



Metro/Sports

Have a happy
Easter

Kenyans Win Boston Marathon

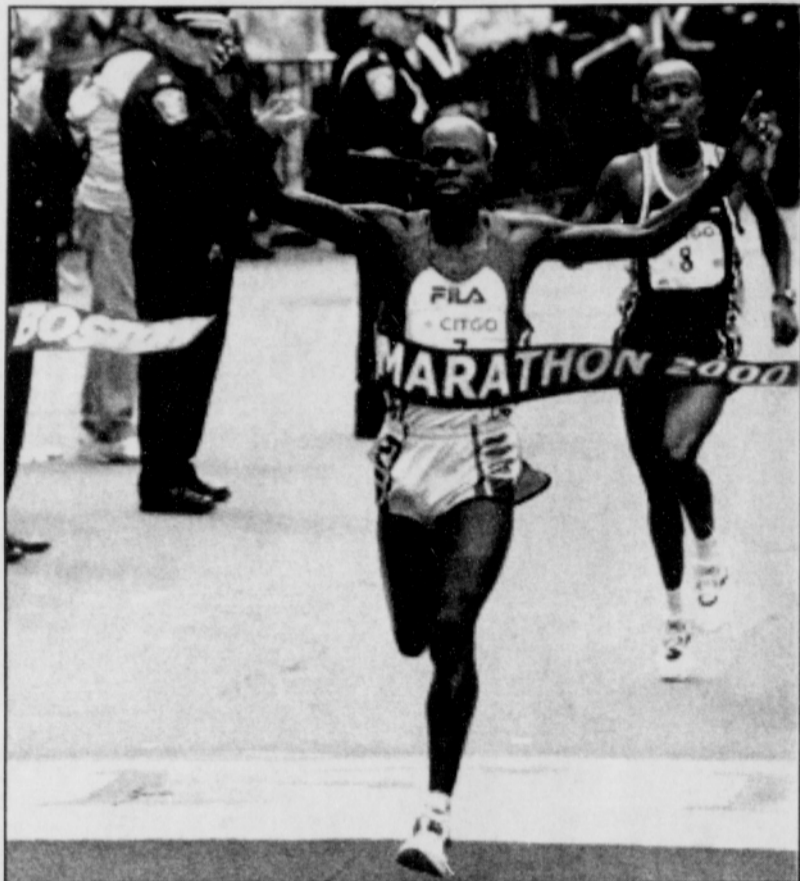
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Trying to lose weight? Forget about the Scarsdale Diet or the ones pitched by Nathan Pritikin, Oprah Winfrey and Jenny Craig.

Kenya's Elijah Lagat has results to put those to shame. He lost 33 pounds and then won the Boston Marathon, just seven years after his doctor told him to start exercising or maybe die. "I was not an athlete. I was fat," he said Monday in a testimonial that seemed more appropriate for a Richard Simmons video than a Boston Marathon winner's news conference. "One time I got sick and I went to the doctor. The doctor told me to do some exercise to cut down my weight." It being Kenya, where road racing is a national sport, Lagat began to run. From a high of 158 pounds at his doctor's appointment in late 1992, when he was having difficulty breathing and an erratic pulse, he dropped to 125 pounds.

"I was not doing it to be an athlete. In the process of trying to compete just for fun, I found that I was doing well," he said. "Before the end of the year, I found that I was doing well. No one needed to tell Lagat what to do on Monday.

Staying with the lead pack through a race slowed by a 13 mph headwind, Lagat came into the final stretch locked in a dramatic duel with training partner



Kenya's Elijah Lagat winner of the Boston Marathon

Moses Tanui and Ethiopia's Gezahenge Abera.

The lead went back and forth before Tanui made his surge with 200 yards to go. But Tanui, a two-time Boston winner, tired as Lagat began his sprint. "Everybody gets to make a mistake,

and that was my mistake," Tanui said. "I felt strong at the end, but I was too nervous." In the closest finish in the race's 104-year history, Lagat and Abera clocked the same time of 2 hours, 9 minutes, 47 seconds, with Tanui three seconds back.

