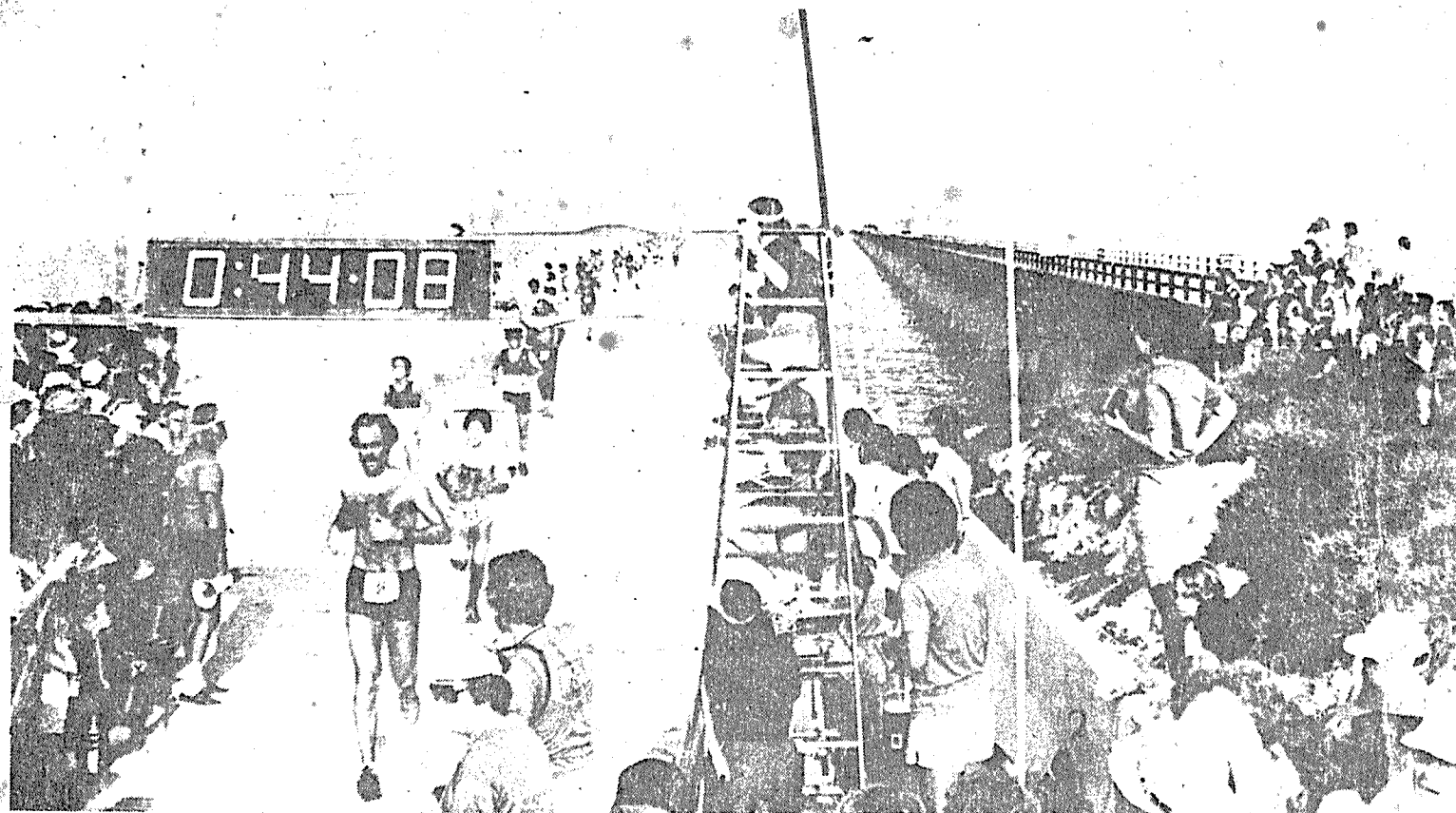


2,600 feet times seven miles equals an historic event



NEVER BEFORE—Since the new Seven Mile Bridge is new, there has never been a 10K run like the one held Saturday over the \$45 million structure. An estimated 1,300 runners started out for the event. It is not known how many actually finished. Spectators almost matched the numbers of runners. The event was held in connection with the dedication of the bridge which is scheduled open to traffic May 28 at 11:30 a.m. (Citizen photo, Sandy Ritson)

A thundering herd makes history

The 7-Mile Bridge 10K

By MICHAEL FAY

THE-NEW-SEVEN-MILE-BRIDGE — "You finished third? You're the winner! Come with me!" race official Tom Wright said to James Kinney, 27, just beyond the finish line of the 10 kilometer road race over the new Seven-Mile-Bridge here Saturday morning at 8:13.

Kinney answered yes, that he had finished in third place overall, and off he and Wright went to officially register Kinney the big winner of the race. And Kinney was awarded two airline tickets to the Bahamas and a 14 karat gold chain necklace with a gold runner's shoe with "runner" inscribed. Kinney ran the course in 33:16:9.

