

On the 'plane back from Los Angeles the Tuesday after his great Olympic run, where he finished 9th, I met an elated Jerry Kiernan and his coach Brendan O'Shea. Both were in terrific form and full of hope for the future. The following was the conversation we had.



## PLAIN SPEAKING FROM JERRY KIERNAN AND BRENDAN O'SHEA

**Q:** *You didn't seem to get the recognition that you deserve in relation to what you did in making 9th place, possibly because it was overshadowed a bit by John Treacy in 2nd, but certainly 9th was a wonderful performance overall. Could you fill me in though on the progress of the race from the beginning because we didn't see very much of it. The finish was very badly covered by the television network.*

**A:** Well, I quite agree with you, the T.V. network was absolutely terrible. The race went fine as marathons go. It was a race I enjoyed, because I've run all my Marathons in Ireland and it was something new to be running with stars like Seko and Salazar and De Castella, and I really enjoyed passing them out in the race.

**Q:** *How did the race start out for you? We didn't see very much of the race, except maybe the leaders. How were your splits? Did you plan the race with Brendan? How did your planning go?*

**A:** Yes, we had a plan of sorts, that I was to run reasonably conservatively early on, but at the same time give myself a shot at going for a medal, which was the way we planned it. I suppose I made up ground a little bit quickly, between 20 to

30K, I pulled back a minute on the leaders and who knows, I might have finished a place or two higher up if I had run a bit more conservatively, but I am very pleased with my performance.

**Q:** *Where were you at 5k, 10K.*

**A:** At 5K I'd say I was about 10 secs. behind the leaders, at 10K I was about 10 secs, at 20K, I was almost a minute behind them. At the half way stage I was over a minute behind them, from 20K to 30K, I pulled back that deficit.

**Q:** *What was the highest place you were in the race?*

**A:** I was actually leading at one stage, well it was just going round a short bend, I took it rather better than the others, well, Brendan feels I was shadowing it around 2nd and 3rd, we were all there in a group, it was around the 20 mile mark. Brendan and some of the Irish team and my friends in San Diego, were watching the race from a Motel and to find out my finishing position, they had to ring up Ireland to find out.

**Fr. K:** *That is extraordinary, because we were privileged to see the finish in the stadium.*

**J.K.:** They covered the first six and then they took a commercial break, and they

came back then in time to put the cameras on America's finisher, meanwhile, I had come in and Brendan did not see me coming in and so there was a state of panic – he thought my legs had cramped up so badly that I did not finish at all. He knew I was in contention at 20 miles, so he rang up Ireland and that is how they found out that I finished 9th.

**Fr. K.:** *What about the cramping? You did cramp in Cork on a few occasions, was it as severe as your time in Cork, or was it because of the heat? Why did you cramp a little?*

**J.K.:** I think it was the same old problem, it was nothing as severe as Cork. I made two short stops inside the final kilometre but at that stage I was not catching the person in front of me, and the person behind was a long way behind, so that there was no panic. I could afford to relax and wait for the cramp to subside and then carry on again. Perhaps I would have shaded 2.12 or 2.11.55, something like that.

**Fr. K.:** *What was the heat factor like? It was really warm. At the start of the race it was over 80 – it never went below 75. Was that a major factor? Would you say in better conditions you would have got a medal?*

J.K.: I think in fact that the excessive heat helped me in that had it been cool I would have been capable of going so much faster, the faster I go the sooner the cramps would come on – it is related to that. In a paradoxical way I was glad it was so hot.

Fr. K.: *What did you think of John's performance overall?*

J.K.: I thought it was a wonderful performance. It did not come as a great surprise to me. He had some superb performances leading up to the games, his 10k was not his most inspiring of runs but it was there and it is great he pulled a medal out of the games.

