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## Interest in Boston at an all-time high

By Brian Metzler  
Competitor.com

As expected, interest in qualifying for the Boston Marathon is at an all-time high.

In the wake of the bombings at the 117th Boston Marathon on Monday, runners and non-runners have been talking and posting on social media about their interest in running the race next year with the hopes of supporting the victims, runners and Boston on the one-year anniversary of the incident. As such, the search for the qualifying standards for the 2014 race are skyrocketing.



Despite tragedies of the 2013 Boston Marathon, the search for qualifying standards has skyrocketed.

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In fact, according to Raymond Britt, a noted chronicler of Boston Marathon results and information, the interest is 15 to 20 times higher than at any point since 2008. Britt monitors results, weather and registration numbers for the Boston Marathon, the Hawaii Ironman World Championship and numerous other triathlons and marathons at his website, RunTri.com.

Interest in Boston Marathon qualifying standards spikes every April when talk, media coverage and the race's results spur interest.

"We believe it's an extraordinary sign of the running community's desire to support Boston," says Britt, a Chicago-based business consultant who ran Boston 13 consecutive times from 1996-2008 and owns a 2:54:37 PR at Boston. "They want to come to Boston in 2014 to defend her honor, take our race back from evil, to prove the spirit of freedom will prevail over all."

The 118th Boston Marathon is slated for Monday, April 21, 2014.

But therein lies a bit of a dilemma. It's still the Boston Marathon, and it is as hard as ever (or at least as hard as in recent years) to qualify. The qualifying standards were stricter this year than in recent years. And, as many recent BQ'ers know, qualifying is only half the battle. Actually getting registered is the other challenge.

In recent years, about 27,000 people have been granted entry to the race (through qualified entries, charity entries and sponsor's exempt entries), but only 22,000 typically start the race. But several thousand are also turned away each year once the race reaches its capacity.

With that in mind, Britt also expects to see a surge in marathon entries over the next several months as runners try to register a 2014 qualifying time before registration opens in early September. Only times recorded between Sept. 22, 2012 and the opening of registration will be valid for entry purposes.

According to lists maintained on MarathonGuide.com, here are lists of last year's most likely and most common qualifying races.

Most Likely to Qualify for Boston (2012): 1. Santa Rosa Marathon, 185 qualifiers, 34.8%; 2. Road2Hope Hamilton Marathon, 346, 32.1%; 3. Bay State Marathon, 302, 26.6%; 4. Lehigh Valley Hospital Marathon, 134, 24.8%; 5. Erie Marathon, 161, 24.3%.

Most Boston Qualifiers (2012): 1. Chicago Marathon, 37,455 finishers, 3,776 qualifiers; 2. Boston Marathon, 21,554, 2,705; 3. Philadelphia Marathon, 11,553, 1,708; 4. Twin Cities Marathon, 8,781, 1,132; 5. (tie) St. George Marathon, 5,696, 1,015; 5. (tie) California International Marathon, 6,186, 1,015.

In the 2013 Boston Marathon, 10,391 of the 17,580 finishers earned qualifying times in the race and 59.1 percent qualified, a relatively high mark made possible by the cool weather conditions. The 2012 Boston Marathon had a relatively low number of qualifiers because of temperatures in the mid-80s.

The next highest amount of qualifiers from all 2013 marathons is the Houston Marathon on Jan. 13, which had 6,667 finishers and 667 qualifiers (10.2 percent). The highest percentage of qualifiers from any 2013 race came from the small Tallahassee Marathon on Feb. 3, which had 66 qualifiers (21.4 percent).

With so many more people interested in running next year (and, presumably, contributing to charities), some have speculated that the B.A.A. might consider expanding its registration limit as it did for the 100th anniversary race in 1996.



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