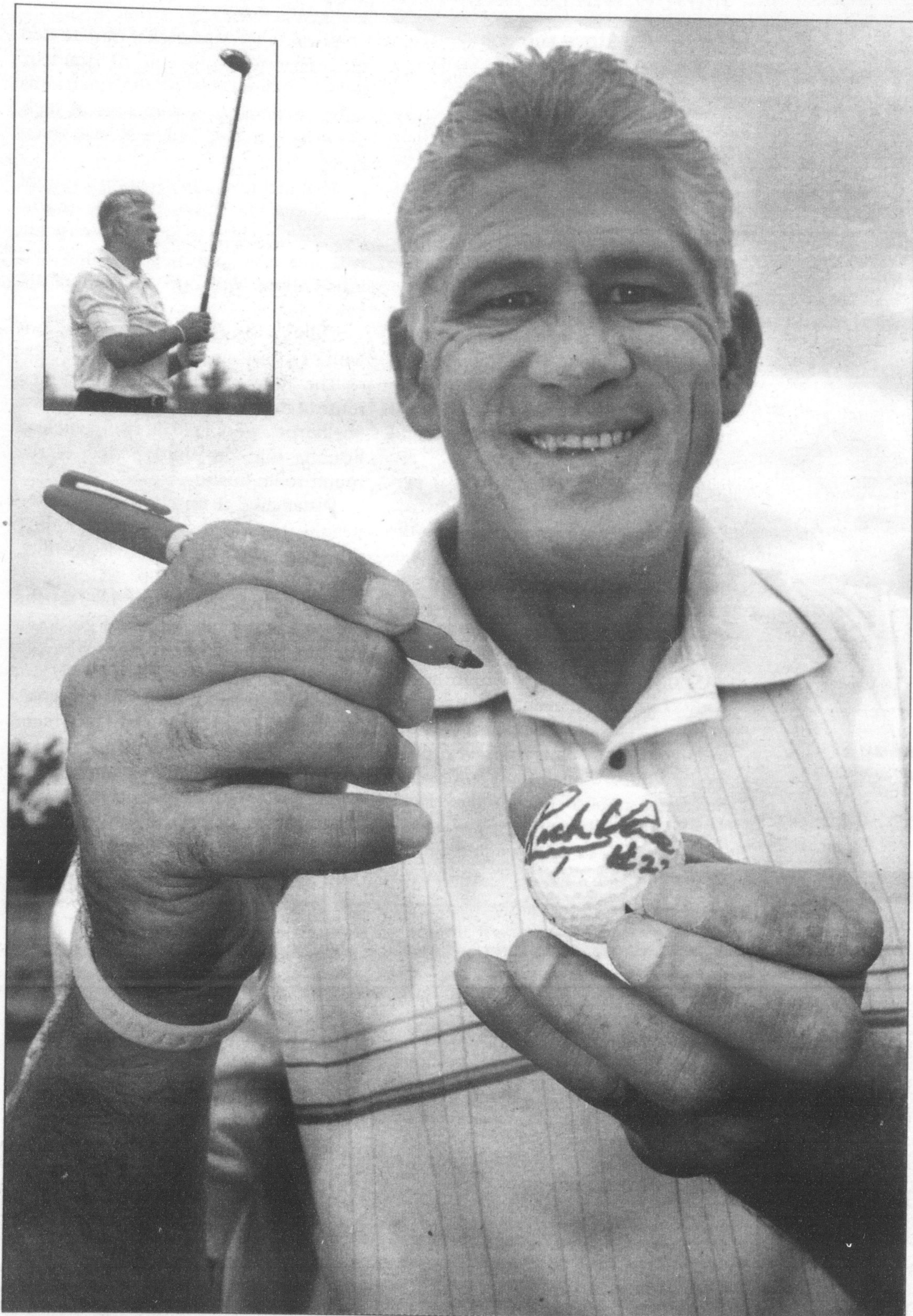


SPORTS

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

SIGNIN' AND SWINGIN': Former Maple Leafs captain Rick Vaive autographs a golf ball and watches his tee shot (inset) at his third annual 'celebrity classic in support of Reach for the Rainbow children's charity Tuesday at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club. Other Leaf alumni taking part were Johnny Bower and Wendel Clark.

Whitlock impressive at U.S. National Masters

Strong showing despite recent cutback in training

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Nagging injuries and the inevitable onset of time have severely cut into Ed Whitlock's training regimen this year.

But that hasn't cut too deeply into the senior racing phenom's success.

Taking his long-distance prowess to the University of Maine last week, the 76-year-old Miltonian turned in a couple of performances that while not quite up to the world record-setting efforts he delivered last summer, weren't too far off.

Leaving his men's 70 to 94-year-old age group in the proverbial dust, Whitlock kicked off the USATF National Masters Championships with a thoroughly decisive win in the 5,000m — clocking in at 19.54.34.

That meet-record finish was just 48 seconds shy of the 75-and-over world standard he established just over a year ago at the Canadian Masters Track and Field Championships in Dieppe, New Brunswick.

