

The Chairman's Corner - April 2013

By Jon Blank



Today marks one week since the horrific acts of terrorism at the Boston Marathon. While I am simply amazed by the swift identification and capture of the perpetrators, I am more shocked by such destructive, seemingly anarchic violence.

Though we still don't know what twisted thoughts led two brothers to construct and detonate the bombs, we do know that four people lost their lives, and one hundred and eighty people suffered injuries. Even our NC Masters Swimming community was affected: Nicole Gross, a Kona Iron Man competitor, former NC LMSC Open Water Chair, and professional triathlete coach, who was supporting her mother's marathon run, sustained blast and shrapnel wounds to both legs. Her sister was also gravely wounded. A fund has been established to aid the family, and it would be wonderful for NC Masters athletes to contribute. <http://www.bestrongstaystrong.net/>

I believe that sports can be one of the few truly noble human endeavors, yet again and again examples of politicization and/or deceit pollute the world of sports. Examples abound: terrorist murder at the Munich Olympics, drug scandals of almost every conceivable sort in so many sports, gender masquerade, match fixing etcetera.

This time it seems different. Certainly there have been sporting events where spectators have been killed and maimed, (auto racing accidents and overloaded soccer stadiums for example), but I can't recall an incident where athletic event spectators were the actual target of terrorism. No one is safe from this vicious insanity, but it is sobering to realize that simply being present to support a friend or relative can lead to such tragic consequences.

The quick and decisive actions of Boston citizenry helped the victims. If there is anything positive to glean from this awful act, it is that people will put themselves in harm's way in order to aid one another. The Boston Athletic Association leadership, along with City and County officials, set in place emergency contingency plans that worked. In sudden crisis, professionals and volunteers, acting together, truly saved life and limb. Though it is gratifying to know that emergency planning works, we can only hope that such actions are never again required.