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Monday, October 29, 2007 : Blues musician Mickey Pantelous talks about his ACM experience

**The annual Athens Classic Marathon, which takes place on Sunday November 4, remains one of the stand-out events of the Greek sporting calendar. It is a time for the elite and the amateurs to line up together to tread in the footsteps of Pheidipidis, Spiros Louis and Stefano Baldini.**

**Blues musician Mickey Pantelous took the dramatic step of running the marathon in 2003.**



**sportinggreece.com: Why on earth would a Blues musician run the ACM?**

Mickey Pantelous: I was and still am a big drinker and I used to smoke since I was 13. When I hit 27 I freaked out with the whole thing and became a bit of a health freak. I started taking care of myself and that included running four times a week in the countryside around my home at the time in Pallini, ten kilometres each time. I like running. When I run, it feels like I am running away from things. I was fit and thought I would give it a try.

**SIG: So did you have any particular objective?**

MP: Not really. I just saw it as a challenge. Why not have a go? My house was in Pallini, the route pretty much goes right past it so I thought if I was too tired then I could always make a left and go home. When I actually did the race, I thought about it for a moment but just carried on.

**SIG: So was your training just a case of four ten kilometre runs a week?**

MP: Yes, basically. I had a slight problem because I have damaged my knee playing football a couple of years earlier. So once I decided to run the race I just laid off the booze

a bit and watched what I ate the night before.

**SIG: So when did you decide to run the ACM?**

MP: About ten days before.

**SIG: Are you serious?**

MP: Sure. I heard it was going on ten days beforehand so on that Wednesday I thought I would just run as far as I could and see how it went. I ran 18 kilometres and the next day I just thought forget it. But then the night before the race, I thought what the hell have I got to lose. So I decided to give it a go.

**SIG: So how was race day?**

MP: Well, I ran without stopping to the 33 kilometre mark and was it in a reasonable time - about 3 hours ten - but then I hit the wall.

**SIG: Ah yes, the wall.**

MP: Man, I was aching really bad. I was walking, crawling, dragging myself along. I told myself to forget it, just ache because it was the only time I was ever going to do this. I said to myself, just run. But I couldn't do it. The order from the brain wouldn't go to the feet. It was kind of shocking. I had to walk for about 20 minutes walk and then I got back into it.

**SIG: Was that the worst part of it?**

MP: Oh yes. Most of it was pretty fun. I met a lot of people. It was pretty sociable. I was chatting to lots of Danes, Americans, Greeks. Some people talked just a little too much. There were some pretty cute chicks to talk to which was nice too especially when they turned out to be faster than me and overtook me. Good view. It was fascinating being around all these people. Mind you, the last ten kilometres I wanted to be by myself. Leave me alone, don't talk to me.

**SIG: What about the best moment?**

MP: Well, like I say running along talking to all these different people was fun. And finishing. It is pretty neat running into the stadium right at the end. I think the best bit, though, was getting home, lying on my bed and having a stiff drink. I am proud to have done it. Sometimes I drive that way from Marathon into Athens and I think, Christ have I run this whole distance? It's pretty amazing.

**SIG: What did your fellow musicians think when they heard that you were running it?**

MP: They were surprised when they heard that I had done it - but no one knew in advance because it was such a late decision. I suppose there was a bit of respect but it wasn't about that. It was a personal challenge for me.

**SIG: So where do you keep your medal?**

MP: I think it is in a drawer in my apartment. I was quite lucky to get one though.

**SIG: Why lucky?**

MP: Because I was too late to register. I tried to but I was told no way. So I asked if I just turned up, could I run. And they said well we can't stop you You just won't have a number. So I went and ran by myself but they gave me a medal anyway...which was nice of them.

**SIG: So no official time to show the grandchildren?**

MP: No, 'fraid not. But I did it in about 4:40ish which was okay. I wanted to do it in under four but, man, that last section really hurt.

**SIG: So would you do it again?**

MP: I would like to but I don't think my knee would allow it. If I did, I think it would be Athens again. I wouldn't want to travel somewhere just to run a marathon. Besides, Athens is pretty special.

To find out more about Mickey Pantelous and his music [click here](#)

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