Fr. K.: *It is unlikely he would have gone into the Marathon, getting the medal then uplifted the whole lot, really must have inspired you as well. You seemed very fresh after your race, and full of confidence, hopefully for the future.*

J.K.: To be quite selfish about it, John Treacy was an opponent during the Marathon, you know when they went away from me and I was on my own, I was not concerned how John was doing, running like this can be a selfish sport, but it is quite true I did finish fresh in the end, that was because I was starting to cramp from 33k on and I could not push it the way I would have liked to, that's why I feel I have recovered so soon after it.

Fr. K.: *If there had been team medals, do you think you would have won?*

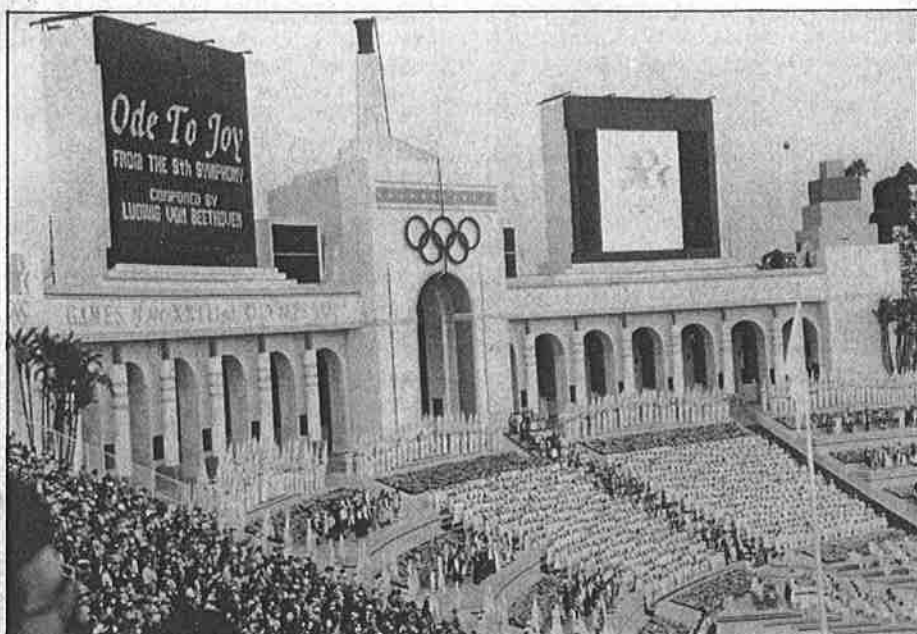
J.K.: Oh yes, In fact we were the only country to have 2 in the top ten. I believe next to us would have been Japan, they had 4 in 14, so in fact we would have won it quite easily.

Fr. K.: *Were you surprised that the likes of De Castella, Seko and Ikangaa that had prepared specifically for the event and particularly the Africans who were used to the heat were such a disappointment.*

J.K.: Well, I said before, I said it to Brendan coming out that the games were going to be littered with people who have great performances in non-intensive type of competitions, but the games are always littered with people who don't produce it on the day, and I felt if I could produce it on the day, which I did, and these people didn't, then I would have a high position. I am sure Salazaar and De Castella did all they could and prepared as well as everybody else, there were just people better than them on the day.

Fr. K.: *It was reported by most people anyway, that it was the highest calibre in the history of the event ever. Would you agree with that, or had you done any homework in that respect at all?*

J.K.: Well only a person like John Comyn would dare suggest that it was not a high calibre race because it was the highest calibre race imaginable. If you were to draw up a list of all the top Marathon runners in the World with the exception of Cierpinski, everybody who was anybody was there and if just all the people who were these big names dropped out of the race finished it, our results



would look even more impressive, because you have the likes of Njeborg and Geff Smith and them, they didn't finish, they were beaten when they dropped.

Fr. K.: *Did you expect the winner, Lopes to do as well, he had run well in Rotterdam, he dropped out of the next one. At 37, did you think he was somebody who would get the gold medal?*

J.K.: This is the best middle distance, long distance runner in the World, he has been for the last 2 years. He has proved it with his 10K times, World Cross-Country, European Cross-country, you name it, he has done it all, he is a superb competitor and it came as no surprise to me.

