

Southward bound



By SC Falkland Islands Team

Marathon running – unique and punishing in any climate – takes on a new spirit and passion when run in one of the most pristine areas on the planet – the Falkland Islands. The Falklands is a windswept archipelago in the South Atlantic which is home to a few thousand people.

The main town of Stanley, with around 2500 inhabitants, lies as far to the south of the Equator (52degS) as the mother country's capital, London, does to the north. Stanley boasts the world's most southerly certified marathon, and anywhere this far south, even on the South American mainland, struggles to provide enough asphalted road surface on which to fit a marathon.

Covering undulating ground that criss-crosses north-east Falkland from the Beaver Hanger to Sapper Hill to the old airport, the Marathon provides runners with a variety of topographical and climatic conditions – sometimes four seasons in the space of the three or so hours it takes to run the course. And there are striking views to take away the pain of the last few miles.

Organised by Standard Chartered Bank, the Marathon is a team effort

from all the Bank staff and many others in the local community. It is a project which both binds people together locally and develops ties to the wider world. Proceeds go to support the Bank's Seeing is Believing project, a global community initiative driven by Standard Chartered's staff to raise awareness of avoidable blindness issues. The aim is to raise US\$10 million by 2010, to improve the lives of 10 million people across 20 countries.

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Although the thinking is big, the numbers are necessarily modest. Most runners are either local or British Army personnel resident at the Mount Pleasant base, located alongside the Islands' new airport. The nearest sources of foreign runners are Argentina and Chile

and this year an Argentine runner, Marcelo de Bernardis, lined up among the 34 individual entries, along with a few other overseas runners from Austria and the UK, and enjoyed a good reception. The marathon runners are kept company along the route by relay





teams, of which there were 31 this year. In all 154 runners had the opportunity to test themselves against the distance, against the elements and against personal best times. On the day nervous energy abounded as runners arrived and greeted friends and team mates.

Registration began at 08.30 at the Bank and at 09.30 there was a briefing in the Town Hall, where runners were reminded of the route and the rules, Acting Governor Mr. Paul Martinez fired the starting pistol at the start line in the Town Hall Car Park at precisely at 10.00 – no nervousness now.

Sunday morning's challenge wasn't the wind, the cold and the rain, as it had been last year, but bright sunshine and excellent temperatures. A slight breeze kept the runners cool for the first few miles but as the day heated up the breeze lost its bite. A few bystanders speculated that it might be too hot for some runners but all seemed to take it in their stride. Standard Chartered employees acted as marshals and others handed out water en-route to some very thirsty runners.

Runners started off with a lap of honour around the Town Hall before heading west towards the Beaver Hanger. Heading back again via Jeremy Moore Avenue and past the Governor's House on the shore of the Stanley inlet, it took about 10-15 minutes for the lead runners to get back to the Town Hall. They then headed east on Ross Road past the Bank and on to their first visit to Stanley Airport.

Over a hundred spectators cheered the runners along as they passed the Town Hall and made their way to Rowlands Rise, where the course leaves the flat margins of Stanley Inlet. Many began to feel their legs during the 7.5 mile out-and-back stretch between Rowlands Rise and the Stanley Airport. After turning around in the Airport car park the runners took the Stanley Bypass at the top of Rowlands Rise to head for Sapper Hill, to the south-west of Stanley. The turn around there,

at about halfway, comes just metres before the end of the tarmac, and runners then made the long return to Old Stanley Airport. Another "U" turn there brought runners on to the Airport Road for a final time, to retrace their steps down the slope of Rowlands Rise and west along Ross Road towards the Town Hall.

But it was not over yet. The final few kilometres repeat the initial excursion to the Beaver Hanger and back. After running literally side-by-side with three-time winner Hugh Marsden, Simon Almond from the Mount Pleasant Base picked up the pace in the last mile to cross the finish line in a new course record of 2:55:46. Marsden followed slightly more than a minute behind and the Argentinian De Bernardis was the next solo runner in, among the leading relay teams.

Mount Pleasant's Amy Cruickshank and Gail Fisher had a similarly close contest for the women's title. A few walkers brought up the rear on an afternoon that began to cloud-up and cool down.

The presentation was held at 16.00 at the Town Hall and trophies and prizes were awarded by Mr. Paul Martinez and Standard Chartered's Chief Executive Rino Donosepoetro. In his remarks to the audience Mr. Martinez said this was his first Stanley Marathon and hinted that he was so enthused by the event that he may enter next year's Marathon. Mr. Donosepoetro went on to say that proceeds from entry fees and any money raised from the marathon will be donated to Seeing is Believing. He expressed heartfelt appreciation to all the people who contributed to the success of the marathon. In particular, the employees of Standard Chartered Bank and their families had worked tirelessly on race day, and before in planning the event.

The day had indeed been a celebration of endurance and passion for runners, spectators and organisers alike.

MEN:			
1	Simon ALMOND	GBR	2:55:46
2	Hugh MARSDEN	GBR	2:56:59
3	Marcelo DE BERNARDIS	ARG	3:07:29
4	Rupendra GURUNG	NEP	3:11:18
5	Terry REDHEAD	GBR	3:17:13
6	Christopher QUINN	GBR	3:29:32
7	Derek MCKEWAN	GBR	3:35:04
8	Kevin LUCAS	GBR	3:38:16
9	Resham SHREES	NEP	3:41:15
10	Lee GREEN	GBR	3:44:22
WOMEN:			
1	Amy CRUIKSHANK	GBR	3:44:48
2	Gail FISHER	GBR	3:47:04
4-MEMBER RELAY TEAMS			
1	FIDF		2:56:47
2	Hofmeisters		3:03:35
3	IPC Select		3:04:45
4	Morrison		3:07:18
5	Griffin		3:08:31
6	Air Force One		3:10:39
7	Maximum Break 147		3:11:02
8	Res Rockets		3:19:43
9	G E F Gazelles		3:23:28
10	FIDF B		3:25:25

After running **side-by-side** with Hugh Marsden, Simon Almond from the Mount Pleasant Base **picked up the pace** in the last mile to cross the finish line in **a new course record of 2:55:46.**



RACE CONTACT DETAILS

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Full race contact listings start on page ??