



French peninsula and back Downtown via the second hill of the course on County Street.

Since 2008, the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick have sponsored the New Bedford Half Marathon along with the Mayor of New Bedford. The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick raise money for their community activities and scholarships. The mission of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is to, "sponsor and preserve cultural, charitable and social service programs. To sponsor and assist in the education of persons without concern for their national origin by providing financial and other assistance based upon merit," a valid cause whether one is of Irish descent or not.



Ruben Sanca

In 2011, the 13.1 mile race had 2,655 runners finishing the race, a record number of racers for the course. Ruben Sanca won the men's race with a time of 1:05:25; Kim Smith won for the women with a time of 1:09:50. Though Mr. Sanca runs in Boston, Ms Smith traveled from New Zealand to race the New Bedford Half Marathon. Because the New Bedford Half Marathon has such a good reputation, the field frequently has runners from all over the country and the world racing for their personal best, no matter what that time might be.

As the Half Marathon is part of the USA Track and Field Championship and Grand Prix, the runners completing the course finish in a wide swath of times. For example, the first New Bedford runner to finish the race was 31 year old Corey Bachand with a time of 1:15:10. The last was 22 year old Nicole Nixon with a time of 2:56:46. Though everyone runs with

the goal of finishing the race and some, like Sanca and Smith are serious competitors looking to win money and set records, some runners are out there with a specific cause in mind.

One such group is "Team Owen." Team Owen was started by Stephen Taylor, a school resource officer at New Bedford High School had a colleague who lost his son, Owen Simmons, to Spinal Muscular Atrophy, the leading genetic cause of death of infants and toddlers. Team Owen runs to raise money for the Gwendolyn Strong Foundation that searches for a cure for SMA. Like Team Owen, these groups of runners racing for charity "Run for those who can't." To donate or to get more details on Team Owen go here: <http://www.firstgiving.com/gsf/new-bedford-half-marathon>

So if you're looking for something fun and different to do on Sunday, March 18th, head on towards the Half Marathon route to cheer on the runners challenging themselves for their personal best and, some, for charity.

For more information, check out the websites below:

- <http://www.newbedfordguide.com/running-the-new-bedford-half-marathon/2011/03/22>
- <http://newbedfordhalfmarathon.com>
- <http://friendlysonsofsaintpatrick.com>
- <http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/stephen-taylor-1/100miles4owen>
- <http://www.firstgiving.com/gsf/new-bedford-half-marathon>