Fr. K.: *Brendan and yourself worked in very close co-operation, I will have a word with Brendan in a minute. You seem to work very well as a team. You went out and prepared very well beforehand, what does the future hold for you now that you have done so well, are you going to continue running marathons? What are your future plans?*

J.K.: Well, my future is in the Marathon, though I do believe I would run some very respectable times over 5K or 10K, I would also be interested in running in the World Cross-Country championships, but the Marathon is my future and I really do believe that it is only beginning.

Fr. K.: *How many respectable or reasonably Marathons do you think you could run in a year?*

J.K.: I think 2.

Fr. K.: *Somebody said, I haven't heard you confirm that you are going to run in the Marathon in Chicago. Is that true and do you think you will have recovered sufficiently from the exertions of this one?*

J.K.: O.K. it's in October, in fact it's about 10 weeks away. I was completely recovered from our National Marathon within four or five weeks, and I do believe I will almost be totally recovered,

it doesn't really concern me how I perform out there, if I run as well as I ran last Sunday and then perhaps you are talking about a 2.10 on a cool day, if I don't do it, it doesn't really bother me because I've done it in a big race, the most important one, I'm more concerned with London next year.

Fr. K.: *That's your big aim for next year?*  
J.K.: Yes.

Fr. K.: *Obviously you hope to peak for the major championships, there is nothing really on next year, the year after probably the Europeans and probably the World Championships?*

J.K.: Well, with John and I, I think we have the World Cup or the European Championships, we have a tremendous chance of doing well, because there are only a few Europeans ahead of me, and Lopes has promised us all that he is giving running up in a year's time, so that it is really up for grabs then and it is in a warm country and John and I proved last Sunday that we can run in warm countries in hot climates with the best.

Fr. K.: *I'm sure it gives you particular pleasure as well, you just mentioned it in passing, to be able to confound some of our great critics back home?*

J.K.: Well, you know who the greatest critic is, and my one fear going into the race was for some reason that I mightn't have run faster than the winner of the ladies' marathon, Joan Benoit. Then I think I would have come in for a bit of stick. I've been having a certain amount of correspondence with this person and his knowledge of Athletics is very limited. He's an armchair critic, we've plenty of those in Ireland.

Fr. K.: *But the real people are out here and they know the score.*

J.K.: The real people are out here and when you know the score about me being overshadowed by John Treacy, it's quite true, I suppose, most people will think of John's performance rather than mine, but for the people that I care about, the people who are really interested in athletics, they will realise the value of my performance.



**Fr. K.:** Right, Brendan, you played a great part in planning Jerry's campaign, a lot of people said after the Marathon in Cork that it was a futile race after the problems in Cork, in fact, some people suggested that Jerry shouldn't go out to Los Angeles at all. I'm sure you're particularly delighted to confound all those critics and you're glad of Jerry's performance?

**B.O.S.:** Well, I'm glad for two particular reasons. First of all it is nice to be right, and I believe that Jerry is a really fine runner by International standards and I also believe in two years time that he will be right in the top three in the world. I'm particularly pleased then for Jerry's sake that he ran so well, because there is not a more dedicated runner in Ireland and because there is not a more braver runner in Ireland than Jerry. I'm particularly pleased for Jerry's sake and, needless to say, for my own sake and for Ireland's sake. I think that there are a lot of things to be learned from these Olympics, and in athletics generally, in the past few years in Ireland. We seem to have a fantastic reservoir of talent in Ireland, in long distance runners, but it is absolutely going to waste, because it is not properly harnessed and no particular plan is being arranged. If you look at the cross-country in depth at the moment, we've a team ready for a certain medal in the World Cross-country, be it gold, silver or bronze, if a proper plan could be co-ordinated to get it going, but there is no real intention to formulate any such plan and to get the athletes to get together and work together as a team, in the longer term there is no particular reason why we wouldn't have an appropriate plan, why we would have a superb team in the next Olympic games and win a lot of medals. One thing I've learned, I think that for the past few years it is so hard for Irish athletes to make it internationally in Ireland. Jerry has made it at a slower rate than if he had gone abroad. Treacy has shown that he can't make it in Ireland, but he can in America. Coghlan has shown that he can't make it in Ireland, but he can in America. Delany has shown that he can make it in America, so the scene in Ireland is not adequate at the moment to support top class international athletes but the talent is just there.



