

by Peter Diamond

New York City, Oct. 23--Some three-quarters of a million New Yorkers watched as Bill Rodgers defeated the largest field in the history of marathons ~~by~~ ^{ing} ~~by~~ 2½ minutes to win his second consecutive Five Borough New York City Marathon.

Rodgers covered the 26.2¹⁸ miles in 2:11:29, the fastest in the world this year, with ~~the~~ 2nd-placer Jerome Drayton of Canada finishing in 2:13:53.

Not only was it the largest field in ~~the~~ history, ~~as the largest field in~~ but it was also one of the best ever ~~outside~~ an Olympic Games. Four of the top six men from Montreal, and ^{six} five of the ~~eight~~ ^{nine} fastest ever, competed on a day with radiant skies, temperatures just ~~under~~ under 50-degrees, and a persistent wind of 10mph from the north. It ~~was~~ was the wind, which blew in the runners' faces through virtually all of the race, which made it ~~it~~ "much tougher than last year," according to the winner. But if the wind provided ~~some~~ somewhat of a hardship, the enthusiasm of the crowd gave the runners a tremendous lift.

Said Drayton, who severely criticized the race at Boston this year, "the crowd really helped me, especially in Central Park. It was their encouragement which inspired me to make my mad rush from 7th to 2nd in the last 3M."

Rodgers needed no such strong finish to take 1st ~~place~~. Early in the race he stayed in the ~~the~~

pack, within striking distance of the leaders, as ~~the~~ Frenchman Fernand Kolbeck led at 6M, with Colombian Victor Mora taking the lead just before the 8M mark. Mora was joined by Niall Cusack and England's Chris Stewart, and that trio led from miles through miles 10-14, but as they approached the Queensborough Bridge, the pack, including Rodgers and Garry Bjorklund, joined them.

The dual between the two U.S. Olympians began on the bridge, and lasted almost three more miles on ~~the~~ First Avenue in Manhattan before Rodgers drew away from BJ, ^{who was running only his second marathon,} in the 19th mile.

The winner slowed considerably in the last 5 kilometers, worried about tightness in his legs which bothered him throughout almost all of the 26 miles.

~~Six hours after the 10:30 start in Staten Island, 3626 had reached the finish line in Central Park.~~ The most notable non-finisher was Frank Shorter, who was through at 16M ~~due~~ to his severely ~~swollen~~ ~~ankle~~ ankle.

~~In the women's race, Boston winner Miki Gorman took the measure of new American record holder Kim Merritt by 3:00 with her 2:43:10. It was almost ~~7~~ minutes slower than she ran to win here last year, but is still the No. 4 time ever recorded by an American woman.~~

According to the ^{officially} New York Road Runners, 3080 had finished by the 4:02:00 mark, with several hundred wandering in after that.

1. Rodgers (GBTC) 2:11:29; 2. Drayton" (Can) 2:13:53; 3. Stewart"
 (GB) 2:13:57; 4. Tikkanen" (Fin) 2:14:33; 5. Bjorklund (UCTC) 2:15:17; 6. Thomas (GBTC) 2:15:51; 7. Kolbeck" (Fr) 2:16:25;
 8. Moore (OTC) 2:16:29; 9. Orzel" (Pol) 2:16:49; 10. Ortega
 (NMTC) 2:17:08; 11. Kardong (CNW) 2:17:10; 12. Fleming (NYAC) 2:17:12;
 13. Thompson" (GB) 2:17:46; 14. Wayne (B Ammo) 2:18:39; 15. Sjerestad" (Nor)
 2:18:47; 16. Ryffel (Swit) 2:19:15; 17. Viren" (Fin) 2:19:34; 18. Hill" (GB)
 2:20:01; 19. Mora" (Col) 2:20:18; 20. Hatfield (W/TC) 2:20:32; 21. Haviland
 (Knox TC) 2:20:42.

Women: 1. Gorman (SFVTC) 2:43:10; 2. Merritt (W/Park) 2:46:10;
~~3. Barron (Atl TC) 2:52:19; 4. Pedrinan 2:52:32; 5. Matovcic 2:55:03~~

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 2:55:03.