

Small town

World-class race

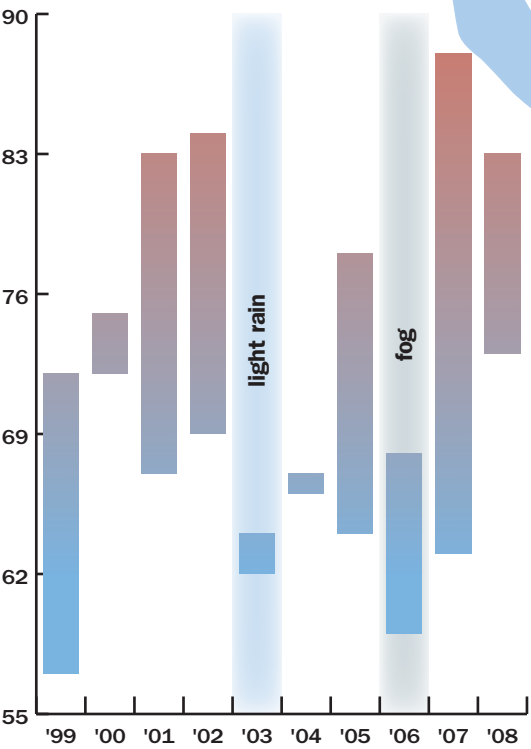
The Heart of America Marathon, an endurance race held every year in Columbia since 1960, is a challenge for even the most experienced of runners. But if you think you're ready to tackle Columbia's toughest race, think again. Marathoners have a lot of factors to deal with before letting the running shoes hit the pavement.

RACE DAY CONDITIONS FROM THE PAST DECADE

The Heart of America Marathon begins at 6 a.m. on race day. Thanks to research from Columbia residents Sharon LeDuc and Rick Katz, race day conditions from as far back as 1960 have been recorded. Below are observed weather conditions for race day between the hours of 6 and 11 a.m. between 1999 and 2008.