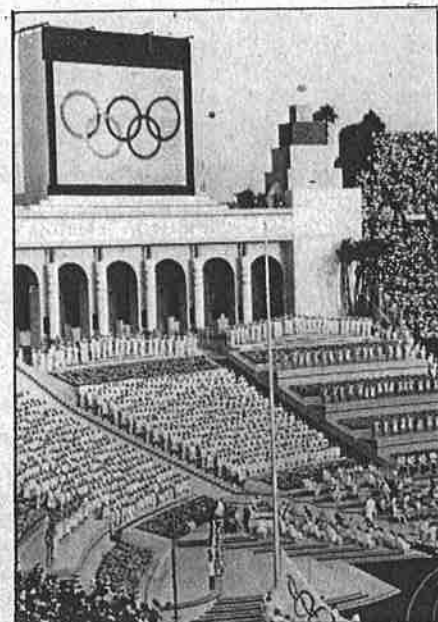
**Fr. K.:** I'd agree with that. Another point is the likes of Liam O'Brien on the track. He was the first athlete in modern times to make it in track and field and I honestly believe if he had got one or two races in close proximity on the Continent rather than going at his own expense to the AAA's I feel that he would have qualified at least for the final and, who knows, might have been right in there, if he had the same opportunities. Do you feel that it is sad for the likes of that to happen – a pile of money is invested by various organisations in spending money foolishly bringing people to various things, just to pay them off to what they're doing?

**B.O.S.:** It is sad that an athlete of calibre like Liam O'Brien is not getting support that he should get, in particular for the Olympics, when you're competing against the best in the world, trained by top class coaches, and given every facility, that it is quite impossible for us to compete in our amateur athletics without the help that they require and in the case of Liam O'Brien, he is a superb athlete, there is no doubt about that, and he ran up to his potential. He could really be a top class steeplechaser with the proper support.

**Fr. K.:** Now to get back to Jerry's race. You saw the race at the beginning, you saw the various stages throughout the event. How did it feel for you, like being out there, willing Jerry along? How did you see the race progressing?

**B. O.S.:** Well, the plan was that he would run slightly more conservative than usual in the first 10 miles but at the same time to keep the leaders in sight, perhaps be 30 seconds behind; perhaps 30 to 40 secs. behind after 10 miles and gradually work into it and hopefully after the 17th, 18th or 20th mile mark be in contact with the leaders and put himself in with a chance. He ran his race absolutely superbly for the first 10k up to 20k; he made his bid a little too quickly from 20k up to 30k, he was running superbly at that point, in fact, having joined them around 19k he was going as good as anything; he was probably better than most of the leading group of 10.

He covered a number of places at 20, he was good, in for a medal at 20½. I could see in the screen that there was a slight change in his gait and that a medal was not really on at 21. The break came. I could see he could not cover the break. I was talking to him afterwards. It turned out that for the first time in the race he started getting twinges of cramp, and he eased back. He didn't cover the break so he could make sure of getting a good place, which was the right thing to do. If he had picked it up at that stage he may have lost his place entirely. With regard to his position at that time, he in fact, as Jerry said, did lead around the bend and in fact at around 20 miles was the actual leader in the Marathon. On occasions he was 2nd, he was 3rd, he was 4th. He ran the last four miles with his typical courage. He cramped a bit in the last



kilometre which probably cost him 25/30 secs. It may have meant one place to him, but that is it. He ran a superb race and it was a performance, I think, which can only be appreciated by the really knowledgeable people and you, yourself, know of the reaction he got from the various media, from experts like De Castella's coach, who expressed great interest in him afterwards and in my opinion Jerry has the potential and I know he has the commitment to make the top three in the world, I would say, in two years time.

