



# The Harvard Crimson

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## Sports

### Students Join in Boston Tradition

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I've never understood what possesses people to run. Granted, I was always the kid on my little league baseball team who got paired with the catcher during sprints...and lost. But I've tried recreational running both on a treadmill and outside, and the same thing always happens about five minutes in—my lungs ache, my right shoulder hurts, and my stomach cramps up. So I've just never understood running.

But out of my misunderstanding sprouts a downright respect.

I'm amazed whenever I see runners on the river or in the Olympics, and the graceful strength of their bodies, the rhythm of their legs and the stillness of all else.

That's why I get excited when the Boston Marathon happens. Well, that and because the Marathon heralds in springtime, nice weather and the Marathon Monday/Patriot's Day holiday.

Oh wait...

That's right, yesterday, while everyone else in Massachusetts celebrated Patriot's Day—commemorating the battles fought at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, ostensibly kick-starting the American Revolution—we here at Harvard were milling back and forth between classes.

Government offices and basically every other college in Boston had a holiday, but Harvard, which bills itself as a landmark of Revolutionary history, was still in session. Some of George Washington's troops were stationed in Hollis Hall for some time, and yes, those stationed in Mass. Hall ended up costing the University 50 pounds worth of damage, but that's no reason to overlook the importance of this state holiday.

And let's not forget the significance of yesterday also being Marathon Monday. Many Harvard students have been training for months, if not years, to compete in the historic event. It's unrealistic for students to have to choose between classes and something they've worked so hard to be part of.

Although sophomore Molly Siegel only reached mile 21, she felt the day would have gone smoother if she didn't have the thought of missed class looming over her.

"It would have been nice to not have class," Siegel said. "Now I have to watch the lecture videos."

Sophomore Sanders Bernstein, who is also a Crimson Arts editor, found that classes played a big role in limiting how many of his friends could show up for support.

"It definitely dampens the motivation to run in the Marathon because a lot of the thrill is having your friends come out to cheer you on," Bernstein said.

Bernstein was stunned that, as much as the Marathon is such an iconic part of Boston culture, Harvard "doesn't allow students to take advantage of it."

Many of Bernstein's friends asked their professors if they could be excused from class to see their friend to the finish line, but were denied. What characterizes a marathon is the palpable electricity in the air that keeps the runners running.

"The main difference between a marathon and just running 26.2 miles are the fans," sophomore Marianne Eagan said.

Eagan, who made her marathon debut yesterday, remarked on the huge boost she got when kids lining the street reached out for high fives and the joy on their faces when she obliged. But for Eagan, missing yesterday's classes came at a bigger cost.

"I actually had a paper due [yesterday]," Eagan said. "I think I got less sleep for [the Marathon], which is kind of frustrating. It was nice having the day off class but it would have been better to have had it sanctioned."

So why doesn't Harvard give its students the day off to encourage students to run the Marathon or cheer on their classmates?

From a historical deference perspective, it makes sense. As a service to its students, it makes sense. Not to mention, Harvard isn't even on the Marathon route. According to Eagan, Wellesley and Boston College, both of which observe Patriot's Day, were so thick with the smell of alcohol that it was a detriment to the runners. If any schools should be in session, it should be them.

"Those who can't do, teach." I suppose those who can't do sports, write about them. I may not be a runner, but I can recognize it's unfair that the University doesn't care about those that can and want to run. It's not hard to make it a holiday. There's all the reason to do so, and no reason not to.

Harvard, what's stopping you?

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