

Santa Rosan Bradley runs 199-mile race solo

By **BOB PADECKY**

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In the previous 15 years of the Relay, only one solo runner completed the entire 199 miles from Calistoga to Santa Cruz. That was ultramarathoner Dean Karnazes, who has done it seven times.

Until this last weekend.

Santa Rosa's Bill Bradley — of "I show up and I suffer" fame — completed the distance in 78 hours and five minutes, getting a total of five hours of sleep after leaving Calistoga at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday and finishing in Santa Cruz at 4:35 p.m. on Sunday. The Relay is comprised of 12-person teams, and all of them started Saturday in Calistoga, running to raise money for organ donation.

"My ankles are still swollen," Bradley said. "I can feel my heart beat through my feet. The only constant was that they always hurt."

According to race director Dr. Jeff Shapiro, only nine runners have even attempted to run the distance by themselves. The route starts in Calistoga, heads through Napa, Sonoma, Petalu-



Bill Bradley

Only nine runners have even attempted to run the 199-mile Relay by themselves. Bradley is the second to have done it, finishing in 78 hours, 5 minutes.

ma, Sausalito, San Francisco, Palo Alto and finally Santa Cruz.

Bradley said he began to "tear up" about a mile from the finish, overcome with the joy that he actually was about to complete the race.

The race is designed to be run under a full moon while crossing the Golden Gate Bridge. As if that could be called pleasure.

"After the first 25 miles," Bradley said, "I was in pain the rest of the way. My sister Karen saw me at the 100-mile mark and said I looked like hell. It was so tough because 95 percent of the race was run on pavement. Running three full days on pavement took a lot out of me."

Not that such pounding robbed Bradley of his sense of humor. In one partic-

ular stretch when his feet were really throbbing, he turned to one of his support team and said, "Don't you love the feeling of pavement between your toes?"

Bradley said it was no night at the beach when he was running down The Great Highway in San Francisco.

"The wind was blowing so hard," Bradley said, "that I had five layers and I still was freezing."

Bradley said he felt more pain in this race than he did completing the Furnace Creek 508, a bicycle race of that mileage through Death Valley in which he was hallucinating at the finish. And he wasn't in as much pain in the Susitna 100, the Alaskan race in which he had to drop out after 78 hours.

"With Furnace Creek," Bradley said, "it was just my butt that hurt. In Alaska, because it was so cold, my feet didn't hit. In the Relay, though, it was everything, especially my feet. Although I was bobbing and weaving like a drunken sailor several times during the race."

He said he took six 10-minute power

naps during the race, some standing up, during which ice also was applied to his feet.

The hardest part of the race for Bradley was running four and half hours up a hill that dipped eventually into Santa Cruz.

At the 120-mile marker, Bradley had to walk the next 30 miles. He simply couldn't run. And then, for a reason unknown to him, Bradley felt the energy again and was able to deal with the pain and resumed running.

Dedicated to finding and competing in the toughest endurance races, Bradley will compete in the Race Across America in June and a month later will compete in the Badwater 135, the most infamous and grueling endurance test, a foot race from the lowest point in the United States up to the 8,000-foot trailhead of Mt. Whitney.

"I wish I was good at golf," said Bradley, 47. "It's a lot easier than this."

Karnazes, by the way, dropped out of the Relay after 150 miles.

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