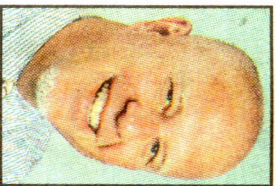


# Runner's mile streak on line in city race

## COLUMN



**GREG**

**JAKLEWICZ**

The Paul and Mike's Excellent Mile was a wacky idea to begin with. Which makes it a perfect race for David O'Meara.

O'Meara is a 45-year-old runner who lives in Sarasota, Fla. He'll be in Amarillo on Saturday to compete in the Excellent Mile because, well, he's an excellent miler.

So excellent that since May 17, he has run the mile in under 5 minutes in a different North American city 13 times.

He believes age shouldn't keep other runners from excelling. That's why he has a goal of completing 20 1-mile

races in 20 weeks in 20 different North American cities in less than 5 minutes each.

Running a mile at a pace of 13 mph is impressive. Especially to those like me who need calendars and not stop-watches to time their miles.

"So far, I'm holding up OK," O'Meara told me over the phone.

According to Mike Flores, who's the Mike in Paul and Mike, it was Paul Hermann, the Paul in Paul and Mike, who got O'Meara to come back to Texas. Hermann and O'Meara were competing in the famous Congress

Avenue Mile in Austin two months ago and struck up a conversation. O'Meara said the race he had planned to enter Aug. 2 had been canceled.

Then come to Amarillo, Hermann told him. We'll move our race back a week if you do.

Dandy, O'Meara said. Always wanted to see Cadillac Ranch.

Paul and Mike's Excellent Run is positioned on O'Meara's continent-trotting schedule between the Sea Cavalcade Mile just outside Vancouver,



**DAVID O'MEARA:**

The 45-year-old has broken 5 minutes in his last 13 miles.

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# Mile: Man plans to run in Hawaii, New York

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British Columbia, and the Ozark Mountain Ridge Runners' Maui Mile in Springfield, Mo.

Most of the races have cool names, such as the Boom Box Mile, though none is named the Miley Cyrus.

Still to come is the Front

Street Mile in Hawaii. He'll finish his quest with the Fifth Avenue Mile on Sept. 20 in New York City.

When he's not in running shoes, O'Meara is a motivational speaker.

"One of the reasons I'm doing this is that I ask my clients to take risks and have courage," he said. His "20/20/20<5" project puts teeth into his talks and will provide the subject for his third book, "Inner Success."

According to his Web site, the Excellent Mile will be O'Meara's 14th race. He began his mile marathon in his state of residence, clocking a 4:52 at the Ceremonial Mile in Tarpon Springs. His closest call was the Main Street Mile in Boise, Idaho, where he ran a 4:54.

He said the dry, desert climate of the Boise area was challenging as well as the eight turns on the course and the elevation. At the halfway point, he was at 2:28, forcing to run a negative split to ensure he stayed under 5 minutes.

His favorite race has been the Eugene (Ore.) Challenge Mile because it came in one of the nation's premier running cities and just before the U.S. Olympic Trials.

"They treated me so well," he said.

O'Meara's 14th mile also will be the 14th running of the Excellent Mile. It started as a competition — Flores termed in a "glorified grudge match" — between Flores and Hermann to see who could beat who. Hermann has won 11 of their encounters.

"Ouch," said Flores, who might want O'Meara to run in his stead.

The local race has grown

from 27 runners to more than 200, and each year, a local charity benefits from race fees. This year, it'll be Special Olympics.

The race will be run at Thompson Park (8:30 a.m. start for sub-6:30 milers) and is a downhill course. O'Meara's best time to date is a 4:28 at the Ogden Mile in Wheeling, W.Va. If he can match that time, he easily will set the Excellent Mile master's course record (4:43.2). And get \$250 toward his next plane ticket.

O'Meara won't be the only runner with incentive. Lone Star Road Runners also is offering \$250 to the school of a college or high school runner who breaks the overall course record of 4:13.9 by Josh McAdams (2005) and 5:13.5 by Jennifer Marable (1998).

If his times seem unreachable to runner out of their 20s, here's encouragement. A former tennis player who played in college, he started running seriously at age 36. His initial goal was to run a 5K (3-mile race) under 16 minutes. It took him seven years to do it.

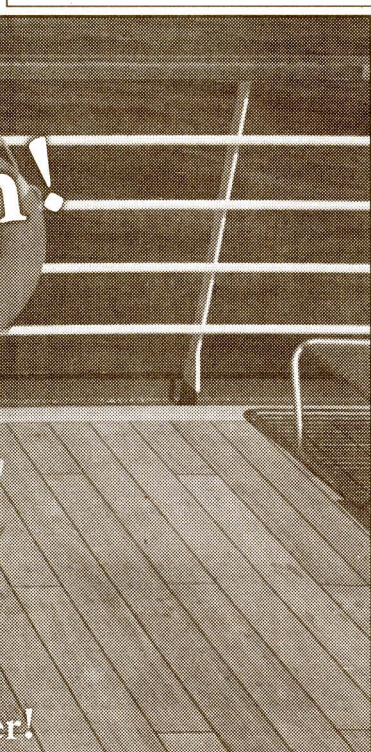
To be a good miler takes natural speed, he admitted. Given that, milers can get better by starting faster while also keeping something in the tank for the finish.

"Continued speed," he calls it.

Something, obviously, that David O'Meara has in great measure.

For more information on O'Meara's trek, go to [www.OneMileRunner.com](http://www.OneMileRunner.com).

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# SPORTS