



Chris Tucker / Whitefish Pilot

Richard Hildner jogs past City Beach Friday while training for the upcoming Boston Marathon.

Whitefish man to run third Boston Marathon

By CHRIS TUCKER
Whitefish Pilot

A 61-year-old Whitefish man will race 26 miles in this year's Boston Marathon for fun and also to raise money to benefit children.

"I hope that people will accept the challenge and make a donation. My legs can do some running to help the community," said marathon racer Richard Hildner, who hopes to raise \$5,200 for The Nurturing Center, a non-profit program that benefits families and children with child-care referrals, mentoring for ninth-grade girls, parenting classes and more.

"We're well over \$1,000 now," Hildner said.

When Hildner isn't busy training to run in the 111th Boston Marathon, he works as a history and government teacher at Flathead High School.

He first started racing while in his mid-30s. The April 16 Boston Marathon will be Hildner's 15th. In 2005, he qualified to race in the 2007 Boston Marathon by finishing the California International Marathon in Sacramento with a time of 3 hours 50 minutes.

To race in the Boston Marathon, men age 60-64 must complete a different accredited marathon in four hours or less. In the 2003 Boston Marathon, Hildner placed 11,804th with a time of 4:19:49. In 2006, he was faster, placing 15,281st with a time of 4:13:46.

Hildner is one of four county residents who will participate in the Boston Marathon, and the only one from Whitefish. His wife Suzanne and 78-year-old father-in-law Harry Daniell also plan on

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running in Boston, although not officially. He'll have plenty of other company at race time, of course.

"The field [of racers] is equivalent to the population of Kalispell," Hildner said, comparing Kalispell's population of at least 17,000 people to the 20,000 or more racers that par-

ticipate in the Boston.

About 500,000 spectators are expected to watch the runners, a figure that is about half of the population of the entire state of Montana.

Training is essential to run a grueling marathon. On Friday, Hildner ran through downtown Whitefish, over the viaduct, up Texas Avenue and then across City Beach as part of the 50 miles he ran during the week as part of his training. The dreaded "Heartbreak Hill" section of the Boston Marathon's race course — a series of four hills at the 16-mile mark that rise a modest 80 feet in elevation — will demand that Hildner be in top physical condition.

The location of Heartbreak Hill is key, as runners by that point typically run out of glycogen, a fuel that muscles can easily burn. Once the body burns all the glycogen, it must switch to burning fat, which is more difficult to burn. The

transition causes racers to feel fatigued and is called "hitting the wall."

Hildner said he expects his heart rate to be about 145 beats-per-minute during the marathon. A few days before entering a race, Hildner will eat carbohydrate-rich foods, like pasta.

To prevent runners from taking shortcuts, their shoes are tagged with a computer chip that tracks their movement at various points along the course.

Anyone interested in donating to The Nurturing Center may send their tax-deductible contribution via check to: The Nurturing Center, 146 Third Avenue West, Kalispell MT 59901. Write "Boston" in the memo line so the money goes into the correct account. Visit www.nurturingcenter.org for more information.