

Westhampton's Martha Grinnell battles pain, but finishes Greater Hartford Marathon

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By BILL WELLS

As a former professional triathlete, Westhampton's Martha Grinnell has endured just about everything when it has come to long-distance training and competitions.

However, even Grinnell was caught off guard at the ING Greater Hartford Marathon.

"I had to talk my way through it," said Grinnell, who finished ninth among the women with a time of 3 hours, 4 minutes, 39 seconds.

Even though she has done numerous marathons as part of her full ironman races, Saturday was the first time the former Springfield College All-America was lined up for solely a 26.2-mile race.

"This is something I've always wanted to check off my list - just to do a marathon without swimming and biking," the 42-year-old said. "I just wanted to do it, and be my own subject on my own training plan."

Grinnell ran just under a 7-minute mile pace through the first half of the race before her quadriceps started to give her significant problems.

"My left quad started to get tight, and I know what that feeling is like from doing so many triathlons and ironman races," said Grinnell, a member of the USA Pro Triathlon World Championship Team from 1992-96. "I thought it was awfully early and shouldn't be happening. At about mile 16½, my right quad started to tighten. I was right on with my drinking and electrolytes. I guess I should have done a few more 15 milers and distance runs."

At mile 20, Grinnell had to scale back her efforts.

"I think I could have held sevens if my quads didn't go on me," she said. "It was very painful. Every step it was getting worse and more painful. I tried to hold form the best I could even though I knew I was rapidly falling apart. It was one of those events where you say, 'Just get to the next mile.'"

"It was hard," said Grinnell with a laugh. "I had it hard. I think there's probably a better race in me. I still can't even walk well."

Grinnell owns Dynamic Training, where she coaches and consults with people who are training for an endurance event.

HARTFORD MARATHON: Amherst's Sergio Brena was the top local finisher at the Greater Hartford Marathon, placing No. 47 in a field of 1,900 runners in 3:02:42. Longmeadow's Janet Aronson (40-44, 3:13:06), Leeds' Sue Dean (45-49, 3:24:42) and Hatfield's Joanne Richardson (55-59, 4:24:32) all finished third in their age groups.

In the half-marathon, Monson's Dylan Griswold won the 15-and-under division in 1:43:34, while Longmeadow's Liz Chertoff took third in the 55-59 age group in 1:59:45. In the 5K, Agawam's Tony Lucia won the 70-74 category in 29:32, and Northampton's Karin George placed seventh in 21:16 on the women's side.

SCHMITT WINS VERMONT 50: Conway's Leigh Schmitt repeated as this year's Vermont 50 champion, topping the field of 200 in 6:54:55 at Brownsville, Vt., Sept. 28. Westfield's Amy Lane placed third among the women in 8:52.

Amherst's Todd Walker (second, 40-49, 7:48:36) and Leeds' Brian Rusiecki (third, 30-39, 7:49:45) placed in the top three in their age groups. In the 50K, Sarah Dolven of Leverett finished seventh on the women's side in 5:28:19.

RESULTS:

WOMEN'S RUNNING: The Pioneer Valley Women's Running Club meets at Whiting Reservoir in Holyoke every Saturday at 8 a.m. for various runs. For more information, go to pvwrc.org

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