

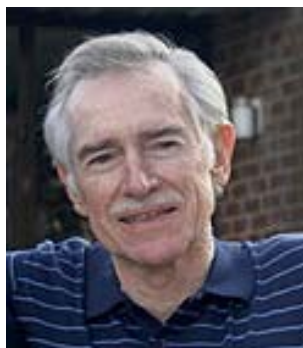
# Cheaters thwart the very point of sports

By Bill Shaw

*The Facts*

Published October 15, 2007

Roberto Madrazo, who finished third in the 2007 presidential election in Mexico, crossed the finish line in the Berlin Marathon with his arms in a victory pose Sept. 30, according to a story from the Los Angeles Times. He accepted the award for first place in the 55 and older category of the 26.2-mile contest. His race chip, however, showed Madrazo skipped 9 miles of the course and he was disqualified.



According to the Times reporter, Mexicans who know Madrazo say he took his political party's dirty tricks to the arena of international sports. He is well-known for rigging elections in his country.

Madrazo is a cheater.

In the 1979 New York City Marathon, Rosie Ruiz finished in less than three hours and qualified for the 1980 Boston Marathon. Ruiz crossed the finish line in the Boston Marathon in a 2:31:56 record time, and placed first in the female competition showing little fatigue. Ruiz told a reporter, "I got up with a lot of energy this morning."

Race officials were suspicious because her time was an improvement of more than 25

minutes from her New York time. Videotape footage showed Ruiz did not run the race. Spectators reported seeing her run onto the course in the last mile. Boston Marathon officials stripped her of the title.

Further investigations revealed Ruiz cheated in the New York marathon. Photographer Susan Morrow reported she saw Ruiz on the subway during the marathon, and Ruiz said she sprained her ankle. Morrow thought Ruiz reported to the

medical tent and did not realize she crossed the finish line. Morrow came forward when she heard the news of Ruiz's stunt in Boston. New York marathon race director Fred Lebow rescinded

Ruiz's 1979 finish.

As of 2007, Ruiz never has officially finished a sanctioned marathon. Ruiz is a cheater.

A drug test shows 2006 Tour de France winner Floyd Landis cheated by using synthetic testosterone to assist his victory.

Need I mention Barry Bonds?

In my 270 races, including 10 marathons and 25 triathlons, I never thought of cheating by taking drugs or by taking a shortcut. I have witnessed only one instance of drug-testing. After I interviewed the winners in the 1998 USA Track & Field Female 10K Championships in Galveston, a race official rushed the ladies off

to a special tent for a urine test. They passed.

Marion Jones not only knowingly took illegal drugs, but she denied she did from September 2000 until November 2003. She said her former coach Trevor Graham gave her a substance he said was flaxseed oil, which she realized was a performance-enhancing drug after she stopped training with him in 2001. She admitted in the investigation of the drug company BALCO that she knew the substance was a designer steroid THG, known as "the clear."

Jones is a cheater and a liar. Her unethical behavior stripped her of Olympic medals and put the medals won by relay team members in jeopardy.

Some athletes subscribe to the deluded attitude attributed to Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi: "Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing."

Winning isn't everything, and winning is not worth the lowering of one's personal standards and ethics. Competition is everything and the only thing — competition and an acceptance of our limitations and abilities if we are not at the front of the pack or among the elite.

In athletics and in life, we develop the courage to compete and to discover who we are and where we fit into the eternal and inexorable scheme of being for our short stay on this planet.

**Bill Shaw's running column appears in *The Facts* every other Monday.**