



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Renee Rombaut captured the gold medal in the women's open division by winning the 10,000-meter run at the Empire State Games. The race took place at the University of Rochester's Fauver Stadium Aug. 5.

## Mother's cheers help carry Mooney grad to finish line

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Who said distance running was grueling just for the competitors?

Even though Renee Rombaut had just run 25 laps around the University of Rochester's Fauver Stadium track, she may not have been the most exhausted family member back on Aug. 5.

Rombaut had just earned an Empire State Games gold-medal victory in the 10,000-meter run for open-division women. Yet it was not Renee, but her mother, Cathy, who announced to the small throng of other Rombaut well-wishers: "I'm tired."

Moments earlier, with Renee pulling steadily away from the opposition, her nervous, hand-wringing mom could be spotted leaning against the bleacher overhang — as close to the track as she could get without falling right onto it. Cathy's voice pierced through the air with shouts of encouragement such as "piece of cake" and "faaannn-tastic" as Renee completed each lap.

When Renee crossed the finish line in a winning time of 36 minutes, 40.94 seconds, she immediately veered toward the bleachers to embrace an ecstatic Cathy, who was shouting, "You did it, you did it!"

Renee acknowledges that her mother's support is a big boost while she's sweating and toiling on the track.

"I tune a lot of people out, but I always listen to her," said the 25-year-old Rombaut, a graduate of the former Cardinal Mooney High School and a parishioner at Holy Cross Church in Rochester.

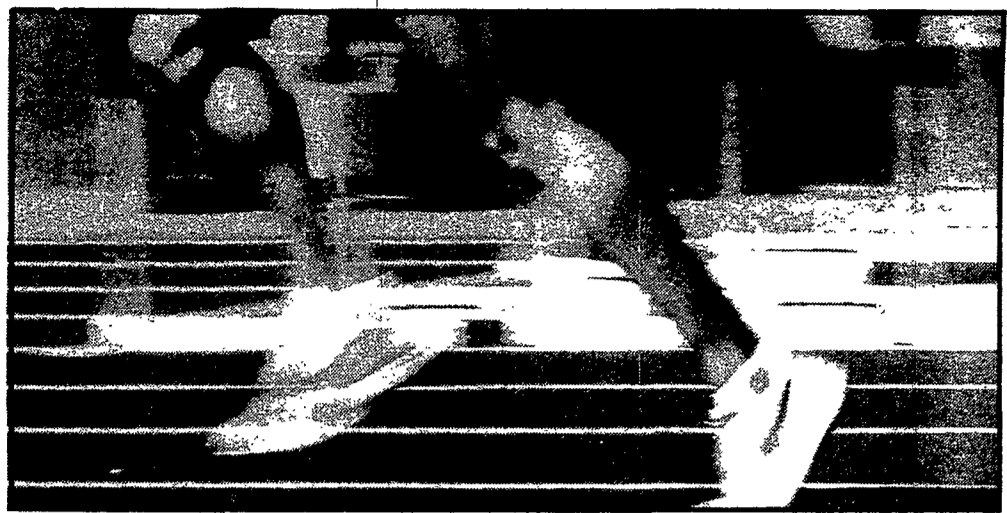
This marked the second Empire State Games 10,000-meter win in as many tries for Rombaut, who also captured the gold medal two years ago.

However, the Greece resident was unable to defend her 1991 championship due to a double stress fracture in her hip. The injury, suffered in March 1992, put a six-month hold on Rombaut's rapidly growing racing career.

