in the outstanding time of 2:42:27. Amazingly, this was the fifth consecutive decade that Reno ran under 2:45 for a marathon, a string that began in the 1970s.

Reno credited the “five decade challenge” as a prime motivator in running so fast. His personal best came in 1979 when he ran 2:19:17 at the Rocket City Marathon in Huntsville, AL. In the 1980s and 90s, he ran regularly in the 2:20s. At the 2007 Boston Marathon, Reno ran 2:44:46 to continue the streak. Last December, as he began training for Boston, he was very mindful of the opportunity to extend his streak into the new decade. He built his training mileage to 80 per week, tapering to 50 when he had races. At the New Bedford Half-Marathon on March 21, Stirrat ran exceptionally well, maintaining a 5:45 pace as he finished in 1:15:16. He felt confident and well-prepared as he approached Boston. During the race itself, Reno “felt O.K.” through Wellesley, then was able to pick up his pace on the “firehouse hill” as the race

turned onto Commonwealth Ave. around 17 miles.

He cites the importance of the numerous friends and well-wishers who cheered him along the course. About three miles from the finish, Whirlaway Racing coach, Dave Kazanjian, urged him to go for it and, from that point, he ran as hard as he could. Remarkably, his split time from 35-40k was 18:07 and, over the last few miles, he passed other runners but was never passed himself.

It is fitting that Reno was born on April 19, the traditional Patriot's Day and Boston Marathon Day, and that his achievement in this year's race was on his 56th birthday. Born in Scotland, Reno moved to the U.S. at age 4. His wife, Susan, is also an accomplished masters runner, who regularly places well in the USATF - New England Road Racing Grand Prix events. He states that their mutual support and understanding has been instrumental in his being able to train and race so well, noting that he is running faster now than when he was in his early fifties.

Although his achievements are measured by the clock, Stirrat makes the point that he races by effort; that he likes to run hard and competitively, chase after other runners, and let the time take care of itself. Looking to the future, Reno remains highly dedicated to setting goals and pushing himself at a range of distances. For example, this October he will go to Syracuse for the USA Masters 5 km Championships, where he hopes to defend his national title in the M55 division.