

*Your First Marathon:  
The Last Word in Long-Distance Running*

BY JACK H. SCAFF, JR.

Many of the pioneers of long-distance running in the continental United States are well known. People like Jock Semple and Will Cloney at Boston, Fred Lebow and Allan Steinfeld at New York, Lee Flaherdy and Bob Bright and Carey Pinkowski at Chicago.

Not as well known is Jack Scaff, one of the most unique figures in marathon running in the formative 1970s—a curmudgeon in some regards, a charismatic Pied Piper in others, an opinionated SOB, always quotable, always on the cutting edge medically, irreverent, sometimes crass, loud, obnoxious, a lovable big ole bear of a guy who never met a demi-god he didn't want to knock off its pedestal with a baseball bat or a mace.

A cardiologist, Jack was among the first to put forth the notion that heart attack sufferers—I hesitate to call them “victims” for fear of getting a slap up aside the head when next our paths cross—could be rehabilitated by training to be marathoners. Naturally, his pushing that idea in what he called The Honolulu Marathon Clinic was heralded as a formula for mass murder by some in the medical community. He also had an idea that Hawaii needed a marathon, in spite of the heat and the humidity, so he founded the Honolulu Marathon. He also helped found the Great Aloha Run in 1985. He's been putting on his marathon clinic for those with heart problems for 35 years and the streets of Hawaii are still not littered with lean corpses brought to a premature end by pushing their own hearts to seemingly ridiculous ends.

He's given more lectures than he can remember, written numerous books, gotten into philosophical arguments, promoted physical movement as the means to a happier and healthier life, and been a mentor to many and a menace to those of a tentative spirit.

He's lived big, encouraged others to do so, and is still vital and dangerous in his 70s.

Thirty years ago this book would not have mattered, because it covers way too much material. Thirty years ago most runners were led along by more experi-

ence runners until they became experienced runners who could lead still others. These days, most people getting into running have very little solid information available to them, even though they are drowned in information. The Internet is full of information, much of it not worth the electrons it wastes; many of those “coaching” these days could use some coaching; too many make it seem as though running a marathon is a lark, when to run it well is an art.

Jack Scaff pulls together nearly four decades of solid, tested, debate-settling information and dispenses it in a style that makes it feel as though he’s talking directly to you—which he is.

He covers everything from running etiquette to treadmill stress testing, how to tie your shoelaces for specific effects and how to avoid injuries and how to treat them if you are unfortunate enough to get them, how to pace yourself in a race after explaining how to train for that race, the effects of beer on marathoners to how exercise benefits and detracts from the female athlete. Every topic you can imagine is here as well as some you’d never even think about—and each is presented simply, efficiently, and personally. And Dr. Scaff isn’t just quoting himself; he quotes everyone from Shakespeare to Darwin, Dr. Peter Reich on whether stress contributes to cardiovascular disease to the effects upon diabetes of long-distance running from *The American Journal of Medicine*. He also occasionally quotes *The Bible* and frequently quotes himself, sometimes in the same chapter.

The book is all you need to know about training for and running the marathon. And then some.