

## Finish the Race Well

The distance of the Olympic marathon was standardized in 1908 when the Games were held in London. The Royal Family wanted to watch the start of the race from their home.

The distance from this vantage point in Windsor Castle to the finish line in the Olympic stadium was 26 miles, 385 yards. From this point on, the marathon distance was fixed.

The first winner of this newly defined marathon should have been an Italian candy maker named Dorando Pietri. He started his race at a rather slow pace, but in the second half of the course he began a powerful surge, moving him into second position, 4 minutes behind South African Charles Hefferon. When he knew that Hefferon was in crisis, Pietri further increased his pace, overtaking him.

The effort took its toll, and Pietri began to feel the effects of extreme fatigue and dehydration. When he entered the stadium, he took the wrong path. When umpires redirected him, he fell down for the first time. He got up, with the umpires' help, in front of 75,000 spectators.

He fell four more times, and each time the umpires helped him up. In the end, totally exhausted, he managed to finish the race in first place. Second was American Johnny Hayes. The American team immediately lodged a complaint against the help Pietri received from the umpires. The complaint was accepted, and Pietri was disqualified and removed from the final standings of the race.



A wonderfully run race was ruined by a wrong turn at the end.

The lesson for us?

Finishing well is as important as running well.

That truth is applicable to us in health care and hospitality. The tasks in which we are engaged deserve our very best commitment and performance – all the way to their conclusion.

(more)

For there is more than a trophy at stake; it's the well-being and happiness of those we serve.

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable (1 Corinthians 9:24-25 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter

