



## Ludlow's Bob Landry wins Oleksak Lumber Half Marathon

By Bill Wells

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John Suchocki

The Oleksak Lumber Half Marathon and 5K gets under way Sunday on West Silver Street in Westfield.

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WESTFIELD – Ludlow's Bob Landry said the Oleksak Lumber Half Marathon "always" draws at least one top runner.

Sunday, that top runner was **Landry**, who tactically made a winning move late in the 13.1-mile to cross first at the Oleksak race in one hour, 18 minutes, 15 seconds.

Eileen Combs of Schenectady, N.Y., easily won the women's division, leading from wire-to-wire for a winning time of 1:23:02.

Patrick Byrne of Manchester, Conn., was the runner-up in 1:18:59. Arlington's Jeffrey Hayes was third in 1:19:07, while Fiskdale's Kyle Dunn placed fourth in 1:22:11.

On the women's side, Suffield's Beth Krasemann (1:28:35), Holyoke's Meghan Lout (1:29:22) and Westfield's Anne Paredes (1:30:47) completed the top four.

The 15th annual event drew a record number of registered runners, with 373 signing up for the half marathon and another 159 registering for the much more friendly 5K.

Holyoke's Tim Mahoney won the 5K in 16:56, while Chicopee's Maura McDonald was first among the women in 20:32.



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The Republican  
Bob Landry, of Ludlow,

The men's race had its share of excitement. Dunn grabbed the lead in the first mile and stayed in front until Landry and Byrne pulled along side during the sixth mile. Dunn then faded off the lead pace, as Landry and Byrne stayed within a few seconds of each other for the next 4 miles.

crosses the finish line as the winner of the Oleksak Lumber Half Marathon on Sunday in Westfield. photo by JOHN SUCHOCKI

Landry, a 41-year-old seasoned distance runner, held a two second lead at the 10-mile mark before picking up the pace and building a significant lead over the final 5K.

"I think (Byrne) tried to make a move and I was a little bit too strong for him," Landry explained. "Right around mile 9 he fell back a little bit."

Landry picked up his first win in four trips to the Oleksak race, which was hilly for the first 4 miles, followed by a 1-mile long downhill before the course flattened. There was a noticeable wind at the 2010 race.

"I'm very happy to get a win here," Landry said. "There's always somebody who shows up. This gives me a little confidence I need doing into Boston this year."



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photo by JOHN  
SUCHOCKI

Eileen Combs, of Schenectady N.Y., was the women's winner of the Oleksak Lumber Half Marathon.

**Landry**, who banged out a 2:36:46 at the **2009 Boston Marathon**, had to cut back on his running over the winter due to an injured IT band. His first race back was the Jones Group Realtors 10-Mile Road Race in Amherst Feb. 28, followed by the Stu's 30K in Clinton March 7.

"I couldn't do anything hard – just easy runs," Landry said. "It wasn't something you could run through. In February I usually run about 400 miles and I only did 100."

Making the trip to Westfield with eight friends, **Combs** had plenty of company. On the course, however, the 32 year old was on her own most of the way.

"From 4 almost to the finish, it was really lonely," the 32 year old said. "But I plugged through it, like a training run."

Combs, too, plans to run the Boston Marathon in April. She banged out a 2:50 last year at Boston.

"I don't think I'll hit that," the 32 year old said. "I'll be happy with a 2:55. I'm shooting for the fall to try to get back down to the Olympic Trials."

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