

**Juggler's World: Vol. 39, No. 1**

## Joggler's Jottings

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### **Joggling takes big strides with Lucas's no-drop marathon**

by **Bill Giduz, IJA President**

Albert Lucas left nothing to chance in establishing a Guinness world record for a juggled marathon in Los Angeles, Calif., on March 1.

The Lucas Racing Team and its effort were officially sanctioned by race director Bill Burke and the Los Angeles Marathon Committee. The public relations firm of Lapin and Rose made sure that Lucas, their client, received wide national press attention. There was extra benefit derived from the fact that Lapin and Rose was simultaneously contracted to handle all publicity for the \$4.5 million event.

ESPN, CNN, Associated Press, dozens of radio stations and other media outlets contacted Lucas before and after the race for interviews. Even "The Wall Street Journal" carried a 10-inch article on Feb. 3 headlined, "Finally, a Solution to the Dilemma We All Face: To Run or Juggle?" There was sponsorship from Puma sportswear and a product tie-in with Exerballs, a new heavyweight joggling ball unveiled at the race exposition.

The rules for certification of the results by Guinness were spelled out ahead of time. To keep tabs on his progress and to keep him from being bumped by other racers, five runners recruited by race director Dottie O'Carroll flanked Lucas every step of the way.

But all the pre-race preparation and hoopla couldn't have gotten Lucas to the finish line without the most important preparation of all -- months of training to run the distance. During six months of performance in Japan last year Lucas ran daily, and stepped up his training when he returned to America in January. Three weeks before the Los Angeles race he juggled 22 miles.

The training paid off handsomely as Lucas became the first American juggler to complete a marathon, going the distance in 70-degree warmth in 4:04.38. (Canadian Michele Lauziere has completed three.) As a bonus for the sport, he completed the entire distance without a single drop!

"The first question everyone asked afterwards was how many times I dropped," said Lucas. "I'm glad I could say 'none.' I think it's a plus for joggling."

Lucas didn't start out with a no-drop marathon in mind. "I just wanted to finish the race. But when I got to 24 miles without a drop I realized how stupid it would be to drop after that point. I was pretty paranoid about it

from that point to the finish line."

Other than general exhaustion at about 23 miles, Lucas suffered no chronic pains during the race. He stopped for up to a minute every two miles for water, but began juggling again a step back from where he had ceased. The only things that threatened his no-drop feat were sticky hands from an energy drink he took at an aid station and twice being jostled by a member of his own team.

The high profile taken by Lucas seems to have given juggling a positive image in running circles. Presentation of Lucas's Guinness record by Gene Jones, associate editor of "The Guinness Book of World Records," was part of the post-race awards ceremony. Representatives of the Los Angeles marathon said they would welcome jugglers to compete again, and a representative of the New York City Running Club also expressed an interest in staging a juggling event.

After the race, Lucas expressed confidence that he would better his time in his next marathon. A big help would be starting in front of the pack instead of behind it, he said. In an agreement with Los Angeles race officials, Lucas and his entourage started at the back of the race so they would not interfere with other runners. It turned out that the heavy traffic of 15,000 other runners interfered with them! Trying to maneuver a pack of six people through slower runners was arduous, Lucas said.

As they worked through the pack, his helpers called out, "Move to the side, please. Joggler coming through." Most folks were accommodating, but toward the end of the race as runners got tired and tempers got short, there was some resentment expressed by those being overtaken. Race director O'Carroll, who helped clear the way for the second half of the race, said for the last two miles they simply asked people to move aside, without saying why.

"Marathoning is an individual sport," she said, "but we were running as a team. That angered a few people. I think it would be better in a future race if jugglers started up front with the racewalkers."

Lucas agreed, saying, "You don't want to be impeded as a juggler, but it's not bad if you're overtaken from behind."

People watching from the side of the road, though, expressed universal appreciation for Lucas and the other off-beat runners in the race -- a couple of backward runners, 13 men running as a centipede, a man pushing a baby carriage, two dressed in Southern California Trojan outfits and one carrying an inflatable dinosaur on his shoulders.

Because of the perceived danger of runners being hurt if they stepped on a dropped ball, Lucas had thoroughly discussed his equipment with the race committee. He used a 5-1/2 ounce lightweight version of Exerballs, a vinyl ball designed to squash flat if stepped on. The 24-ounce and 16-ounce production models of the product were on sale in a booth at the runners exposition staffed by the product's originator, Scott Morris, games editor of Omni Magazine. The production models, manufactured by Brian Dube of New York, gained extra weight by mixing steel shot with the plastic.

To help market their product as an aerobic upper body exercise, Morris and Lucas traveled to the University of California - San Diego two weeks before the race to conduct physiological tests with Dr. James White, professor of exercise physiology.

Treadmill results showed Lucas's pulse rate rising from 132 to 145 beats per minute when he used one-pound Exerballs as he ran, as opposed to running alone. When he used two-pound models, the rate increased to 154. These were the first scientific tests conducted that give an indication of the extra effort of juggling over running, though the weight of the object juggled is greater than that used by most people.

Foot-sore but happy after the race, Lucas said he will return to Los Angeles next year for the Third Los Angeles Marathon to beat his established time. An experienced 2-1/2 hour marathoner who accompanied him partway, Jim Brusstar, said, "Albert's got a three hour marathon in him if he trains right."

Lucas is now in Williamsburg, Va., serving as company manager and performer at a Willy Bitek Productions ice show, "America on Ice," at Busch Gardens Theme Park. He will be there through November.

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