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# Duel In The Sun: Alberto Salazar, Dick Beardsley, And America's Greatest Marathon



## Synopsis

The 1982 Boston Marathon was great theater: Two American runners, Alberto Salazar, a celebrated champion, and Dick Beardsley, a gutsy underdog, going at each other for just under 2 hours and 9 minutes. Neither man broke. The race merely came to a thrilling, shattering end, exacting such an enormous toll that neither man ever ran as well again. Beardsley, the most innocent of men, descended into felony drug addiction, and Salazar, the toughest of men, fell prey to depression. Exquisitely written and rich with human drama, John Brant's *Duel in the Sun* brilliantly captures the mythic character of the most thrilling American marathon ever run—and the powerful forces of fate that drove these two athletes in the years afterward.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1982, Alberto Salazar and Dick Beardsley ran the entire 26.2 miles of the Boston Marathon neck and neck, finishing within two seconds of each other. For both, it was the pinnacle of a running career cut short, for Salazar because of a mysterious malaise, and for Beardsley because of a drug addiction that developed after a farm accident. Brant, a *Runner's World* writer, weaves the tension of the race into the story of the decline of both runners. He's clearly a running enthusiast; few others would write of the race as "one of the signature moments in the history of distance running—perhaps, in the history of any sport." The story is sad yet triumphant; despite the end of serious running careers, both men made successes of their lives. Brant tells their tales reverently; his style creates distance instead of allowing readers into the runners' heads. While

Brant's writing tends to be unfocused and melodramatic (when describing the women watching the marathon, he writes that they sounded "like Zulu women ululating on the hot road to Durban, raging gleeful keening"), runners especially will enjoy the suspense of the race. B&w photo insert. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Within the running community, the 1982 Boston Marathon is arguably the most memorable race in the modern era. It was a neck-and-neck battle between the favorite, Alberto Salazar, and an upstart at what would be the zenith of a sudden, meteoric rise, Dick Beardsley. Brant, a contributor to *Runner's World* since 1985, re-creates the principals' careers leading up to the race, describes the race itself, and, most significantly, analyzes its aftermath. Neither runner was ever the same again. Beardsley suffered a mind-boggling series of physical setbacks that led to a serious addiction to pain killers. Salazar gradually slid into a paralyzing depression. Many inspirational sports stories, both fiction and nonfiction, center on individuals who found themselves trapped by some form of destructive self-indulgence before battling their way to the top. Neither the ebullient Beardsley nor the regal Salazar chose their personal burdens, but each approached life as a marathon, and both have overcome adversity and are now cruising comfortably down the stretch. Two inspiring tales, well told. Wes Lukowsky Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If you are a runner, like I used to be prior to my injuries, my gosh, this is a great story for you. I happened to buy a used copy, opened it up, and found that it was autographed by Dick Beardsley. Amazing! Even if you are not a runner, you will appreciate this man's grit and fire, as well as his battles. This is a story of an underdog in many ways, an amazing runner who gives Salazar all he can at the Boston Marathon. Yet, even more, it is a story of a drug addict and his long road to becoming sober. I was moved by the story, and I have immense respect for both men. I think many of his will cheer for Dick Beardsley, though, as he is such an underdog, like many of us associate ourselves as being. I would highly recommend this book to all runners and readers.

Such a great book! It's very engaging, and quite a page turner. I have loaned it to friends, and they all love it. The story is interesting on so many levels, whether you're a runner or not. My husband thought it was hard to follow at first, because the story moves back and forth in time between the two main characters (who are real), but he loved it too.

An excellent running book which is structured around a biography of Dick Beardsley's life. It especially focuses on the great marathon between Beardsley and Salazar, but doesn't overemphasize the narration of the race. The Description of the marathon isn't a massive portion of the book, but I think that its just right. You also get a look at Beardsley's life before and after the marathon, which builds the book into a more substantial work. Young runners might be disappointed that it really isn't an "epic running novel" like *Once a Runner* or other books, but I think that is one of its strengths... as it dives into the life of a runner, and the long term impacts and struggles that running had on one of America's Greats. Serious runners will think that the details and development were somewhat lacking. The typical reader that would stumble across a book on running will probably find it just right. Therefore, it was overall a good book but could have been developed more substantially.

This is a pretty exciting book on the greatest race in Boston Marathon history between two of America's (Salazar was born in Cuba but has American citizenship) greatest distance runners of that time coming as the career of the great Bill Rodgers was just past peak but still competitive. As the race did to the top finishers in the 83 Boston, the race was so competitive and intense, both competitors were never quite the same again physically as they were then. It's as if they each damaged part of their physiology that day made worse by the ever pleasing Beardsley's racing schedule. The style of the book is a bit challenging as alternate chapters flash between the race as flashback sections on the careers of both men, family life and even post race experiences flashing forward. I agree with many of the reviewers that the book would have been better served by starting with a bio on the runners up to the race date, providing the race story followed by the post race bios on both runners that sadly includes devastating injuries and health issues, particularly in Beardsley's case. I had already read Beardsley's personal bio on his life that includes the race and in "Duel in the Sun", Beardsley's historical segments are almost verbatim from his book. Thus, you will enjoy the book better if you read Beardsley's book afterwards or skim through Beardsley's bio parts as presented in *Duel* if you already read Beardsley's book. The information on Salazar's unique physical issues were very revealing and provide a greater and appreciative picture of the struggles he went through that finally obtained some relief capped by his famous 50 mile ultra victoria in Africa. I had also hoped that there would be more pictures of the race and with more commentary from the competitors that stayed with them longest, particularly, the very game Rodgers who was the last to let go on a very hot day. Well worth reading but I think it could have been better but hats off to

Beardsly and Salazar for running one of the most competitive races of all time, gutting it all the way.

I couldn't put this book down, it was an astonishing read. Not only the best running book I've ever read, but really one of the best books I've ever read period. John's somewhat unorthodox, edgy writing style does a great job of capturing the drama and movement of these men's lives. It's just amazing to see how one single athletic event can shape an entire life. In a world and society obsessed with team sports and "winning at any cost", the true nature of individual sports and the quest therein seem largely lost and mis-understood -- perhaps as much among the participants themselves as the world in general. For those who choose to listen, this book tells a tale, not only of a unique moment in sports history, but also of a universal tale of life's soul-searching that often seems to lead the searcher "astray" but always ends up leading back to the self again. Fantastic honesty in this book, and kudos to Alberto and Dick for allowing the story to be told so fully. Very inspiring, and highly recommended reading!

This is a great behind the scenes look into two great athletes' lives. If you like to run, check it out.

I didn't know a thing about either Alberto or Dick prior to reading, except that Alberto trained hard when he was in his prime. I'd recommend the reader have some background prior to reading, whether it be running a marathon or knowing the legend of Salazar or Beardsley. It's great to finally know the story and while understanding the background of each, I admittedly skimmed some of the history lessons that seemed like filler content, as I was most interested in the runners' training, character and the actual race itself. I was sad to finish the book because I enjoyed it so much. So I just ordered Beardsley's 'Staying the Course' book to learn more. Enjoy this, as I'm sure you will!

Captivating page turner about the 1982 Boston marathon. Intertwines stories from the two runners lives and scenes from the actual race. Well written and researched.

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