With regard to his cramping problem, it was still there to some small degree. It generally hits him around 17. We took various measures; in this case we visited experts both in Ireland and in England. We got better shoes made and I was really pretty certain all of these things would combine to push him along the road beyond 17 without getting the problem and this is, in fact, what happened. He reached 21 – 25 with minimal problems, not anything like before and it was really only in the last kilometre, one mile, that he had the bigger one. I am quite certain that given another 12 months we would have pushed him another three-quarters of a mile on the road and that within 12 months we would hope that he would be able to gallop the full 26 miles without having the problem and then in a normal sort of course like London it is certain he would be capable of doing under 2.10.

**Fr. K.:** London would be a much faster course and an easier course?

**B.:** Very much faster. Jerry is lucky also in a number of respects, one of which is that he is an absolutely superb heat runner. I knew he was a good heat runner. I didn't realise how good he was in heat until we brought him out to San Diego and we ran him out there in a number of races in very hot weather, perhaps in the 80°, 80/90 humidity against the local fellows, some of whom were 2.14 marathon, sub 4-minute milers,

and he ran absolutely away from them. This is a genetic sort of thing combined with proper training and showed that he is lucky to be one of those people who can run in heat. I would anticipate or expect in Jerry's case, on the day, it would probably mean about 1½ minutes to 2 minutes in London, which is a course similar to L.A., L.A. being an easy course, I think, by most standards. London is perhaps 30 seconds better, with better weather, it should knock him in 1 to 2 minutes off and with better legs we are talking about another minute. I would be hopeful of him getting 2.10 sometime in the near future, not necessarily in this one race in Chicago but hopefully then in London.

**Fr. K.:** *I think Jerry wants to come in here?*

**J.K.:** Just with Brendan's comment, with me having minimal problems. It is quite true I had minimal cramping problems from 21 to 25 miles. However, it was a very inhibiting factor and I knew I was capable of pushing faster and chasing the three Africans who were just ahead of me, but I also know that if I had done that the cramping would have been so severe that I would not have been able to finish the race, so certainly, whereas I didn't cramp badly, I was very inhibited.

**B. O'S.:** Just one point. You were talking there about Chicago. Coming up in 10 weeks time. Certainly one cannot recover from a very hard marathon or a very fast marathon 100% in 10 weeks. In Jerry's case he will have recovered very substantially to the nearest thing to 100%. Not quite 100%, I'm sure, but very close to it. One of the reasons being that physically, healthwise, he is really in tremendous condition at the moment. He looks so much stronger, so much healthier than he did at any time since I've known him and so many people have commented on that – how healthy he looks – and this is one of the things I believe, that unless you really are healthy and vigorous that you really cannot be expected to get the body to produce the goods at this optimum level.

Now we were talking earlier about De Castella in the race itself and this was, as soon as he came on the screen, even when I saw him jogging in the very beginning, warming up, he was running quite light compared to what he was running before. He was awesome, I thought, in Rotherdam, he was awesome in the Commonwealth games – the power he exuded – and physically he is a very strong-looking individual. This time he wasn't; he actually lost weight and he didn't come across with the same power and the same exuberance he did before and I would suspect myself he probably has overdone it – the travelling – because you may know he travelled quite a lot from American to Australia, to Europe, during the year for half-marathons and cross-country and track races and I think perhaps he overtrained. I don't know, but certainly he looked quite light. He didn't look strong and healthy as he did before. If Jerry is at his best, and this is one of

the reasons which I expect he will, in fact, shade his 2.12. in Chicago, I think he should do a faster time in Chicago.

