

Ted Corbitt's 80th Birthday Celebration: Honoring a Legend

by Trishul Cherns

The Ted Corbitt 80th Birthday (eight hours for eight decades) celebration took place at Fairleigh Dickinson University in the Rothman Center Indoor Track. A total of 52 runners, beginning at midnight and ending at 8:00 a.m., received their own handheld clickers to keep track of their laps.

Every 20 laps the runners reported their progress to their scorer, hence the fun-run title: fun staying awake and fun remembering to score yourself.

Many participants took the event as a long training run (in a nicely heated environment!) but most saw it as a chance to celebrate with Ted on his birthday. It was an opportunity to honor Ted for his immense contribution to long distance running and to salute his accomplishments as an athlete.

Ted set American Track records for 50 miles (5:54 in 1966), 100 miles (13:33 in 1969) and 24 hours (134.7 miles in 1973). He finished in second place three times at the London to Brighton 52 1/2-mile road race. 1964: 5:40:42; 1965: 5:44:35; 1969: 5:38:11. His marathon personal best is 2:26:44 and he was on the 1952 US Olympic marathon team.

One of the few who raced the event was Rimas Jakelaitis, originally from Lithuania and now residing in Brooklyn. He led from start to finish, pushing the pace in the beginning and coasting to the end with 57 miles, 1460 yards. That's quite a productive output for a night spent on the graveyard shift.

Fred Pilon and Ed Dodd showed us more serious fun by racing each other up until the bitter end. Canadian multi-day champion Antana Locs led the women with a very steady 45 miles, 12397 yards.

A hardy break "feast" and birthday cake awaited us at the campus dining hall, and everyone received a commemorative plaque decorated with a print of Ted's portrait.

I talked to a few runners who remembered the first race that began their long-distance career when they were neophytes and Ted was King of the Roads.

In 1966, when Ed Dodd was attempting his first marathon in Philadelphia, he passed Ted at 18 miles only to be passed by him at 23 miles. "Ted rocketed by me as if I were standing still," remembered Ed. Ted finished ninth in 2:51:50.

On November 28, 1968 at the 50 Mile National Championship, Harry Berowitz ran his personal best of 6:37. Ted won that event in 5:39:43. John Kenul ran his first ultra on May 4, 1969.

Ted ran there too, finishing in second place.

On November 26, 1972, Dan Brannen finished his first marathon in 3:05. Ted Corbitt ran an eleventh place in 2:48:11. I ran my first New York City marathon in 1977 and Ted, at 58 years young, was smoking in at a time of 3:38.

Anyone who would like to read more about Ted's extensive career can refer to *UltraRunning's* December 1988 issue, pages 32 to 35 and Ted's biography by John Chodes published by Track and Field News, P.O. Box 296, Los Altos, CA 94023 (415) 948-8188.

Special thanks to Rita Babikian, Facility Director of Fairleigh Dickinson University and Ed Andryshak. Also Allan Steinfield and the New York Road Runners Club for providing additional financial support.

Ted Corbitt 80th Birthday Run (8 Hours)

Hackensack, N.J. January 31, 1999
Indoor 200-meter track

	mi	yds
1. Rimas Jakelaitis,43,NY	57	1460
2. Benjamin Huddell,40	52	781
3. Fred Pilon,53,MA	51	815
4. Ed Dodd,52	51	135
5. Dan Brannen,45	50	145

6. Lanny Levit,48,NY	49	1661
7. Frank DeLeo,45,NY	47	1327
8. Michael Tobin,41,NY	46	87
9. Antana Locs,40,NY	45	1397
10. Kelvin Sherrington,38,NY	45	1212
11. Ed Finnegan,41,CT	45	214
12. Bruce Kacen,50,NY	44	1331
13. Vincent Croce,55,NY	44	313
14. Fatima Silva,44,NY	42	1015
15. Spencer Ellis,28,NY	41	1649
16. Duke Conde,24	41	1423
17. Sal Carretta,42,NY	41	1136
18. David Redman,51,NY	41	304
19. Nirihari DeLong,48,NY	40	1229
20. Admas Belilgne,46,NY	40	1017
21. Tim Kourounis,61,NY	40	685
22. Alex Bekkerman,45,NY	39	1570
23. Krueger,31,NY	39	527
24. Tim Ryan,55,NY	37	807
25. Deb Robertson,45	37	497
26. Barbara Saldick,46,NY	37	228
27. David Obelkevich,55,NY	36	858
28. Louis Rosas,45,NY	35	1466
29. Francis Ziccardi,49,CT	35	727
30. Paul Seltzer,46,NY	35	39
31. Roger Byrom,40,NY	34	1534
32. Michael Morrin,62,CT	33	1251
33. Christine Woods,32,NY	33	232
34. Trishul Cherns,41,NY	33	192
35. Roman Dzierlatka,42,CT	32	1261
36. John Pier,44,NY	32	985
37. John Kenul,55,NY	32	329
38. Stephan Samuel,23,NY	32	149
39. Fred Kirby,47	31	777
40. Harry Berkowitz,58	31	339
41. Lew Cullen,45,NY	31	121
42. Patricia Cullen,41,NY	31	21
43. Nicole Bernadette,27,NY	27	1693
44. Edward Basanti,40	27	599
45. Ted Corbitt,80,NY	26	1216
46. Larry Katz,49,NY	26	391

RACE NUMBERS AND SUPPLIES FOR ULTRA EVENTS

We specialize in small runs of custom numbers at very reasonable prices!

RAINBOW RACING SYSTEM®

P.O. BOX 18510

SPOKANE, WA 99208

Call or write for a free catalog and samples.

RAINBOW RACING SYSTEM®
The world's leader in quality race numbers.

1-800-962-1011