

Lauziere, Damgaard joggle into the record books

Two athletes recently pushed the bounds of juggling past existing IJA standards, setting new speed and distance marks for others to chase.

Michel Lauziere, IJA champion in the mile joggle for the past two years, proved his versatility as a runner by Joggling the International Marathon of Montreal, Canada, on September 13 in 4 hours, 5 minutes.

A month before Lauziere astounded bystanders on the crowded streets of Montreal, a runner in Minnesota bettered Lauziere's IJA convention one-mile record by over a minute. Scott Damgaard, a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater, led a newspaper reporter four times around a quartermile track in 4 minutes, 37 seconds.

Lauziere 's feat was remarkable in more ways than just the extreme distance covered. With 500,000 spectators encouraging him along the 26 mile, 185 yard course. Lauziere juggled his extra burden the entire way without a single drop. "I concentrated very hard the whole way," he said. "I could have run a better time, but the crowd at the beginning of the race slowed me down."

A resident of Drummondville, Quebec, (and partner with Jean Roy in the comedy team "Les Foubracs") Lauziere was the only one of 10,000 Montreal Marathon entrants to joggle, and the first Joggler ever to complete a marathon. "It goes without saying that I am very proud," he said. "I plan to joggle other marathons, but I don't know which yet."

Lauziere's long joggle was well covered by the press several days before his run, he appeared on a popular Quebec television show hosted by Michel Jasmin. In addition, newspapers throughout the province carried stories both before and after his success.

Lauziere, an accomplished artist and cartoonist, joined with many other Montreal Marathon participants in soliciting money from people in behalf of his efforts for the Quebec Society for Crippled Children.

Damgaard learned to juggle just last spring, and began joggling last summer to try to revitalize his interest in running, which had dwindled after a year on the college cross-country team. "It wasn't fun anymore, and I thought joggling might put some of the fun back in it," the 18 year old said.

It worked. "I'm back on the team and running 80 miles a week or so, joggling at least one day a week," he explained last October. "Everyone on the team asks me to bring my juggling balls along when we work out, and if I don't have them I can always pick some apples off a tree as we run by. "

He first went public with his joggling at a local 10 mile race last summer, finishing in 1:07:40 with sore shoulders. "I was nervous about doing it at first. .. he confessed. "I wondered how people would react and had a friend hold my juggling balls until the last moment. Then I decided, 'Why not?' It turned out alright. The people running around me were real curious and interested in it. "

He then heard news of Lauziere's 5:44 record mile time through juggling friends. "I didn't think I'd have any trouble beating that; I ran a 4:33 in high school. and I've improved since then," he said.

To document his record, Damgaard called the Milwaukee Sentinel newspaper and challenged reporter John Fauber to a mile race of juggler vs. runner. Fauber recounted in his story later. "The kid can't be serious, I thought. Does he honestly expect people to believe that he is going to juggle three balls and at the same time run a mile in under five minutes?"

The unsuspecting reporter met Damgaard at the appointed time and watched from far behind as the jogger ran his mile in 4:34. As for his extra baggage, Damgaard claims juggling doesn't slow down his running pace at all.

Holding a world record focused some attention on Damgaard as well as Lauziere. Though he was shy about it at first, Damgaard now endorses juggling wholeheartedly to the public. "It helps me physically because I'm out there running," he said. "And it's helped me psychologically because the work of running seems more fun. It's built up my confidence too, because I have to deal with all these people who stare as I juggle by. "



Laziere (l) goes for distance as Damgaard (above) sets speed mark.

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