

## Using Flying Irish GRANT at Bolder Boulder

*by Eddie Tompson*

I would like to THANK the Flying Irish for their \$75.00 "Race Grant". I am now a PROFESSIONAL RUNNER after 52 years of running and racing YIPPEE HOORAH!! Last autumn the Grant made me think a lot about serious things and how I am getting older.

I had only once spent any real time with my nephews Matthew and Nicholas and figured it would be good to get to know them a little bit. I had only visited Louisville, Colorado once in the past 32 years so with all this thinking I thought it would be good to try to get a modest amount of money from the Club for the trip. I thought that there must be a good race in the Louisville area and found the "For BIG Profits" "Bolder Boulder 10K". The race had many starting waves each about 70 seconds apart and I had to send in proof of my times and earned wave "EC" which is the 19th wave. I was staying near Boulder Colorado at my sister Jeannie Tomkowicz who was moving from her house with lots of packing and U hauling to a storage building. Cousin Paul Swiszc took me out for lunch and got to meet my sister Jeannie. Paul's daughter Sophia Swiazcz was going to run the race too.

I went into a running store named "The Runners Roost" here to pick up my number. Upon entering the store a very pretty woman with beautiful eyes comes up to me and says "Eddie are you here from Spokane to pick up your number and run the Bolder Boulder"?

HEY EDDIE IS FAMOUS!!!!?!!

FANS EVERY WHERE!!!!

Was it because I was the only older male picking up my number here? How could she know? I hadn't said a word!

Turns out she was a "Flying Irish" member but even more importantly she is the Famous runner "HOLLY AMEND" who was the big running STAR at Lewis & Clark HS Spokane and went on to Gordon College in Massachusetts. Holly was the NUMBER ONE RUNNER SUPER HARRIER (British term for a Cross country runner) at Gordon and also set Gordon College records in Track and Field. She got her start in retail at Runners Soul in Spokane. She knew me from there. Later at Runners Roost I met Janet Pliska from Westfield State University in Massachusetts where I had coached Cross Country in the 90's. Her name sounded familiar to me and upon checking she had the 4th fastest 5K Cross Country time ever when she was a student there. Flying Irish Treasurer Bret Whitesides, my sister Jeannie Tomkowicz, Maggie Heady, Kent Hoppy Hopson, and several Flying Irish members warned me about the altitude and getting sick.

Holly smiled at me and said her group was running a 5 miler in a hour and she wanted me to run. Hey, I was just there for a few hours but I had to hold up the HONOR of the Club and Spokane. The run was all around marshlands and I suffered badly going up the tiniest of hills! Holly and the group put me through the ringer and I was near death. On the Positive side my shin splints which I have had for several years were not hurting much.

The Bolder Boulder was packed with 46,210 finishers with many in costumes. The lines to the Port a Potties were 25 to 30 deep and I had to go BAD but my wave was getting very close to starting. My Doctor has me take a blood pressure medication pill, but to go with it a 2nd pill that forces me to urinate! We were all roped in and couldn't get out! My wave was made up by all runners my pace within 43 seconds. Bang! We were off! Excited as usual I took off and was leading the wave pack. Two male Photographers were high above the road over the race course in a crane about 170 yards from the start. "Photo Hound Eddie" was sprinting out like a shot subconsciously to have his picture taken in front of his wave! As I passed the crane other runners started to pass me and I felt a very heavy weight on the top of my chest! HEY SLOW DOWN BUDDY it is a LONG way to go I told myself. Alas it was all for naught as it turns out there was a young woman who was dressed very sexy to my far left and the two male Photographers were taking her photo and no one else.

Our group started passing runners almost right away and before the first mile marker I passed a healthy 18 year old male who started 5 minutes and 10 seconds ahead of our "EC" group! I still needed to pee and at 2 miles I entered my 1st ever during a race Port a Pottie! I tried and tried but I could not preform and nothing came out! Boo Hoo! As I exited the Port a Pottie the "Grim Reaper" in his hooded black cloak and wooden shaft with the steel blade scythe passed me! It was a tough battle for me and him during the rest of the race. Both literally and figuratively. Was this "Grim Reaper" my guide to the afterlife in Buffalo Land?

I was almost at the 3 mile mark when the surface on the road had a slant sloping down towards the left gutter. My left leg came down and WOW the pain in my upper thigh. I pulled it. In all my 52 years of running this had never happened before. I worked the pain with my hand slowing down but continued to run. The pain continued for a mile and I had to stop and gave it a two hand muscle massage for about 4 seconds and continued on. This helped a lot but I had some pain the rest of the way. I had been driving a car with a clutch and my left thigh had been getting a good workout shifting, something I hadn't done much of in many years. Maybe this shifting worked my thigh in an unusual way partly causing the pull. After the

race I was limping for 2 weeks and could not run. I enjoy the pain of running during the race, but this was too much.

I was having lots of fun despite these problems and was very happy that the runners were not bunched together much and the streets were enjoyable to run down.

I made a right turn and I could finally see Buff Stadium. This is where my sweetie "Maggie" would play her flute in the UC band for the football fans and "Ralphie" the Buffalo mascot. The final hill was coming up and I started my kick repassing "Grim Reaper" and another dressed as "Batman". We had been duking it out for several miles. It was a great day and a fun run. Nephew Nicholas Hopson, his girlfriend Lizz McGehee, Matthew Hopson's girlfriend Allison Loparo, and cousin Sophia Swiszc all ran great and will move many many waves next year. Nephew Matthew Hopson (bad legs) and sister Jeannie Tomkowicz cheered us on and dropped us off before the race.

I ran very well in my age group well ahead of Frank Shorter Olympic Champion in the Marathon Gold 1972 and also Silver in 1976. I had brought a van full of high school cross country runners to see Frank win the Silver in Montreal, Canada. But Montreal 1976 is another story.

July update: Over a month after the race I received a small package from the Bolder Boulder Race Committee to my surprise inside was a PURPLE AWARD RIBBON!!! EDDIE IS A REAL WINNER!!! A PROFESSIONAL FOR REAL!!! HA!! HA!! I was one of the few runners (only 3.8% of the field) that ran faster than their age in 2016. I won the award for my finishing time (which was my slowest road 10K ever) and beat my age even with all my stops and problems!



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