

Belmont Cross-Country Races a Fitting Tribute to Saint Clair

Submitted by Dave Thomas

PHILADELPHIA, PA—The first annual Jack Saint Clair Memorial was held at Belmont Plateau on a perfect day for cross-country—sunny and 35 degrees. The race, held December 6, served as a tribute to the legendary coach who led many city championship teams in XC for Cardinal Dougherty HS in the 1960s and later coached for Temple University until the 1980s. The location of Belmont Plateau for the race was fitting since “The Saint” (as Saint Clair was known to many of his runners) along with James Tuppeny (Coach of Penn and Director of the Penn Relays) designed the 5-mile college and 3-mile HS courses along with the 10,000 meter course used for the USA National XC Champs in 1976, all at Belmont.

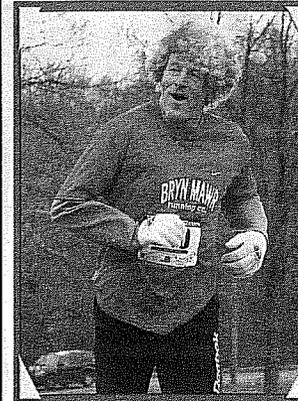
The Jack Saint Clair Memorial included a Women's 6,000 Meter race followed by a Men's 8,000 Meter race. Belmont Plateau is the site of many Cross-Country Championships and is one of the most famous XC Courses (along with Van Cortland Park/The Bronx and Franklin Park/Boston) on the East Coast. Olympic runners such as Liquori, Coghlan, Maree, O'Sullivan, and Huber have been challenged by “Parachute and Surekill Hill” at Belmont.

Many of the runners who participated in the Saint Clair Memorial (or stood on the sidelines) either ran for “Saint” or knew of him from the Philadelphia Catholic League. The 6,000 meter women's race was led by Mary Fanelli-Lund from start to finish. Fanelli-Lund, 50, fought the cold and wind to finish the tough 6,000 meter course in 30:28; second was Mary De Luca (32:23), followed by Sarah Myer (37:31).

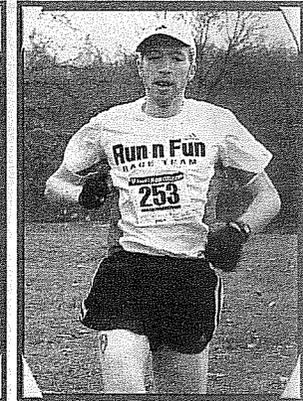
1st Annual Jack Saint Clair Memorial December 6, 2008

The Men's 8,000 Meter race was led from start to finish by Malcolm Richards, 26, who won the race in 26:51. The men ran on the current men's college course (used since 1998) while the “Classic 5-Mile” course, designed by Saint Clair, is being repaired. Tom Haxton was second in 28:27 and Joseph Emory finished third in 28:27. Special Awards were given to the first Cardinal Dougherty graduate (Greg Green/34:56) and the first Temple University grad (Chuck Shields/29:51). Local Philly running legend, Gary Fanelli (Graduate of Bishop McDevitt HS) ran the course in 35:18.

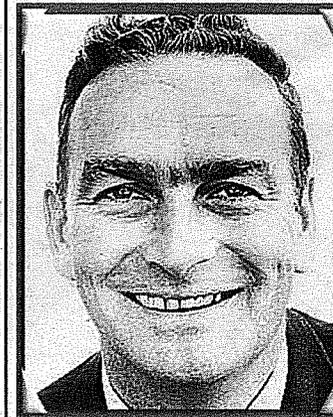
The awards ceremony featured three of Saint Clair's 12 children who helped honor their father at the race and distributed the awards. The race, which was created and produced by Dave Thomas of Philadelphia Athletic Charities will be developed into a Cross-Country Carnival in the future. It will include high school, college, and Open races and will be part of the 2009 Mid Atlantic USATF Cross-Country Series. Thomas is a graduate of Temple University and ran cross-country and track for Saint Clair in the 1970s. Proceeds for the event will be used for maintenance on the “Classic 5-Mile” cross-country course at Belmont Plateau, and Thomas hopes to springboard the fund raising to build a picnic pavilion at the park. For all who knew “The Saint,” they would all agree that he would have thought that cold and blustery were perfect conditions to hold a cross-country race in his honor.



Gary Fanelli and his rainbow wig bring energy to the race.



Men's race winner Malcolm Richards.



Philadelphia coaching legend Jack Saint Clair.