NBA Playoff Races Standings

EASTERN CONFERENCE

W L Pct GB xz-Indiana 55 26 .679 - xz-Miami 51 29 .638 3 1/2 x-New York 49 31 .613 5 1/2 x-Philadelphia 48 33 .593 7 x-Charlotte 47 33 .588 7 1/2 x-Toronto 45 35 .563 9 1/2 x-Detroit 41 39 .513 13 1/2 x-Milwaukee 41 40 .506 14 x-clinched playoff berth

WESTERN CONFERENCE

W L Pct GB xz-L.A. Lakers 67 13 .838 - x-Portland 58 22 .725 9 xz-Utah 54 26 .675 13 x-Phoenix 52 28 .650 15 x-San Antonio 52 29 .642 15 1/2 x-Minnesota 50 31 .617 17 1/2 x-Sacramento 44 36 .550 23 x-Seattle 44 36 .550 23 z-clinched division

To the Victor Go the Seventh-Place (and No Shaq) Spoils

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Seattle and Sacramento will be playing for the right to avoid a first-round playoff matchup with the Los Angeles Lakers when they meet at Arco Arena. The Kings play host to the SuperSonics on Tuesday (10:30 p.m. ET), with the winner clinching seventh place in the Western Conference and the loser getting stuck with a first-round series against the Lakers, who have the league's best record and have taken three of the four meetings with both teams. The team that finishes seventh will play Utah in the first round. With a win Tuesday, Sacramento will own a 3-1 series edge over Seattle and clinch the tiebreaker if the teams finish with the same record.

"If we beat the Sonics (Tuesday), we're the seventh seed," Kings coach Rick Adelman said. "They have the same schedule as we have, and it's going to be nice to go against them as if it were a playoff game."

The Sonics would gain the seventh seed by winning Tuesday, since the teams would split the season series and Seattle owns the next tiebreaker by virtue of its better conference winning percentage.

The Kings have struggled against the Western Conference elite lately, dropping five straight in matchups with playoff-bound teams. A 102-95 loss at Portland on Sunday followed a 121-114 loss to the Los Angeles Lakers at their Staples Center on Friday. Sacramento has also fallen to

Minnesota, Phoenix and San Antonio during that stretch. After Wednesday's game at Utah, the Kings will have faced the other seven playoff-bound teams from the West during the final eight games of the season.

The Kings, who managed to slip in a win against lowly Golden State, have lost five of their last six overall.

The Sonics won for just the second time in their last six with a 121-112 victory over Houston on Sunday.

Gary Payton notched a career high with 43 points and added 11 rebounds and seven assists.

The Sonics have not lost the season series since 1994-95 and hold a 103-59 edge against the Kings all-time, including a 43-37 showing on the road.

Winner's circle closed to Duval, Els, Love

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They are among the best players in the world, considered the chief challengers to Tiger Woods. They already have earned more than \$1 million this year, and the season is not even four months old. Lately, however, David Duval, Davis Love III and Ernie Els share one other distinction that has become a troubling trend.

They can't seem to win. All of them have been there on the back nine Sunday, either in the lead or close enough that it seems like only a matter of time before they're holding an oversized check and hoisting a trophy for the cameras.

The latest opportunity belonged to Els, a two-time U.S. Open champion whose credentials carried him only so far in the MCI Classic. With a birdie sandwiched between two great bunker saves, he was at 14 under and three strokes clear, cruising toward what looked like a sure victory. Suddenly, shockingly, the Big Easy became the Big Pushover.

"I don't know what happened," Els said after playing the final 11 holes in 5 over to finish five strokes behind Stewart Cink. "I just lost it. What can you do?"

