

NYRR EMPIRE STATE BUILDING RUN-UP

February 6

Though the winners of this 30th annual climb to the top of New York's tallest building hailed from Germany and Australia, many local runners did themselves proud. The top New Yorker of the day was Dana Bayly, 39, of Manhattan and Urban Athletics, who finished third overall among the women.

"I can't believe it!" exclaimed an ecstatic Bayly after crossing the finish line on the 86th-floor observation deck with all of Manhattan at her feet. Like many of the 201 finishers this year—an event record—Bayly returns to the Run-Up year after year; this was her seventh finish. "I absolutely love it," she said. "I see the Empire State Building almost every day, but by taking part in this race, I can say that I truly know the Empire State Building."

Held each year since 1978, when it was won by New York City firefighter Gary Muhrcke, the Run-Up is invitational, with entrants selected based on previous performances and other athletic achievements. Climbing 1,576 steps is no mean feat (Bayly deemed it harder than a marathon) but New Yorkers may have an advantage thanks to the city having more than its share of skyscrapers.

The race's oldest finisher this year, 77-year-old Al Puma of Brooklyn, completed his 15th consecutive Run-Up in 27:16. New York Road Runners donated \$10,000 to the Australian Cycling Federation Support Paul Crake Appeal in



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honor of five-time Run-Up champion (1999-2003) and record-holder (9:33) Paul Crake of Australia. Crake, 29, turned to professional cycling in 2004 and was severely injured in an accident during the Tour of Southland in New Zealand on November 11, 2006, fracturing vertebrae in his back and neck.

NYRR THURSDAY NIGHT AT THE RACES

January 11 and 25
February 8 and 22

On a cold February night at the New Balance Track and Field Center at the Armory, Kathryn Martin seemed to fly around the track. In her sights was the 1500-meter age-group world record, and Martin, 55, was determined to get it. With her arms and legs pumping in unison with the hard-driving music from the PA system, the old record of 5:07.3 didn't stand a chance. She

obliterated it, crossing the finish line in 4:58.7—her fourth world record at the series known as Thursday Night at the Races (TNATR).

"The crowd here really gets you going, and you just feel the support," said Martin. She brought the crowd to its feet again an hour later when she lowered her own world record in the 800 meters to 2:32.06.

"Five world records in four meets was my goal," said Martin, who had set world marks in the 3000 meters (10:49.2) and the mile (5:26) in earlier TNATR meets. "You just push the envelope as far as you can."

Runners from high schools, colleges, and running clubs pulled for one another throughout the four-meet series. They weren't running for points or prize money, but for pride and the spirit of competition. "It's the healthy happy hour on Thursday nights," said NYRR president and CEO Mary Wittenberg.

TNATR is indeed healthy, happy, and growing. "When it started it was kind of a small local meet, but now runners from the top Division I colleges are coming," said Devon Martin, coach of the Nike Central Park Track Club. "Athletes from D.C. and Boston are coming. It's growing in prestige, and we're grateful to [meet director] Ian Brooks for having such a well-organized meet."

In other impressive TNATR performances, Marisa Hanson ran a 10:16.5 in the women's 3000 on February 8; high school senior Lionel Williams of St. Peter's on Staten Island won the men's 800 in 1:54.3 on February 22; and Brittney Sheffey won the women's 800 the same evening.

NYRR Al Gordon Snowflake 4-Mile

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NYRR Gridiron Classic