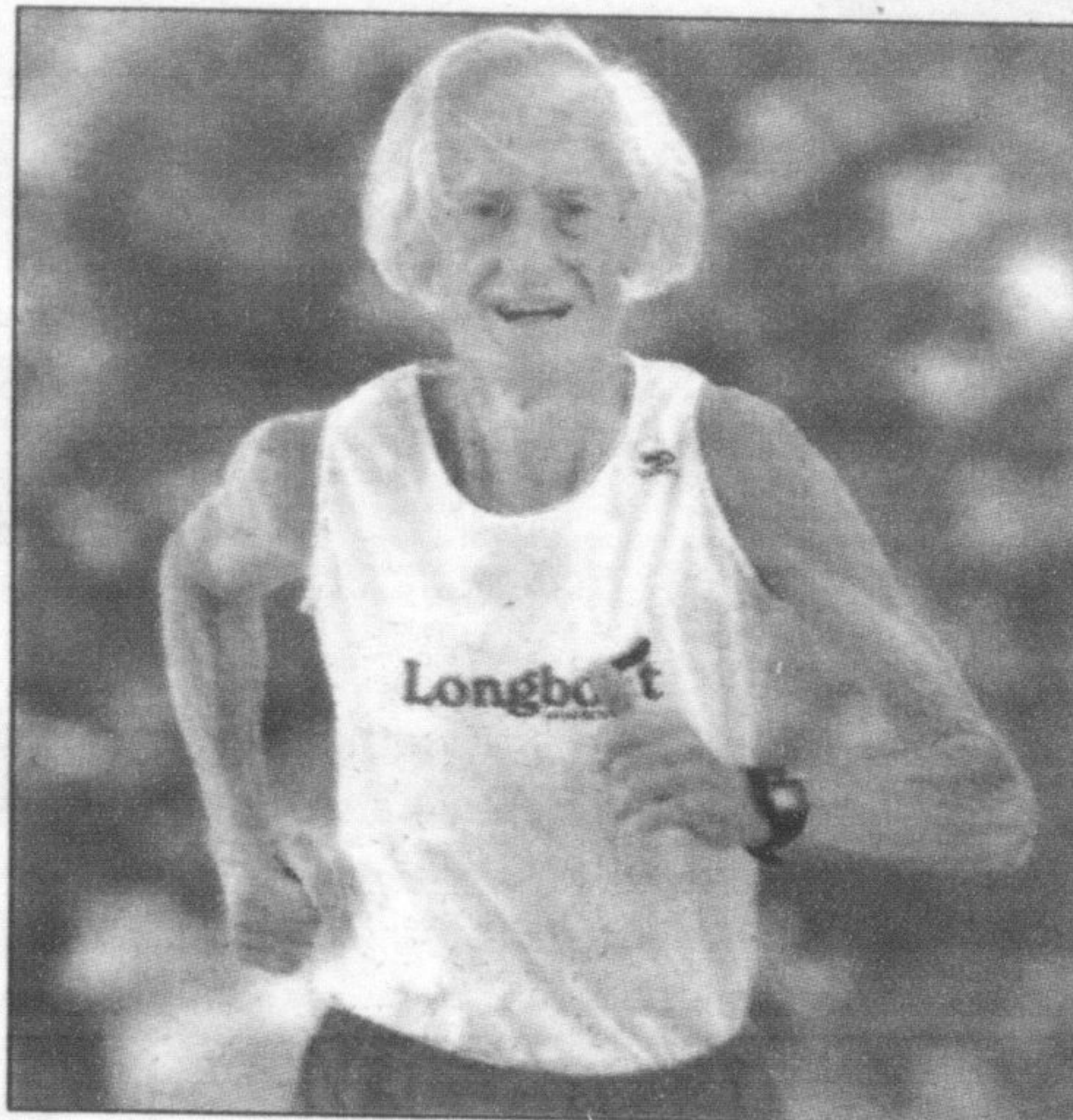
"I was quite happy with that. That was about the time I was aiming for," said the always modest and soft-spoken septuagenarian racer, who had a 20.04 showing at this year's Canadians, held recently in Saint John, New Brunswick. "It was fairly humid, but that usually affects me less than a lot of other people. I was OK."

Slated in the younger 60s' division two days later for the 10,000m, Whitlock would more than hold his own — placing among the top finishers with a 40.41s effort, just over a minute off the world record he set last summer.

Remarked the highly-accomplished

runner, "That was a good race too. I was quite pleased with my results, seeing as I'm not in the same shape as last year. My knees haven't been that great lately."

With that in mind, Whitlock will likely switch gears for next month's Toronto Waterfront



Ed Whitlock

Marathon — where in recent years he's set three world age-class records in the marathon.

With hopes of adding to that number somewhat bleak these days, he expects to give the half-marathon a try — and focus on breaking the unofficial 1:31 world record among his 75 to 79-year-old group that he established this past spring in London.

"There's no official record for the half-marathon, but it's something I'd like to improve on and think there's a good chance of doing so — as long as there's no more problems between now and then."

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