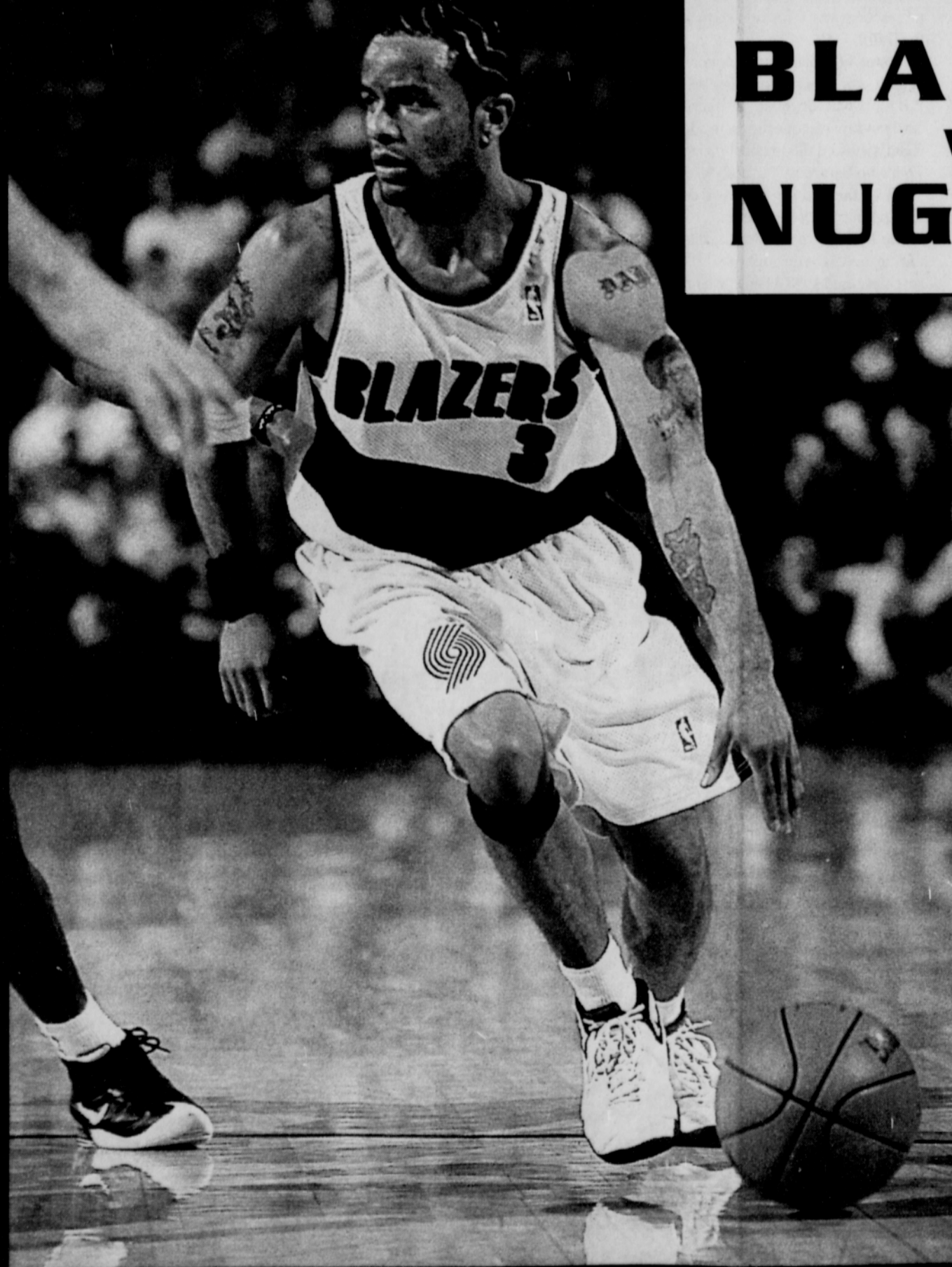
That's a consolation speech Love should know by heart. Love was only three strokes behind Els to start the final round and quickly bowed out, just as he did in the Masters a week early, just as he did in the Bay Hill Invitational a month ago.

Duval wasn't at Harbour Town. He folded his tent a week earlier at Augusta National, one stroke out of the lead with seven holes to play when he hit a bad shot at a bad time. He wound up with a bogey on the par-5 13th and finished four strokes behind Vijay Singh.

Just more than a year ago, Duval was No. 1 in the world, a winner in 11 of his last 34 tournaments. He is 0-for-23 since, dating to his victory in Atlanta the week before last year's Masters. Els is 0-for-26 going back to his victory a year ago in Los Angeles, where he held off Woods, Duval and Love down the stretch at Riviera.

"When you haven't won like me, for almost a year now on this tour, it feels like you've got to work a little harder to get back there," Els said. "I've felt like that for quite some time."

DAMON STOUDEMIRE



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