

NON-FICTION

THE BOOK OF THE FILM **SPIRIT^{OF} THE MARATHON II**

The movies *Spirit of the Marathon* and *Spirit of the Marathon II* have become defining expressions of the running movement. Runners carry the DVDs to inspire them before a race. Now comes this book, linked closely to *Spirit II*, as fresh inspiration.

The vivid words and striking images all come from people who love and know running. Amplifying the film, celebrated running writer Roger Robinson takes the reader on an unforgettable journey through the modern marathon, its story, and its meaning in the lives of individual men and women runners.

While the focus is on Rome, one of the world's most atmospheric marathons, the book encompasses the marathon globally and historically. It takes us deeper into the seven runners who are featured in *Spirit II*, and into all the celebrity experts whose comments enrich the film.

Ground-breaking chapters bring to life the full story of the running boom and the transformative rise of women's running. For information or inspiration, *Spirit of the Marathon – the Challenge and the Journey* is an essential accompaniment to the films, and a must-read original book.

*This wonderful book will send you right back
to enjoy the film even more – and vice-versa!*

How the boom began

When the modern running boom began to resonate around the world in the 1970s, many people contributed to its energy.

There were those like Arthur Lydiard, Bill Bowerman, Kenneth Cooper and Browning Ross, who saw that regular running could benefit many more people than the small 1960s hard core of competitive runners. There were those like Merry Lepper, Lyn Carman, Dale Greig, Roberta Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, Nina Kuscsik, Dr Ernst van Aaken, and Dr David Martin, who saw that those benefits should be available to women as well as men. There were those like Ted Corbitt, Alan Jones, Rudy Straub, and Phil Stewart, who brought new quality standards to the way races were measured and managed. There were the role-model great runners like Abebe Bikila, Billy Mills, Frank Shorter, and Bill Rodgers who made endurance running glamorously heroic.

Most important were those who saw the need for a new kind of race – accessible and inclusive, challenging but colorful. In most cases, the idea emerged from a group of local runners. Some gave their new races alluring romantic names like Peachtree, Lilac Bloomsday, Avenue of the Giants, Cherry Blossom, or Cascade, or quirky memorable names like Grandma's, Marine Corps, the Boilermaker, or Hospital Hill. Most took titles that affirm the connection to their community – New York City Marathon, Toronto Marathon, Virginia 10-Miler, Tulsa Run.

They saw the need, so they created the races – in New York, Seattle, and Atlanta in 1970, in the Humboldt Redwood State Park in 1971,



- > The growth of modern running: to call it a “BOOM” is an understatement.

and in Falmouth, Portland OR, and Vancouver in 1972. That seminal year came three other races that made special statements about the way running was transforming itself. The New York Mini 6-miles (now 10km) was the first open road race for women only. A new marathon in Athens, Greece, calling itself the Classic Marathon, was designed from the outset as a tourist destination event. And the Round the Bays Fun Run, in Auckland, New Zealand, was the first to affirm that it was not a race, but a run – for fun.

Other innovations kept arriving – first, the magazines, like *Long Distance Log*, *Distance Running News* (founded 1966, transformed into *Runner’s World* in 1970), *Running Times*, *The Runner*, *New Zealand Runner*, and in Europe, *Spiridon*. Writers emerged, like Joe Henderson, Hal Higdon, Cliff Temple, Rich Benyo, Jim Fixx, and George Sheehan. Enterprising runners launched new running-related businesses – race operations and announcing, apparel lines, retail stores, nutritional products, medical services, travel, photography, and most profitably of all, shoes. A new industry was created, and a new social movement. Both grew vast. The running boom was not imposed or imported, it grew from within, from the ideas of runners who were already giving many



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hours a week to their own running.

In 1981, two more radical innovations came into running. One was professionalism. By a combination of debate and defiance, with Chuck Galford's Cascade Run-Off the turning point, the best runners were at last permitted to benefit financially.

The other idea was running for a cause. The London Marathon in 1981 was the first to make charity fund-raising formally part of its mission, though races like the Kosice Marathon, the whole "runathon" phenomenon, and leaders like the spiritual guru Sri Chinmoy and Canadian cancer-sufferer Terry Fox, were important precursors.

Consider four statements. 1. Most runners now run for a cause other than their own result. 2. Most runners are women. 3. The best runners are full-time professionals. 4. Marathons are huge commercial enterprises. Those four statements would have been inconceivable in 1969. When 55 runners finished the first New York City Marathon in 1970, or 46 the first Vancouver Marathon in 1972, or 244 the first Berlin Marathon in 1974, no one would have believed that forty years later such races would annually close the city's streets, dominate its news, boost its economy, and transform its culture.