



UWI ROAD WARRIORS

UWI staff leaves the classroom and office for the road where the competition is fierce



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“Actually it’s the best organized race in Trinidad & Tobago to date... in my time of running I’ve not seen better,” says triple champion, **Darrin Grenade**. “I just think we should throw a little more road races like the UWI [SPEC International Half Marathon] ...it’s really a pleasure doing that race, the organisation is superb.”

For the past three years he has taken home gold in the UWI staff (male) category, with a personal best in the first year of 1 hour 25 minutes. The next two years he did exceptionally well, but injuries gained just before race day, affected his time.

For **Dr. Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw**, a UWI lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, she has always appreciated the care given to runners in the race.

“It’s one of the best organized races in the country and I really appreciate the great respect shown to the athletes”, explained the champion in the staff (female) category, for the past three years.

In just 60 years, The University of the West Indies has grown from a college into a well-respected tertiary institution with alumni and staff that have been integral to the development of the region. And so as the institution kicks-off its 60th anniversary celebrations, what a better place to start than with a celebrated road race. It seems that the UWI Sport and Physical Education Centre’s International Half Marathon is about to become another UWI tradition of excellence – in road racing.

In just a few years, this International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) certified race, the brainchild of Dr. Iva Gloudon, Director of Sport and Physical Education at UWI, has grown from 300 runners to over 600 in 2006. Members of staff from Jamaica to Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have said that they welcome the opportunity to compete and engage in a sport alongside students and colleagues. They also have an opportunity to win attractive cash prizes, hampers and medals. Also there is no gender bias in the prize structure, as sometimes occurs in other regional races.

Walk across the St Augustine Campus on a cool October morning or evening

and you know that the UWI SPEC race is drawing near – the number of runners training on the fields and pathways across the Campus seem to have doubled. And although the reasons for running this 13.1 mile race vary, the interest from staff in taking part in the half marathon has remained constant.

For UWI lecturer **Dr. Valerie Bowrin**, who placed second in the staff female category in 2005 and 2006, it is the opportunity to stay fit and healthy. Although she trains throughout the year, she gradually increases her programme two to three months before race day.

“I run because it works for me, but I don’t really like running - so I use racing to train. I like aerobics and the gym, but I have to motivate myself to run... I’m not very competitive like that, but I like the atmosphere, there’s adrenalin in the air,” she recently explained.

Over a decade ago, while studying in the USA, she began with the shorter races like the 10 mile ‘Broad Street Race’ in Philadelphia.

Over the years she has competed in 5K races at home and in 2004 “attempted” and completed the CLICO Marathon. However she has a preference for the half marathon.

“It is enough to make it a training effort but not the time you have to put into training for a marathon.”

Her routine consists of a long run on Sundays and shorter runs during the week. She trains for about 5 hours every week and consistently varies her routine.

The race course, which begins and ends at the gates of the UWI SPEC forms a loop and while some runners may find this distracting, she sees it as an incentive.

“I like the fact that you see the winners come back – when you see them returning it gives you inspiration,” she explained.

Darrin Grenade, has been running competitively since 2001, taking part in the TTUTA 10 k race and the CLICO marathon in the same year. Obviously a talented runner in his second race and first marathon, he completed the course in just 3 hours 27 minutes.

“I just took it up; I had a passion for running and I tried it... I was encouraged by friends in the Trinidad & Tobago Road Runners club,” he explained.

For this 33 year old Chief Storekeeper at the University’s Chemistry Stores, the international race is a well-timed preparation for the CLICO marathon.

“We constantly train and focus our energies especially around the half marathon... we’ve started training for this season’s marathons and doing the half marathon actually tells where you are and what level of fitness you’re at in your training.”

Unfortunately, this year he will not be taking part in the UWI SPEC race, instead he’s heading for New York to run in the Marathon, which takes place on the same day, November 4th, as the UWI SPEC race.

He runs with his club members around the Queen’s Park Savannah and environs almost daily, accumulating almost 50 miles a week of running, gradually increasing this to 70 miles, before race-day. When asked what motivates him during the race to win, he explains, “You have to keep your focus...I look at other runners, [markers] and think of catching-up and I also think about the cash prize.”

For Darrin Grenade and hundreds of other competitors from Africa, USA, South America and the Caribbean, their eyes will remain on the prize on November 4th at 6:00am.

Anna Walcott-Hardy, Communications consultant and former Campus Communications Manager at UWI. Anna Walcott Hardy is an honours graduate of Boston University, USA. She has over 15 years of experience in Marketing and Communications, having worked in publishing houses and advertising agencies in the USA and Trinidad and Tobago. Over the years she has received advertising awards from various international institutions and agencies.

