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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1992/1/1

alized the magnitude of the goal he had set for himself. The Boston newspapers the next morning sang the praises of Stenroos and DeMar. One or two sportswriters acknowledged Johnny's presence in the city, calling him "untrained" and a "raw youth." Johnny was quoted as saying that if he lost, that simply meant that a better runner had won. He mentioned the debt he owed his parents and said that he wanted to win for them and for Cape Breton. About 9 a.m., Murdock Campbell arrived to drive Johnny to the race starting point at the Tebeau farm, in Hopkinton. During the half-hour journey, Campbell said little. He was probably worried about Johnny's chances. Few people shared Johnny's confidence. His recent victories were considered insignificant, because he had not run a marathon; and it was thought that no one as young as he could possibly do better than the cream of the marathon world. But the runner possessed a quiet self-assurance, born in the Cape Breton coal mines where he had gone to work at age 11 and fortified by the support of his family and community. Johnny and his father also believed in their simple strategy: stick to the heels of the front runners and make a last-minute sprint to the finish. The tactic had proven effective in other, shorter races. In the cramped farmhouse that served for weigh-ins and was sometimes called the Ashland clubhouse, Johnny mingled with the other runners. When Whitey Michelson overheard Johnny suggesting that he had as good a chance at winning as anyone else, the marathon world-record holder broke into the conversation. "What's that you say, you ... win? What's your name?" Michelson asked. Johnny Miles crossing the finish line, 1926 "Jack Miles," Johnny replied. "You have a fine chance to win today," Michelson said sarcastically. "Well, you just watch me. I'll be in the shower before the second-place runner comes in. You wait and see," Johnny countered, not knowing to whom he was speaking. "You're crazy," Michelson shot back. "You're another one of those marathon nuts they talk about." "All right," Johnny said. "Just wait and see." Michelson's doubts were probably shared by the bystanders who stared as Johnny sat on the sidewalk, eating cold steak and dry toast and washing it down with tea. He did not look like a serious challenger. Congratulations to Cape Breton's Magazine on its 20th Anniversary! Marine Atlantic rates & schedules are available by calling: (902) 794-5700 Marine Atlantic Marine Atlantique Great - Connections