

The 1986 Seven Mile Bridge Run

Scierra, Vaughn snag race titles

By BOB KOSLOW
Staff Writer

MARATHON — After four years, the awards ceremony following the Fifth Annual Seven Mile Bridge Run on April 26 saw a new women's champion crowned.

Nancy Scierra of North Miami streaked across the finish line with a time of 43:27.07. That was almost 1½ minutes ahead of the nearest women's competitor and 3½ minutes ahead of a Sharon Beal, the four-time defending women's champion of the bridge run.

The 1986 men's overall division saw controversy, with delay in the announcement of the winner for almost two hours after the first runners had crossed the finish line.

As it turned out, two-time defending champion Harry Vaughn of Orlando picked up his third consecutive win after it appeared he had been dethroned by two other runners.

Motivation to conquer the seven-mile concrete course was not hard to find for women's winner Scierra.

"I trained hard using weights recently and I knew Sharon would be here," said the winner.

Beal, trying to shake off nagging injuries, took the women's lead early but slowed on the up-side of the bridge hump. "I stuck with Sharon up until the top of the hump," recounted Scierra. "I felt her back off a little and then I took it in from there."

Dave Krouse of Tulsa, Okla., stirred the finish-line crowd by being the first person across the bridge, breaking the tape at the 33:39. He was quickly followed by Jim Alexander at 33:53. A minute later, at 34:56.28, Vaughn ended the grueling race.

Then it was learned that Krouse was running without a number. He said he had been promised a spot in the run during a telephone conversation with Race Coordinator Cathy Madden the week prior to the race.

"I spoke to him on Tuesday of race week and told him I would try to get him a number from someone who was registered but was not going to run," Madden responded. "We had over 200 people who came here thinking they were registered or trying to sign up late."

"It has always been the policy not to let them register. Maybe I was too optimistic with him on the phone."

Jim Alexander of the Boca Raton Runners Club was disqualified for running under someone else's number and never signing the standard release form.

The three racers sat together along the side of the bridge, discussing the race and the surrounding circumstances.

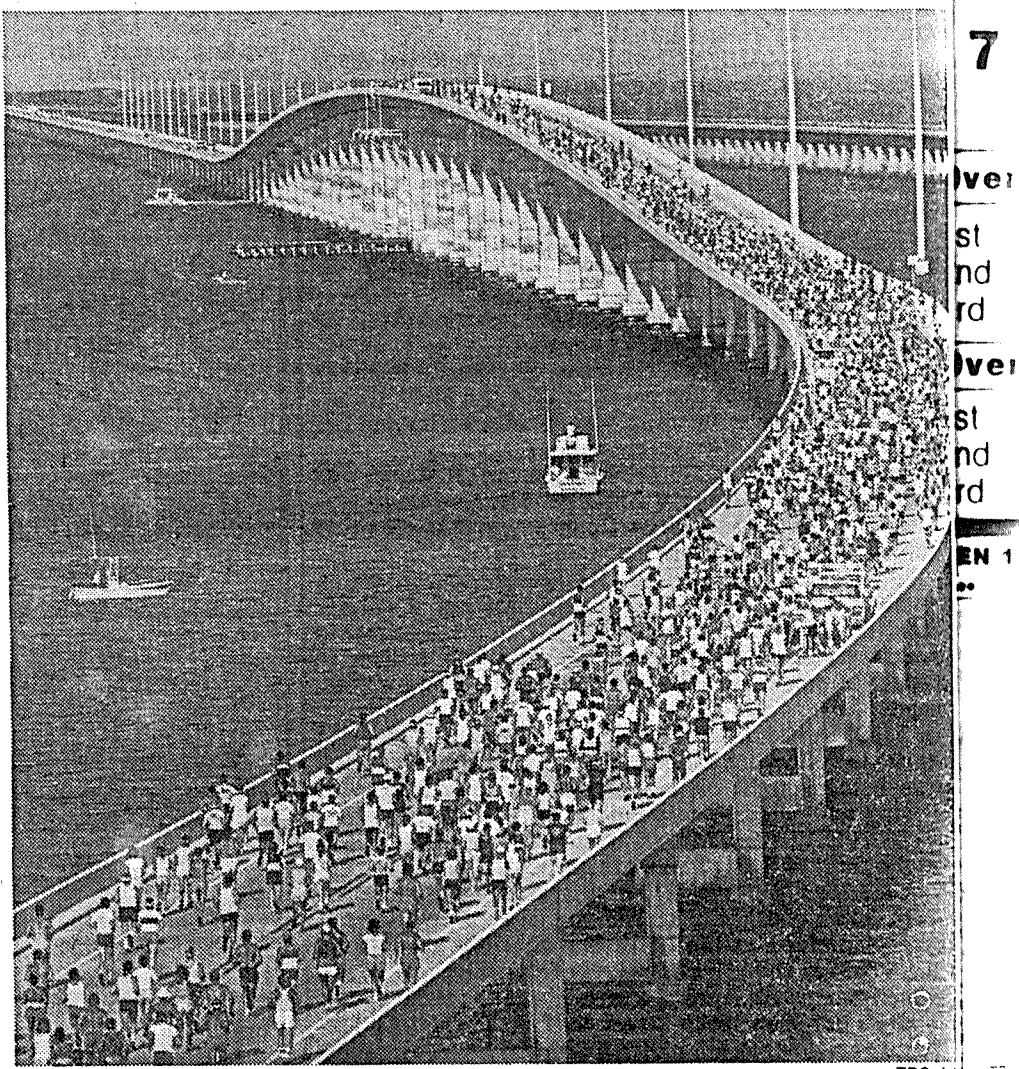
"Actually, I was in third place," said Vaughn. "I got beat fair and square by these other two guys who ran a great race, but I guess they weren't registered officially."