Sharon Beal, 35, of Lauderhille, Fla., was the first woman racer to cross the finish line. Beal grabbed a 14 karat gold miniature conch shell for her 42:02 time. Late for her award presentation, Beal was applying lipstick. She said, "It was warm," describing her run. Rene Appell, 26, and Kathleen Binnili, 27, both of Key West, finished two and three respectively in the woman's division close on Beal's heels with time unknown and a 42:46 for Binnili.

The second and third place finishers in the men's division in order, were Barry Dusch, 31, of Fort Lauderdale and Alberto Almora, age unknown, of Miami, with 33:54 and 34:32 times respectvely.

The two runners who actually finished first and second, but were disqualified for using borrowed numbers, were Billy Convey, 17, of Miami, and Al Mayer, 27, of Rochester, Minnesota. Convey, Florida state runnings champion for 2A small schools division, ran across the bridge in 32:45. Mayer tailed seconds behind Convey.

Kinney, of Boca Raton, said, "All I kept looking at were those balloons; they looked like grapes in the sky," describing the finish line made of red, pink, orange, yellow, green, purple and blue balloons floating above the bridge.

Convey, on not getting credit for winning the whole schlemiel said, "The only thing

that's upsetting is that most races have race day entries and they don't. Also, I've never been to the Bahamas." Upon winning, Convey admitted immediately, "I believe I'm disqualified." Wearing friend Mary Anne Marshall's number, Convey was announced as leading much of the race. Mayer also was disqualified for wearing a borrowed number, and he quickly owned up to the charade, saying he was on vacation, too.

Kinney, a marathon distance runner, said that he had run 90 miles last week in training, but that he wasn't "keen today" on the short distance because 26 miles is his specialty. Had the race been a few miles longer, Kinney said, he would have "exploded" by the two frontrunners. Currently, he is training for the Chicago Marathon in September.

Analyzing the race, Kinney said the hump — or heartbreak hill South — was difficult. "It was a hump; and your hump was beat when you got to the other side," he said.

Officials of the race said that another run will be scheduled next year if details can be worked out with the Florida Department of Transportation. Some 1,300 runners participated Saturday, and some 1,000 or more spectators watched the spectacle.

Runner Will Sohn, early thirties, of Big Pine Key, said, after placing 294, "I didn't like the helicopters (hovering overhead). I had to keep looking at them and the backwash slowed me down."

Chuck Bayles, Coach of the Marathon High School Lady Dolphins, crossing the finish line answered the question, "How'd you do," saying, "We got beat in the semis." Pulling up to a full stop, Bayles said it was a "hot" run and figured his time at 42:24.

Father Tony Mullane, Pastor of St. Bede's Church in Key West finished around 43 minutes and said, "It was a good race."

Wright, the beleaguered race official, said at one point, when disqualified runners seemed a penny per gross, "We're going to find a winner eventually." Kinney, the ultimate winner, said the older a runner gets, the slower he goes.

Local sports notes

Special Olympics
Practice will be held each day this week at May Sands School by the Monroe County team entered in the Florida Special Olympics games to be held in Tampa this weekend. Thirteen athletes will travel to Tampa to compete for trophies. Practice will be held at the school from 1:45 to 2:40 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

KWHS awards
The Key West High School spring athletic awards banquet will be held Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the high school cafeteria. Tickets may be obtained by calling the school at 4-5212.

Sports on TV
Tele-Communication be airing two sports telecasts early this week on Channel 5 that should be of interest to local sports fans. Monday evening a taping of the Seven Mile Bridge race and dedication ceremonies will be aired. On Tuesday, TC will reshoot the Bill Hurricane Forecast show. The University of Miami football program was received upon its showing, prompting TC to air it again this Tuesday for those who missed it the time around.

Military baseball

Monday, pitchers Mike Armstrong and Ephoniou King led VAQ 33 over Coast Guard 12-8. King led VAQ at bat with a triple. Armstrong had two singles, Charles Hiter and Gregory Linscott also had singles. Vivian Chastain, Lewis Franzino and Shawn Wallis had singles for Coast Guard.

Tuesday, First Federal rode timely hits by Ben Poncho with a single, Shermin Hamlin with a triple and single, Matt Green with a single and Brian Fanning with two singles to a 14-8 victory over Coca Cola. Lillie Locklear, Gary Yarbrough and Cory Burns had singles for Coke.

Wednesday, Mike Armstrong and Ephoniou King again pitched VAQ to

another 12-8 victory over Guard. VAQ was led at Bobby Lamanna with a Jeremy Tremper with singles, King and Armstrong had a single apiece. Scott had a single for Coast Guard.

Thursday, Jason Ritz Allen Johnson Jr. pitched Federal to victory in its record to 12-0. Ben led First Federal at the with a triple and a singles were also delivered by Ross Kaelin, Brian and Shermin Hamlin. Yarbrough, Tasha and Mary Northrup had singles for Coke.

Standings after 12 games: First Federal 12-0, VAQ 12-8, Coca Cola 3-9, and Coast Guard 2-10.

Billy Harris: a young man of ability is gone