



Peak Profile

Jerry Macari

Age: 44

Residence: New York City

Latest feat: Overall winner,

NYRR Summer Kickoff 10K (34:52)

In a sport governed by a ticking clock, the ironic truth is that time can sometimes be bested. Just ask Jerry Macari.

A member of NYRR since 1984, Macari was the 2000 NYRR Runner of the Year for the 40-44 age group. Though he's aiming to reclaim that title this year, he has set his sights on loftier goals. "I'll never be an age grouper," he states with characteristic brashness. "As long as my legs are pedaling I'll challenge the overall leaders."

Macari races locally nearly every weekend, up to the half-marathon distance. Indeed, his entire lifestyle centers on running fast and often. He spends early mornings at the gym, followed by mid-morning loops around Central Park, where he sticks to the roads ("I hate getting my running shoes dirty"). After lunch, he heads south to his downtown running specialty store, Urban Athletics. A former Wall Street financier, Macari traded his 18-hour workdays to found the establishment with his family in 1995. He recently opened a second shop uptown on Madison Avenue.

Over post-workout beer and thick-crust pizza, Macari waxed eloquent on the highs and lows of his two decades as a leader of the pack.

New York Runner: You've been a top-level road racer since before some of your competitors were born. What is the secret to your longevity?

Jerry Macari: I guess I am always hungry, and I have a deep, gut feeling that the best is yet to come. I know I can run faster yet. When I took up running, I really



Scott McDermott

thought I had a shot at being a professional runner.

NYR: When was your first win?

JM: It was back in 1984. I beat top masters runner John Dugdale in a cross country race in New Canaan, Connecticut. It brought my uncle to tears. That was the race that gave me delusions of grandeur, which haunt me to this day.

NYR: What is your all-time favorite NYRR race?

JM: The Frostbite 10-Mile has always been a favorite. I ran 52:10 once and lost to a man in the final sprint after I pointed out to him that we should begin a sprint, as the finish line was fast approaching. He thanked me profusely.

NYR: What do you consider your best-ever performance?

JM: It would have to be my 2:24:11 at Boston in '88, though it was terribly disappointing not to have run a couple of minutes faster and qualify for the U.S. Olympic trials.

NYR: After racing for 20 years, you have probably seen it all, right?

JM: Yes, I was once leading a race when I was pulled over by a cop for running in the road. I had on my race number and I was panting, hardly able to utter a word. Strangely, he seemed to ignore the 500 other runners behind me who went flying by.

NYR: What are your racing goals for the rest of 2004?

JM: I just ran a time trial 5-miler that puts me in line for a 32-minute 10K. I am also going to run under 15 minutes for 5K. I would like to win any NYRR award for the year, and kick the butt of anyone who doesn't eat the cheese on their pizza.

NYR: Is an ex-Wall Streeter happy owning and managing a running store?

JM: I love it. People come in just to give me feedback on a race they did or a training run they enjoyed. It is a life with vitality, instead of pushing paper. ■