



Just watching the marathon burns calories

The 30th Honolulu Marathon takes place Sunday with more than 28,000 registered entrants and thousands of spectators. Obviously, those completing the 26.2-mile course will experience a nutritional challenge to consume enough fluids and carbohydrate. But what about the nutritional needs of the dedicated marathon spectator? Just watching the marathon can be an endurance event!

Question: How does the typical spectator watch the marathon?

Answer: The avid marathon fan might watch the start of the race at 5 a.m. to catch the offshore fireworks as runners head downtown from Ala Moana park. Next, spectators head into Waikiki toward Kapiolani Park to see the runners coming back through Waikiki at about 5:30 a.m.

By 6 or 6:30 a.m., spectators might get a quick breakfast (or at least coffee) and be ready at Kapiolani Park (by 7:05 a.m.) to find a good vantage point to see the winners finish. The course record is just under two hours and 12 minutes (7:12 a.m.). Serious spectators won't risk missing a new course record

being set.

This is just the start of a long day for a true marathon spectator. The slowest participants are usually hurting the most and have the greatest need for crowd encouragement. Serious fans know their support is an essential element of the experience. They will be on the course past noon, putting in an eight-hour day.

Q: How many calories are expended by serious spectators?

A: For most fans, eight hours on the course with a combination of walking, standing, clapping and cheering will use anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 calories. Compare this to someone who completes the marathon: The average finisher will burn 2,500 to 3,000 calories. The expert spectator is not far behind.

Q: How much fluid is needed to run the marathon?

A: It depends on temperature and humidity, but average participants will sweat out about 6 quarts of water and 3 teaspoons of salt. They need to replace most of this water during the race. Most of the salt can be replaced afterward, although those on the course longer than four to five hours may need some salt

replacement along the way.

The water needs of a spectator depend on the weather and how much they move around. It would not be unusual to sweat off a couple quarts of water, so they should plan on having plenty of fluids on hand.

Q: What should they drink?

A: As with a runner, a spectator's greatest need is water. Getting some carbohydrate can also help endurance.

Runners will be provided with water and Amino Vital Water Charge, the marathon's official sports beverage. Fans can find the same drink at the Running Room in Kapahulu and at most ABC stores. Made by the Ajio-moto Co. in Japan, Water Charge contains added amino acids thought to enhance endurance during exercise and muscle recovery after exercise.

If cheering on marathoners isn't enough of a workout for you, consider an ultra-endurance spectator event such as the Kona Ironman Triathlon. It requires 17 hours of providing support to the world's most elite endurance athletes.

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