



## New road races set for Hampden and Wilbraham in April

By Bill Wells

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With two road races in March setting attendance records, two other local events picked a good time to have their respective inaugural races.

The **Hampden Recreation Association** 5K Run/Walk will be held April 10, while the **ProShred** Green Day 5K Run Race will kick-off in Wilbraham April 17.

The **Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race** drew the largest field in Western Massachusetts history March 20 with nearly 5,000 runners, while Sunday's **Oleksak Lumber Half Marathon** and 5K attracted a record crowd of 500-plus for its 15th annual event. Those figures prove to be a good sign for the region's two newest races.

The Hampden Race will begin at Thornton Burgess Middle School at 9 a.m. The registration fee is \$20, with all proceeds going toward the Hampden Youth Sports and Recreation programs. The course is a relatively flat, left-turn loop.

For more information, e-mail [dturk@yahoo.com](mailto:dturk@yahoo.com) or [fdinoia@detechinc.com](mailto:fdinoia@detechinc.com).

The Green Day race is set for the **Scantic Valley YMCA** at 9 a.m. The entry fee is \$15. There's also a fun run for kids ages 5-15 at 10 a.m. The race is a fund-raiser for the 2010 Hit a Home Run for the YMCA of Greater Springfield Annual Campaign, which is attempting to raise \$300,000 to support children and families in local communities.

Call Bill Proulx at (413) 596-2749 for more details.

**OLEKSAK RACE:** The Oleksak race enjoyed its finest race, with 373 runners registering for the hilly half marathon and another 159 signing up for the 5K.

"Following a good running trend, we had record numbers like Boston and the Manhattan Half Marathon," race director Mike Sheldon said. "It seems like there's a mini-running boom going on and we're glad to take advantage of that."

And the bigger numbers meant even more good news, as the race was able to donate "a record profit for the **Westfield Boys & Girls Club**, which is the whole point of the race," Sheldon said. "I'm very pleased, and I received some very nice comments from the runners about the race: they're coming back in spite of the hills."

Sheldon received a bit of a treat for the 13.1-miler, as he drove the lead car.

"Being in the lead car was sort of a dream of mine," he said. "It was great to watch the race unfold from the front and not being at the back of the pack, like my usual (running) pace."

**ELKS RACE BEGINS:** The Holyoke Lodge of Elks 5K will begin its annual series Thursday. The races are held throughout Ashley Reservoir, starting at 6:30. The Lodge of Elks is located at 250 Whitney Ave.



Staff photo by John Suchocki

Sunday's Oleksak Lumber Half Marathon and 5K drew a record field of 500-plus runners.

Go to [www.empireonerunningclub.com](http://www.empireonerunningclub.com) for more information or e-mail [eorc@empireonerunning.org](mailto:eorc@empireonerunning.org).

SMAC ALSO SET TO START: Five days after the Elks race starts its season, the **Sugarloaf Mountain Athletic Club** will host its Northampton Cross Country Race Series, which is held Tuesdays at 6:30 near the Northampton Community Gardens on Burts Pit Road.

SMAC's web site is [www.sugarloafmac.org](http://www.sugarloafmac.org).

WALK TO RUN: The **Pioneer Valley Women's Running Club** will host its Walk to Run Clinic, starting April 19. The eight-week program runs 5:30-6:30 in Springfield. Interested participants must be able to walk briskly for 30 minutes and be in good physical condition. Along with running, members will be taught how to properly stretch and warm up.

The entry fee is \$50. E-mail [donnafleury@yahoo.com](mailto:donnafleury@yahoo.com) or go to [www.pvwrc.org](http://www.pvwrc.org) for more information.

RUNNING SCHOLARSHIP: The PVWRC is seeking nominees for its annual scholarship, which is presented to a local high school female senior who's involved in track or cross country. To obtain an application, call (413) 567-0936. The deadline is April 30.

USATF CHAMPIONSHIPS: Kent Lemme of Williamstown placed fourth in the men's 40-44 division in the 800 meter race at the **USATF Masters Indoor Track & Field Championships** in Boston Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Springfield's Brian Hetzel took fifth in the 800 in the 30-34 division, while Brimfield's Ron Lombardi finished sixth in the 45-49 3K. Chicopee's Jonathan Tetherly placed fifth in the 3K and sixth in the 800 in the 65-69 category.

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