



PHYSICAL EDUCATION When not training, Emily Bates, 27, studies Huntington's disease in a Harvard lab.

3 QUESTIONS FOR

Emily Bates

This fleet-footed graduate student hopes to finish among the top 25 women in tomorrow's Boston Marathon.

For the first time in the Marathon's history, the elite female runners will start before the men. A big deal?

I think it will affect how the crowd sees and responds to the elite women. I've been a part of the crowd before, and everyone cheers a lot when the first men come through. People have been waiting a long time to see the runners, so it's exciting when the first people come. Then usually by the time the women get there, people don't even notice. It might be exciting to not have too many people ahead [of me], but there will also be fewer people for me to pace off of. I'll probably practice the course a couple of times, and I'll make sure I have people I know cheering for me at [Heartbreak Hill].

Should this be a permanent change for the race?

I don't think they need to [let the women start first] every year, but every once in a while, it's nice to have the recognition. Because the women who come in first are just as amazing as the men who come in first.

Ever just want to walk at, say, mile 25?

It's quite an amazing feeling to finish a marathon. In 1997, I ran my first Boston Marathon injured, and that was a painful experience - I had a lot going against me. I remember finishing and being in awe of what my body had accomplished. I was in awe of the crowd and how many people had supported this crazy dream that we have. I finish partly for that feeling and partly because it seems a waste not to, after putting all that effort into it. My last two marathons, I was trying to qualify for the Olympic trials. I missed it by one minute, and even in the last few miles, I knew I wouldn't qualify, but I wasn't going to give up. I don't give up. - *Julia Tolliver Maranan*

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