Mass Running in Greece: A new trend from ancient times?

Leonidas Petridis, University of Debrecen
Greece and running?

Ancient olympics

Battle of Marathon

First Olympic winner in marathon run, Athens, 1896
Development of mass running

Athens Classic Marathon

Running became trendy
Separate amateur club structure from 1981 onwards. Today: about 60 amateur running clubs all over the country. NO funding, NO connection to the national sports administration.

Amateur running clubs’ year of establishment (n=31)

- Before 1900: 19.4%
- 1990-1999: 25.8%
- 2000 or later: 54.8%
Club memberships

- Not member: 60%
- Amateur running club: 32%
- Competitive athletic club: 8%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>17-29 yrs</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;60 yrs</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race distance</td>
<td>&lt;10 km</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42km</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October – December 2012
702 individuals replied to the questionnaire,
Data from 597 persons were analysed
79.9% males (n=477)
20.1% females (n=120)
Evolution of mass running events per year

223% increase
Mass running events

Running events per type and per year

- Road races
- Mountain races
- Ultramarathons

- 2006: Road races = 49, Mountain races = 7, Ultramarathons = 0
- 2008: Road races = 92, Mountain races = 18, Ultramarathons = 0
- 2010: Road races = 105, Mountain races = 6, Ultramarathons = 0
- 2011: Road races = 121, Mountain races = 7, Ultramarathons = 0
- 2012: Road races = 130, Mountain races = 8, Ultramarathons = 0

- Growth rates:
  - Road races: 165%
  - Mountain races: 842%
  - Ultramarathons: 14%

Graph showing the increase in running events per year for different types of races.
## Mass running events

**Percentage of running events per number of participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>&lt;100</th>
<th>100-200</th>
<th>200-500</th>
<th>500-1000</th>
<th>&gt;1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants in mass running events

400% increase

male  | female  | total
-----|--------|-----
2006 | 2,042  | 13,576 |
2008 | 4,031  | 19,266 |
2010 | 7,464  | 41,298 |
2011 | 8,296  | 47,175 |
2012 | 14,408 | 54,591 |

2006-2012
Rate of male to female participants

Participants in mass running events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

females
males
Survey with runners

Running background of the respondents (n=597)

- <1 yr: 13.1%
- 1-2 yrs: 26.5%
- 3-4 yrs: 22.7%
- 5-7 yrs: 12.2%
- 8-10 yrs: 5.2%
- >10 yrs: 20.0%
The Greek runner – a first profile

30-39 yrs: 43%

Runs alone: 76%

Middle income level: 43%

Highly educated: 68.7% (college or higher degree)

White collar workers: 74.4%
Mass running in Greece?
Mass running in Greece?

- Running events
- Participants on events
- Amateur running clubs
- Survey with runners
Thank you for your attention!