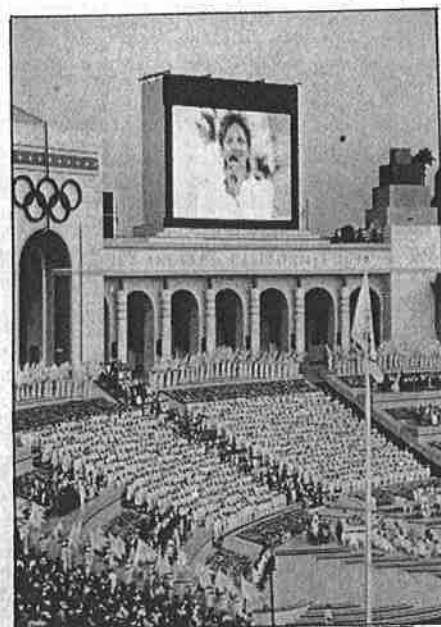
**Fr. K.:** *And I think that is going to be the trend for the future. Everybody can go out and do the mileage, it's what you do with it, like the proper diet and the proper balance and for all that, that's going to be a very important factor.*

**B. O'S.:** That's right. People often ask what is an athlete? What is a top-class athlete? To my mind a top class athlete is an individual who has got a very healthy body, who has trained, who has got a proper diet, a proper chemical balance in his blood. He's got a good mental make up, a fully integrated combination there that makes an individual who has the body that is trained to win and to withstand stress and who can actually produce it on the day. Too many of our best athletes leave the best times training as times behind them on the training track. They become too involved in fast work and they are not willing to progress slowly, keep building up the body and making it stronger and healthier; they tend to actually wear it down and in the process and they just can't produce it on the day. It's not that they are not willing to work hard for success; they just work too hard and there is probably nobody around, I wouldn't say no one, but not enough people to actually point this out to them at the time.

**Fr. K.:** *Well, this could be said with regard to John Treacy. He had problems for the past number of years and he went back to Providence to get them solved, through his coach there and through this Brazilian doctor and that obviously paid off for him. Did it pay off to a greater extent to you, though, were you surprised in any way with John's performance?*

**B. O'S.:** I was absolutely thrilled at the idea of John getting it for his sake and from a selfish point of view for Ireland's sake. We really needed a medal very very badly for morale and, fair play to John, he produced it. He has a bad record as a heat runner. I understand he has become quite involved in a nutritional programme and I'm absolutely certain that that was a major factor in his improvement. In fact, I remember at the Inter-Country in Cross-Country about four or five years ago, which was held someplace around Waterford, I can't exactly remember the place; I remember talking to him afterwards about this nutrition plan, it was quite interesting, and I was amazed when talking to him that he seemed to have very little interest and his coach had minimal interest, and I thought it was very strange. Again, it's only since he got involved in the nutrition programme that his track times have improved so substantially and he has now proved so resilient in health that he can run in World Class company in heat which he never could do.

**Fr. K.:** *And twice in the one week at that, no, three times.*



**B. O'S.:** Yes, indeed. Yes, and it wasn't a flash-in-the-pan either because I understand that in some race in Providence, some weeks back, that were held in 85° he gave a superb performance in heat, so I would say that his new progress is certainly related to his improved form.

**Fr. K.:** *So, instead of coming back with an attitude of doom and gloom we can really look forward to something great for the future and I think at this stage as well, and you might like to comment on that, there should be definite plans drawn up within the next three months by both B.L.E. and the Olympic Council to plan the course for the people for the next Olympic Games. How do you feel about that?*

**J.K.:** The will isn't there to do something like that in Ireland.

**Fr. K.:** *Why, Jerry?*

**J.K.:** Well, I don't know why. I think that most people, most officials, I think the B.L.E. aims for their own enjoyment, for having a good time. Some officials work hard, but I don't think some officials are that bothered how we perform. Certainly that is the impression I got out there; as long as you behaved yourself, kept your nose clean, and obeyed the rules, shaved every morning, I think as long as you met those requirements they were not unduly concerned with how you performed.

**Fr. K.:** *That's from an athlete's point of view, because obviously without athletes there would be no sport.*

**J.K.:** Yes, you would imagine that the officials should be there to serve the athletes. I think, not just in Ireland, but elsewhere, I think it's the other way round, we are there to serve the officials. I don't see it being done quite honestly.