"This adds a little fuel to the fire to come back next year in better shape."

"I also feel for Dave (Krouse). But what ever the officials decide," said said apparent runner-up Alexander, "I know in my mind I ran my best race ever."

Wade Dehart, with a time of 36:12.32, was the official second-place finisher while Rick Ingerson at 36:31.01 was third.

Suzanne-Dee's final kick propelled her to finish in second place in the women's overall division at 44:54.20. Her time was four seconds ahead of Julia Snyder's 44:58.20.



THE HUMP adds another challenge, besides the distance and the heat, to the runners during the Seven Mile Bridge Race April 26. In the distance, the leaders slowly pull away from the thinning crowd. Nearly 1,300 runners crossed the finish line.

Bridge race is successful

MARATHON — Despite the controversy surrounding the end of the Fifth Annual Seven Mile Bridge Run, the event's coordinator said she was quite satisfied with the overall outcome.

"Everyone I see is very pleased with the whole operation," Cathy Madden said. "Everyone on the various race committees worked real hard and did an outstanding job."

"I even had time to run the race, but I won't tell how I did."

The biggest problem faced by organizers came on race day. Nearly 200 people arrived who, for various reasons, were not officially registered.

Madden felt that precedent had been set in previous races not to let them register, and so late registration was not allowed.

As a result, the first runner to cross the finish line did so without a number. The second crossed with someone else's number. Both were disqualified, giving Harry Vaughn his third bridge run men's title.

Madden feels one cause of the confusion was the cut-off date. The race was limited to 1,500 runners and the cut-off

date was set two weeks prior to the race date of April 26.

When the 1,500 mark was reached on April 7 — five days before the posted cut-off date of April 11 — no more applications were accepted.

People who sent in applications arrived believing they were registered. Others anticipated that a few numbers would be held out for last-minute entries, a practice seen in many large events.

"I think we need to get the applications out sooner and have the cut-off date earlier so we have time to notify everyone," Madden said.

Another problem, if it can be called a problem, has been the increased popularity of the race. This year's race drew applicants from 21 states.

"The Marathon Runners Club has to get together and decide what direction to take this race," Madden added. "Does the club want to keep the race a family-style fun run or consider taking it to a national level?"

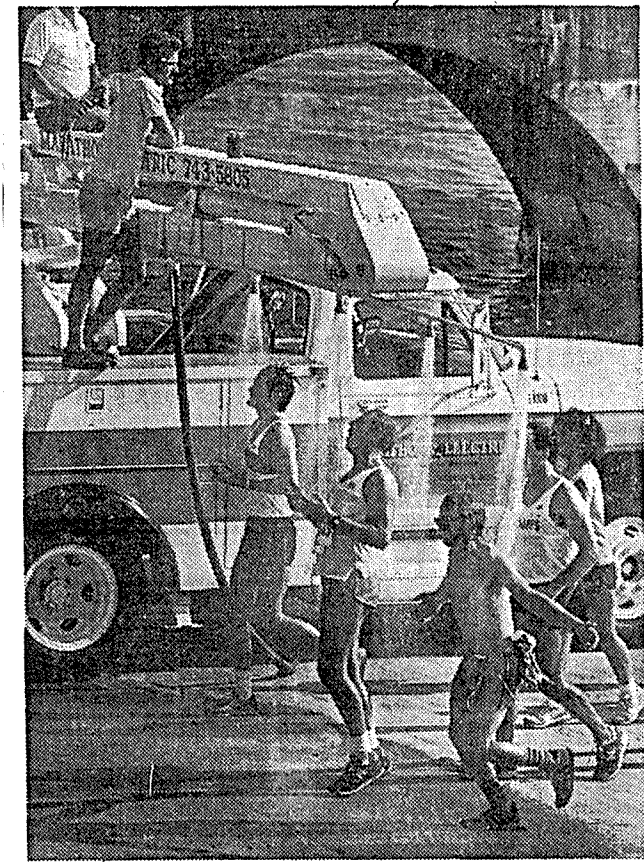
The lateness in getting the county commissioners to approve the race delayed the beginning of entire operation. Notification didn't come until March 7, only seven weeks prior to race date.

"It's unfortunate we had the problems we did," Madden said. "But I feel it was very very successful."

Despite the closing of U.S. One for two hours, Monroe County Sheriff's Department officials said the race caused "no problems whatsoever" for traffic or crowd control.

"Everything was just outstanding, like it always for the race," said Lt. Jimmie Jones. "Everybody cooperated and there were no problems."

—Bob Koslow



WELCOME RELIEF is offered to runners during the Seven Mile Bridge Run on April 26. Starting temperature was about 75 degrees, but the lack of a cooling headwind made it seem hotter for the participants.

TDC photo