

Jim Melnyk

Jim Melnyk has been a prominent figure in road racing for almost all of the MRA's 50 years. He got his start when his grade 3 class had a ½ mile race and he placed second. He participated in another half mile race as part of the fitness challenge in Canada's centennial in 1967. By junior high at General Wolfe school, he was running cross country and track and moved on to the same events in high school at Daniel McIntyre, which was a powerhouse program in that era. They won the city championship in all 3 of his high school years and the provincial championship when Jim was in Grade 12. Like many kids of that period, Jim participated in the Miles for Millions 35 mile walk all over Winnipeg.

At University of Manitoba, Jim did not run on the Bison team but trained on his own. He participated in the fun runs the Phys Ed faculty put on at King's Park and he somewhat ambitiously attempted the 1973 Labour Day marathon at St. Vital Park on very limited training, completing 13 miles of the race. In 1978, Jim watched Boston Marathon highlights on TV and was inspired by Bill Rodgers' winning performance and decided to start training for another marathon. The Labour Day marathon in 1978 was 5 loops originating in Kildonan Park, and Jim ran 3:26 on a hot day in a field of about 100 runners. The following year, Jim was one of the 1000's on the start line for the first Manitoba Marathon which he completed in 3:21 and then went to Twin Cities later that year and ran 2:56. He started running many of the MRA races, including the Puma Series and the Islendingadagurinn 10 mile. In 1981, he started running with Jim Fethers and Wayne Ford and joined the locally renowned Yellow Snow Athletic Club and started winter training in the Gritty Grotto with the club led by Chris McCubbins. He ran in the Manitoba Marathon most years from 1979 to 2011, either the full or the half. His goal in the full marathon was to break 2:30 which he accomplished in the 1992 Manitoba Marathon.

One of Jim's proudest accomplishments was winning the Thunder Bay 10 mile race on Victoria Day 1990 with a personal best of 51:50. He had driven to the Thunder Bay race several times with Jim Fethers, Pat Riddell, Gregg Gemmell and Grant Towns. He also counts that somewhat undulating Thunder Bay course as his favourite race.

Jim's worst experience was the 1981 Boston Marathon, where he collapsed dehydrated at mile 25 after missing congested water stations on a hot day and woke up 2 hours later in the hospital.

Jim's best 5 km was 15:30; 10 km was 31:59; 15 km was 49:50; 10 mile was 51:50; 20 km was 1:06:38 at Bird's Hill in 1989; half marathon was the hot 1984 Manitoba Marathon in 1:12; and best marathon was that 2:29:13 in the 1992 Manitoba Marathon.