**Fr. K.:** *Well, I'd hope that it could be done quite honestly, perhaps after this there could be some re-think?*

**J.K.:** Well, it was proved on Sunday, that we in the middle distance field, we are as good as anywhere else in the World, I mean John Treacy works closely with his Coach, I work closely with Brendan, and I think that shone through



on Sunday. I think some of the other boys, you know, they seemed to be in the wilderness, they don't seem to have any overall plan.

**Fr. K.:** *Well hopefully something will come, but you honestly can see very little coming?*

**J.K.:** I don't think so. Brendan make a comment. **Brendan:** You say something must be done, that's not quite true, nothing need be done, the officials certainly pay a certain amount of lip service, I don't believe they have any interest in the least, you judge people by their action and over the years their attitudes have not been positive, and an athlete like Jerry, who has proved that he can make it in Ireland and not alone make it but has reached the highest pinnacle. A number of them actually have harassed him often through the last number of years up to and including the last two weeks here in L.A. A number of our American friends who have heard the behaviour of certain officials and the negative attitude they used on Jerry, one could almost suspect them of psyching him out, they were trying to tell him that he was injured, that he could possibly collapse during the Marathon, that perhaps he could be suspended, this on the eve of the Marathon was quite a disgrace. Our friends just couldn't believe it but, that is par for the course for Irish officials as Jerry pointed out in no way are the officials available to further the cause of the athlete, they are just a necessary irritant that the officials have to put up with to justify their existence, so you say something must be done, I don't believe anything will be done, for some genetic reason we have a superb pool of natural talent in Ireland at middle distance, we could be one of the top countries in the World, we could not only rival Finland, we could be better than Finland, sit down and quickly think of what natural talent we have in Ireland almost unhelped, you have Liam O'Brien, you have John Linehan, Dave Taylor, certainly Jerry, certainly I would say 10 out of 15, Caroline O'Shea, who is a really beautiful runner, I have thought so for years, I remember mentioning to her 4 or 5 years back to move up to 800 and 1,500 metres at that stage she was just concentrating on running the 200 and the 400 metres and I think there's absolutely World Class talent here at 1,500 metres at this point, luckily she moved up to 800 now, but if she works to get a proper foundation now perhaps over a space of 1 or 2 years and build up to 1,500 metres with a view to running top class 1,500 metres in a few years time.

**Fr. K.:** *She told me she'd never run further than 3 and a half miles in the past 6 months.*

**B. O'S.:** Well, that just shows it, I think you could even see that the way she ran in the 3 races, she was becoming less buoyant, her second as opposed to her first, she ran marvellously in each of her three races and if she had that strength you get from doing endurance work over

a space of two or three years, she would have been able to stay with them in the last half lap in the 800's, it was really then she began to lose contact, and if she had been able to stay up there she would have made the 5th or 6th position, perhaps the 4th position, she would have gone very close to the medals.

**Fr. K.:** *So really the message going out loud and clear is for the people that control the reins is just cop themselves on and put the interest of the Athletes at heart or just get out?*

**B. O'S.:** Well ideally speaking that would be the case but there is no particular reason to believe that these officials who like the bit of glory, the majority of them in fact are quite well motivated but they have no expertise, they really don't know what they are trying to do, or what they are looking for, and unfortunately they are not going to delegate it to anybody who knows what they should be doing, that's a big thing I suppose, they just don't like handing over any bit of authority to anyone.

**Fr. K.:** *Jerry wants to come in here I think.*

**J.K.:** I think after that outburst, I don't think I'll be sent abroad for a race for the next 10 years.

**Fr. K.:** *Does that worry you?*

**J.K.:** Well, not really, I've been doing nicely on my own.

**Fr. K.:** *That seems to be a bit of an attack, I just wonder if it is on certain people or does that include the team we had*

*for the Olympics of Lar O'Byrne and P. L. Curran, you know, does it include those, because I kind of would be sad personally if it does, so would like to comment Jerry?*

**J.K.:** Well, I didn't want to make a sweeping attack on all officials, it's just the way I see it. As regards Lar and P.L. Curran, you couldn't possibly meet two more obliging and helpful gentlemen, and they were ideal to have out on such a thing at the Games, their attitude was well, the athlete he knows himself, he knows what's best for himself and leave him to his own devices. They didn't treat us like errant schoolboys, they knew what we were doing all along and they were quite confident in the fact that we were responsible people and I think this was demonstrated in the end.

