

Don James

Don James started running in high school in 1946, placing 4th out of 24 runners in a mile race. He ran 9 more races that year, placing first in 6, second in 2 and third in 1. He won two provincial championships in the mile and one for the half mile. He also placed third in the mile in the Canadian championships in Edmonton. Between 1948 and 1951, Don won every race he entered, from 1 mile to 6 miles. In 1948, Don went to the Olympic trials in the 5000 and 10,000 m events and won the 10 km event in Montreal, competing against Jim Daly. He placed 3rd in the 6 mile race in the British Empire Games trials in 1949. He accomplished this without a coach; in fact, he never did have a coach, despite his considerable accomplishments.

Don's first marathon was Boston in 1952. It was 90 degrees F. and there were no water stations. He had no idea of pacing for the marathon distance. His training was 15 miles per week. His shoes were unfit for a long road race and his feet were blistered and bleeding. He finally had to drop out. He found this his most humbling experience as a runner. He learned how to prepare better and ran 5 more Boston Marathons, and all of the Manitoba Marathons from the beginning in 1979. In his mid-50's, he ran his best time of 3:05:23 in 1982.