

# New record set at Royal Victoria Marathon

Steve Osaduik of Nanaimo breaks 25-year-old record

**Cleve Dheensaw, Times Colonist**

Published: Sunday, October 08, 2006

VICTORIA — Enveloped in fog and mist Sunday, the famously scenic Royal Victoria Marathon course wasn't at its best.

But Steve Osaduik of Nanaimo certainly was, bringing the 2006 race to its knees in eclipsing one of the most stubbornly enduring records in Island sports, and announcing himself to the world two years ahead of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.

The emerging Harbour City running star crossed first in two hours, 16 minutes, 49 seconds to break by exactly two minutes the 25-year-old event record of 2:18:49 set by Tom Howard of Surrey in the second Royal Victoria Marathon in 1981.

"It's hard to keep myself composed," said Osaduik, the Canadian half-marathon champion, as he was mobbed by well-wishers upon crossing the line in the new record time and a whopping seven minutes under his previous personal best.

"I saw the date of that record [1981] and said that's a long time ago and it has to be broken sometime and I'm going to do it. I'm thrilled. It was the best race of my life. I gave it everything I had in the last bit because I knew I was close to the record."

The conditions didn't factor into his record run, noted the graduate of Dover Bay Secondary, whose clocking Sunday made his the fastest marathon run in Canada this year.

"You have to put the weather out of your mind," said Osaduik. "There was no wind. That's the main thing. Wind is what gives you trouble, not rain. The temperature was perfect and it was cool enough that I didn't overheat."

Osaduik is now looking to lower his time to the 2:12 range of the retired Bruce Deacon of Victoria, the two-time Olympian to whom Osaduik is now the Canadian heir apparent.

"This is huge and is going to open a lot of doors," said Osaduik.

The long-term goal is to break marathon legend Jerome Drayton's Canadian record en route to the 2008 Beijing and 2012 London Summer Olympics.

"Running is my life and I don't care about anything else right now," said the 27-year-old Osaduik, who pocketed \$1,000 for the win and a \$4,000 bonus for breaking the race record.

"Nothing else matters. This is my focus for the next six years."

A total of 8,837 runners took part in the marathon, half-marathon and 8K runs of the Royal Victoria with an additional 500 in the kids' run.

"We have nearly 9,400 participants and that makes 10,000 realistic for next year [the 28th Royal Victoria in 2007]," said race director Rob Reid.

"Look at all these people in town [7,000 of the runners are from off-Island]. Victoria tourism is alive and well."

Suzanne Evans of New Westminster successfully defended her Royal Victoria women's marathon title to

claim back-to-back crowns in 2:47:03, bettering by more than three minutes her winning 2:50:24 time of last year.

“People were cheering all along the course – homeowners along the route were in their front yards and clapping for us despite the weather – and that really helps keep you moving,” said Evans, who upon crossing the line was immediately hugged by her two children, six-year-old Zoa and four-year-old Kai, “Wet is fine. I don’t mind it. And it was warm enough once I got going.”

Former international triathlete Nik Southwell won the 21.1K Royal Victoria half-marathon in 1:07:25, besting fellow-Victorian and Beijing Olympics hopeful marathoner Jim Finlayson’s second place clocking of 1:08:39.

Cheryl Murphy of Victoria won the women’s half-marathon in 1:17:02.

David Jackson of Victoria, gearing up for the Chicago Marathon in two weeks, took the men’s 8K in 24:43 while Kirsty Smith of Victoria won the women’s 8K in 27:34.

© Times Colonist

<http://www.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/news/story.html?id=de9cd91c-2deb-4800-ada2-891218509278&k=32446>