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BIB NUMBER 261

THE START LINE

On a cold, wet morning in April 1967, a twenty-year-old college student stood at the start line in Hopkinton. This small Massachusetts TOWN is where the Boston Marathon begins. Her entry CARD said K. V. Switzer. Kathrine Switzer always signed her name with her INITIALS, the first letters of her first and middle names. Pinned to her baggy gray sweatshirt was her BIB, the paper number that every runner who is officially entered has to wear. Hers read 261.

SPELL Spell: CARD

CARD

SPELL Spell: TOWN

TOWN

KNOWN What is the paper number called that every officially entered runner has to wear?

BIB

KNOWN What do you call the first letters of a person's first and middle names?

INITIALS

OPEN If a race number were made just for you, what number would you want on it?

Open response - use practitioner judgment

GRABBED ON THE COURSE

Nothing on the entry form asked if the runner was a man or a woman, so nobody noticed. Two miles into the race, a TRUCK full of photographers rolled past and spotted her. A race OFFICIAL named Jock Semple jumped down, ran at her from behind, and grabbed at her bib. He tried to rip the number off her SHIRT. Her training partner, a hammer thrower named Tom Miller, threw a shoulder into him and knocked him off the road. Switzer kept going and finished.

SPELL Spell: SHIRT

SHIRT

SPELL Spell: TRUCK

TRUCK

KNOWN What was the job of the man who jumped down from the truck and grabbed at her bib?

OFFICIAL

OPEN The photographers caught the whole scene on film. Which moment of it would you have wanted in the picture?

Open response - use practitioner judgment

MATH Switzer ran the Boston Marathon in 1967. Women were officially allowed to run it in 1972. How many years later was that?

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NOT THE FIRST

She was not the first woman to run Boston. A year earlier, Bobbi GIBB hid in the BUSHES near the start. When the gun went off, she slipped into the PACK of runners and ran the whole way with no number at all. What made 1967 different was the bib. Switzer was signed up, so her name sat on the official list with a number beside it. The race could not pretend she had never been there. Women were still not allowed to enter until 1972, five years later.

SPELL Spell: BUSHES

BUSHES

SPELL Spell: PACK

PACK

KNOWN A year before Switzer, a woman named Bobbi ran the whole race with no number at all. What was her last name?

GIBB

OPEN Bobbi Gibb waited in the bushes until the gun went off. What do you think she was thinking while she waited?

Open response - use practitioner judgment

THE NUMBER RETIRED

If you have ever pinned a number on your shirt for a school race or a charity run, you were doing the ordinary thing she had to fight for. The SPORT kept opening up after her. A women's marathon was added to the Olympics in 1984. She later started a group called 261 FEARLESS, which helps women around the world BEGIN running together. In 2017, at seventy, she ran Boston again wearing 261, and the race retired that number for good.

SPELL Spell: BEGIN

BEGIN

SPELL Spell: SPORT

SPORT

KNOWN Switzer started a group that helps women around the world start running together. Its name is 261 followed by one word that means unafraid. What is that word?

FEARLESS

OPEN She ran Boston again at seventy wearing the same number. What is something you would want to do again fifty years from now?

Open response - use practitioner judgment

MATH The women's marathon joined the Olympics in 1984, and the Games come every 4 years. Counting 1984 itself, how many women's Olympic marathons had been run by the end of 1996?

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