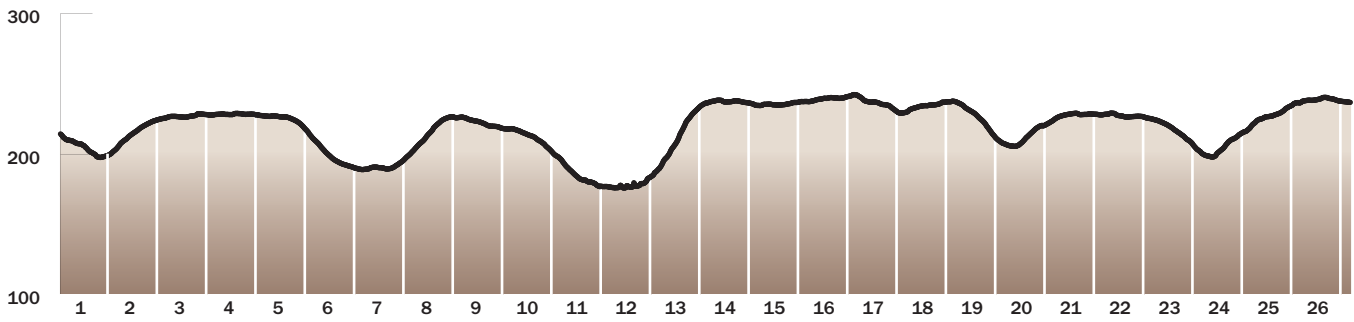
PAST OBSERVED TEMPERATURES

Other weather events marked accordingly



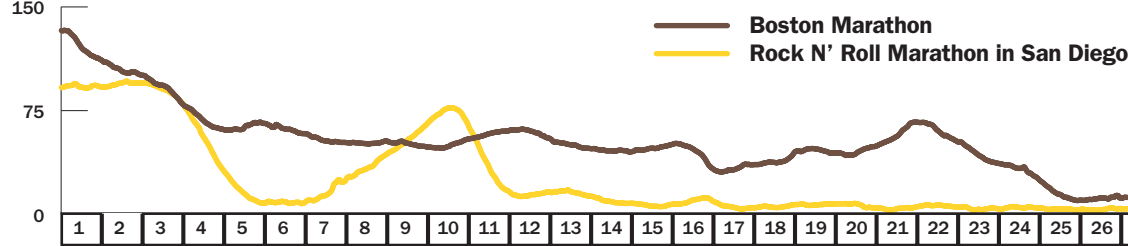
ELEVATION PROFILE FOR HEART OF AMERICA MARATHON

In the range of the marathon, racers ascend more than they descend. Racers will have ascended 73 feet at the finish line.



ELEVATION PROFILE FOR OTHER POPULAR MARATHONS

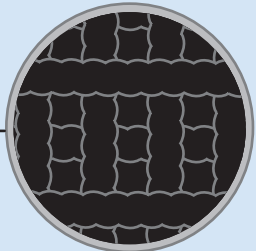
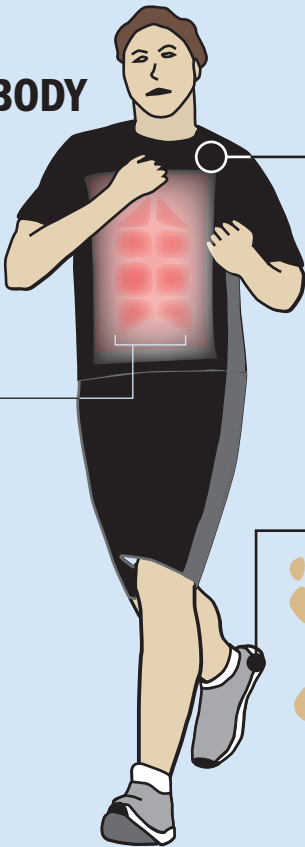
Both the Boston Marathon and the Rock N' Roll Marathon in San Diego have net descents. Runners descend 394 feet in Boston and 285 feet in San Diego.



EFFECTS OF A MARATHON ON THE BODY

Running a marathon can have many positive effects on health and stamina, but runners must maintain adequate levels of hydration and make special allowances for nutrition in order to make it through to 26.2 miles.

Strengthen your core: While running a marathon is a core-strengthening exercise, it's important, when training, to focus on these muscle groups with other cross-training exercises, like crunches, plyometrics, pilates or even yoga. By varying the exercise activity, it will make these core muscles stronger and lessen the possibility of injury.



Race attire: Wearing a technical fabric like lycra will pull sweat away from the skin instead of absorbing it like cotton.

Hydration: When running a marathon, it's not sufficient to only drink water. Electrolyte beverages provide needed energy in endurance races.



Gels: To make it to 26.2 miles, electrolyte gels can help runners push themselves to surpass distances their bodies usually can't reach

Match foot type to shoe type



Supinator: Runners with a high arch tend to supinate, or pivot outwards, needing special cushioning on the outer sides of the shoe.



Normal arch: Runners with a normal arch do not need special support, only a standard stability shoe.



Pronator: Runners with near-flat feet may need shoes with extra, motion-control support near the arches because these runners tend to pivot inwards.

26.2 MILES IN THE HEART OF MISSOURI

Beginning south of Columbia and ending downtown, the Heart of America Marathon is exactly 26 miles and 385 yards long. This year's race on Labor Day, Sept. 7, will be the 50th running of the race, which began in 1960.



How to attend

What: 50th annual Heart of America Marathon
When: 6 a.m., Sept. 7, 2009
Where: Start line is on Stadium Boulevard at the Hearnes Center. Finish line is on Broadway and 7th Street in downtown Columbia.
Entry fee: \$25 (register by Sept. 5)
Race restrictions: No one is advised to attempt to finish the race without proper training and doctor's advice. There is a seven-hour time limit.
For more information: <http://ctc.coin.org/hoa>