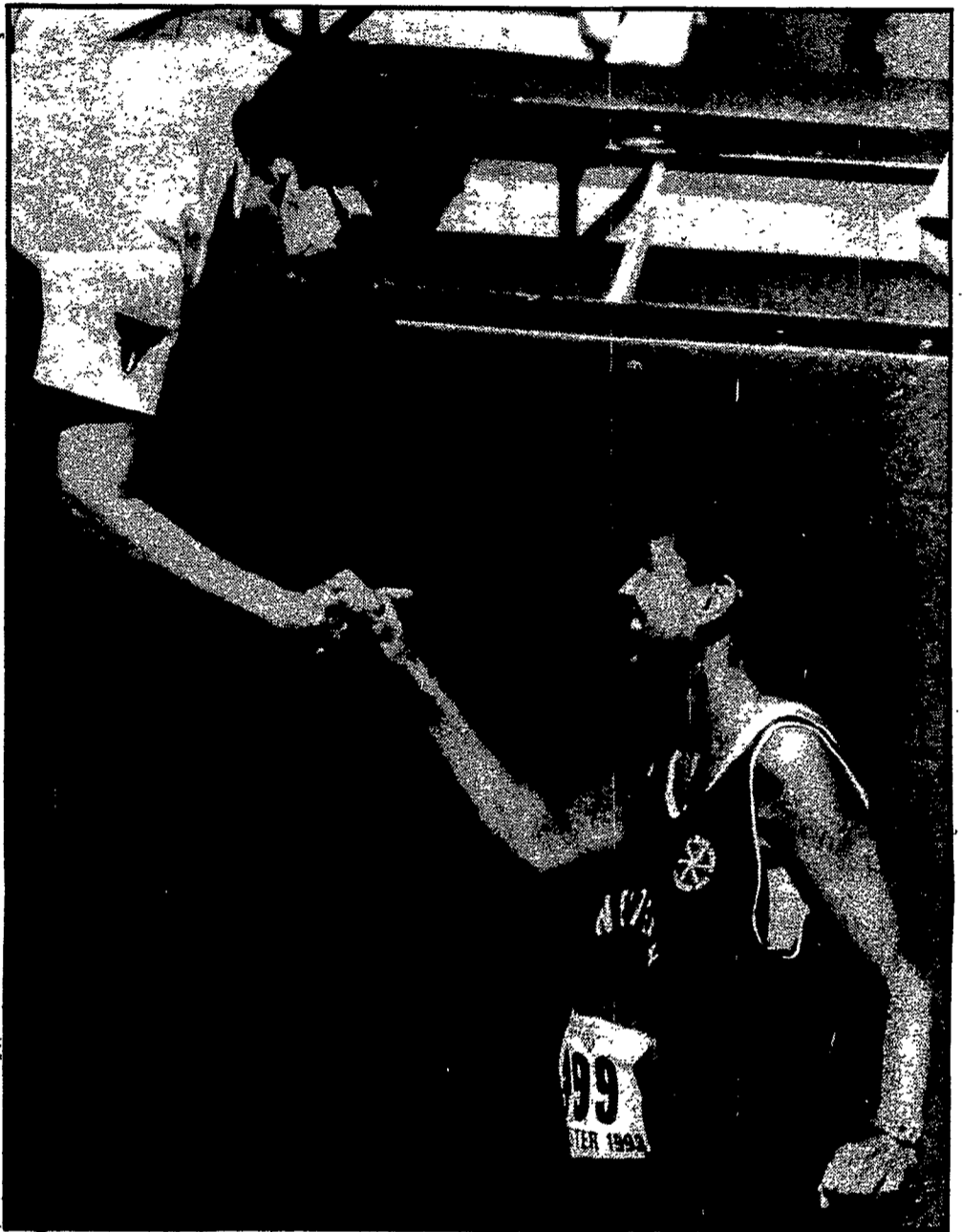
During her recovery period, Rombaut had a rough time adjusting to her forced inactivity.

"I drove my parents crazy," she admitted. "I had to lay flat, so I had soup cans in my hands and I was lifting them. Then my dad ate the soup, and I had to find something else to lift. I have so much energy."

Rombaut has made a complete recovery from her injury, as evidenced not only by her ESG victory but first-place finishes in the women's division of several Rochester-area road races this year: the Hillside 5K, Human Race 10K, Jungle Jog 5K, Corn Hill 5K and the Corporate Challenge 3.5-mile run. She was also among the top finishers in the Run for the Shamrocks and the Lilac 10K. Her performances garnered her this year's "triple crown" award in



Renee's legs carried her 25 laps to a gold-medal victory.



Cathy Rombaut leans over the bleachers to congratulate her daughter.

the women's division for accruing the most points based on her performances in the Run for the Shamrocks, Hillside 5K and Lilac 10K races.

However, the 5-foot-11-inch Rombaut also realizes that she can't hit the next level if she limits her agenda to local competition. Thus, she has begun traveling to larger events around the northeastern United States.

"I have to start running in more international races to see where I stand," she said.

Perhaps her toughest run of all will

be this coming October, when she competes in her first-ever marathon. She will attempt the 26.2-mile journey at the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C.

Rombaut is so looking forward to marathon running that she's hoping to become a 1996 Olympic qualifier in either that event or the 10,000 meters.

"I do better with longer distances. I love it; it's in my heart," remarked Rombaut, who has completed marathon distances during training. "I never find it hard going out on a run at all."

### Kearney to hold picnic, garage sale, car wash on Aug. 28

IRONDEQUOIT — Bishop Kearney High School, 125 Kings Highway S., will be the site of three outdoor events on Saturday, Aug. 28.

A kick-off athletic picnic will begin at noon at Clark Field. Cost is \$1 per person and \$5 per family, and guests are asked to bring dishes to pass.

A garage sale will begin at 10 a.m. on Aug. 28. Items are still being accepted for the sale. In addition, a car wash will take place from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Cost is \$3 per car.

For information about the picnic, call Mike Dooley at 716/671-6093. For details about the car wash and garage sale, call Regina Siesto at 342-8419.

### CFB celebrity golf tournament scheduled for Aug. 23

PENFIELD — Cystic Fibrosis Foundation will be the chief beneficiary of the John Bednarski Celebrity Golf Tournament, scheduled for Monday, Aug. 23. This event will be held at Shadow Pines Golf Club, 600 Whalen Road; and Shadow Lake Golf and Racquet Club, 1850 Five Mile Line Road.

In its sixth year, the tournament, which features current and former Rochester Americans hockey players, has raised more than \$60,000.

Those interested in playing golf or sponsoring a hole during the Aug. 23 tournament may call 716/546-5890.

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