

Men plan training for local marathon

By Jodie Wagner, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer
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Bob Anderson has six marathons under his belt and will be attempting a seventh this fall.

Jim Werring, a retired New York City police detective and fellow West Palm Beach resident, will be going for No. 26.

Both men, along with hundreds of other distance runners, will participate in the inaugural Marathon of the Palm Beaches on Nov. 14.

The event, open to runners ages 13 and over, will be the latest in a long list of marathons run by Anderson and Werring, who began running many years ago for fitness and weight maintenance and fell into marathon training during the course of their workouts.

"(When) I first started out, it was just a way to get in shape, and I just gradually kind of liked it, the way I looked and the way I felt," said Werring, a 54-year-old New York native. "I started to get competitive after a few years just to reach some... personal goals I had. It was just rewarding mentally and physically."

Anderson, 62, felt likewise.

Though he hadn't run more than 5 miles at one time during his first 59 years, the native Chicagoan began marathon training three years ago after answering the challenge of his son, a distance runner who competes for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training.

Shortly thereafter, Anderson completed his first 26-mile race -- the 2001 Rock 'n' Roll San Diego Marathon.

"It probably was one of the most rewarding things that I ever have done because it was an accomplishment," Anderson said of finishing the race. "It was a lot of pain and aching and sweat and hard work, everything else. But until you really experience going across the finish line, you can't understand what we're talking about."

Thanks to Anderson and Werring, however, about 30 local distance runners soon will.

Beginning June 1, Anderson and Werring will oversee a 24-week training program designed to help newer runners or first-time marathoners increase their chances of completing a marathon.

"The goal would be to take a person, a beginner or somebody who only ran one marathon, and get them prepared mentally, also conditioning-wise, to be able to safely and happily finish a marathon -- to get the finisher's medal," Anderson said. "Time is not that important; just to be able to have bragging rights at the office or at home (is)."

As part of the training program, which will run through Nov. 12, participants will be taught the importance of injury prevention, hydration, nutrition and stretching.

They also will receive weekly training schedules, take part in organized group runs on Saturday or Sunday mornings and participate in track workouts appropriate to each participant's progress.

"We have to get them to build up a base," Anderson said. "The total distance will never exceed 10 percent from the previous week. So it's a gradual build-up to the point where they can do a couple of long training runs, a long gradual run of between 20 and 22 miles. That will give them the base, conditioning-wise, to be able to complete a marathon.

"Also, it will help them with their confidence and the mental aspects of pushing through that so-called wall and completing the last six miles."

Participants will be divided into a north group and a south group.

Werring will oversee the north group, which will use Jupiter's Carlin Park as its training base. The south group, headed by Anderson, will meet in West Palm Beach.

Cost is \$125 for the 24-week course. The minimum age requirement is 21. Water and sports drinks will be provided on long runs.

For information, call 694-8125 or visit www.palmbeachmarathontraining.com. *Jodie Wagner is a sports writer for Neighborhood Post. She can be reached at 820-4537. Faxes can be sent to 837-8320.*

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