**Fr. K.:** *That's fair enough. I'm glad that you made that comment, any comment from you Brendan in there?*

**B. O'S.:** I'd certainly go along with that. P.L. he really worked his backside off and he did a great job in managing the team. Lar O' is one of those great gregarious individuals who derives great rapport with the team and that is exactly what you want in a situation like this. If we had more people like these been given authority and were left work on in their unfettered way, left work unhindered by the bureaucratic officials senior to them, we'd have a far better system.

**Fr. K.:** *Thank you. We'll leave it at that.*

*Incidentally Jerry and Brendan, you will be glad to know will be contributing regular articles to "MARATHON". Their vast experience should be a great asset to our readers.*

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"It was night – Oh what a night – it really was". These words taken from a well known song must have echoed in the minds of the many T.V. viewers who stayed up in the early hours of Monday morning 13th August, 1984.

Where were you when John Treacy won SILVER will be the question asked in years to come when future Olympics come around. The many who stayed in bed will regret it for years to come and those who stayed up will never forget it. Many would have said before the race that John Treacy would run well but no one could have expected such a performance in his first marathon. On the way home from Croke Park that afternoon my wife was reading out the list of contenders for the race and such was the talent listed for the event that she remarked that "we haven't a hope of any Irish runner getting into the top ten, not to think about a medal". After five miles she went off to bed with instructions that I shouldn't tell her the result in the morning as she would watch the highlights on the T.V. Breakfast Programms. A friend of mine Fr. Roddy Curran C.C.C.P. watched with me for the first half of the race and departed for Kimmage to see the finish.

John Treacy was going well at that stage and after another few miles I was beginning to think that something could happen, even a medal was possible. I felt that I needed someone to share the excitement of the race, so I ran down the Estate to Seamus and Therese Gallen who I knew would be watching. When I got to their house they were as excited as I was. Soon Jerry Kiernan entered the picture and we just couldn't believe it, the BBC were checking to see who was the green vested runner arriving at the front of the field, soon they realised it was the Irish champion (no one had told them about the disqualification in Cork). I was now faced with the dilemma as to whether I should run back up to wake Amy (wife) because if an Irish runner was going to win a medal and I didn't wake her then I would never hear the end of it. I ran back home, into the bedroom and said 'get up quick Treacy is going for a medal'. She jumped out of bed as if the house was on fire. At this stage I felt like waking the whole Estate but I didn't. I knew that my neighbour across the road Michael O'Muircheartaigh had gone to bed, I phoned him, told him that Treacy was going for gold, need I state that he arrived in my house in less than two minutes to share the excitement of the closing stages of the race. With the stadium in sight and Treacy battling it out with Charlie Spedding our hopes of a medal were increasing with every stride. The question was would it be silver or bronze? A few minutes before we would have settled for any medal but now we were praying for silver. The sight of John holding off the English runner over the last 100 metres was a joy to behold, it was like

Arkle and Mill House in the Cheltenham Gold Cup all over again.

Many tributes have been paid to John Treacy for his wonderful performance in L.A., however, none surpassed that given to him by the great Brendan Foster, former European 5000 metres champion who was in the BBC commentary box

during the race. After ten miles he was asked to comment on Treacy. His comment was 'if a gold medal should be struck for any athlete for sheer guts, determination, courage and a man who never knows when he is beaten that man is John Treacy'. Little did Foster realise that John was on his way to beating his own clubmate and training companion.

## JOHN TREACY – A NIGHT TO REMEMBER ON T.V.

by NOBLE JOHNSON

