



The Old Ironsides Report



Saturday, December 06, 2003

Ready First Combat Team sending Iraqi Olympic hopeful to U.S. marathon

By Sgt. Mark Bell, 372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- An Iraqi teenager will soon live out his childhood dream when he competes in a major U.S. marathon Dec. 7, thanks to the commander of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division and his brother.

Sponsored by the Ready First Brigade Combat Team, Ali Hashim Hamdan Al-Bahadly, age 16, from Amara Misan, Iraq, will compete in the 21st Annual California International Marathon (CIM) in Sacramento on Dec. 7.

The scheduled race is a 26-mile, 385-yard point-to-point race that begins at Folsom Dam and ends at the state capitol in Sacramento.

Ali left Wednesday for California where he will compete against more than 5,000 marathon runners from across the world. He is sponsored by the Oakmont High School cross-country team in Roseville, a suburb of Sacramento where he will be able to meet with several U.S. Arabic-speaking families and high school students.

To help the process of obtaining Ali's visa, Col. Pete Mansoor, the "Ready First" commander, contacted the U.S. embassy in Amman, Jordan, to arrange for expedited processing of his application.

"He deserves this opportunity to compete on the world stage as the representative of a free Iraq," Mansoor said. Ali and Mansoor met briefly for the first time on Wednesday, before international media interviewed Iraq's most promising marathon competitor for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China.

The Sacramento marathon will be Ali's fourth marathon and most challenging to date. Since the CIM is known as one of the fastest marathons in the United States, Mansoor said the young runner has his work cut out for him.

"I hope to finish well," Ali said with a smile. "I want to do good so I have a chance to qualify for the Olympics."

Ali's running career started as a hobby during his pre-teen years, but for the past four years, he has been training to become an international competitor.

More than competing in the race, Ali said that going to America to compete brings hope to other young athletes around Iraq.

"Maybe as I compete in this race, it will inspire other young athletes to try harder to be given a chance to compete at the international level too," he said. "I want all of Iraq and the world to know that we are not bad people; but like so many Americans, we love our sports."

"By happy coincidence, the offices of the Interim Iraqi Olympic Committee are in my zone," Mansoor said.

In September, Mansoor's brother, John, the Race Director for the CIM, asked his brother if he find an Iraqi marathoner who would be eligible to participate.

"I got this idea after watching the participation of the female athlete from Afghanistan in the World Track and Field Championships this summer in Paris," said John Mansoor. Col. Mansoor arranged a meeting with the Olympic committee



Col. Peter Mansoor, 1st Brigade Combat team commander, and Ahmed Al-Samarrai, chairperson of the Iraqi Interim Olympic Committee, bids marathon runner Ali Hamdan Hashim Al-Bahadly farewell during an informal ceremony at Martyr's Monument. Courtesy photo.

chairman, Ahmed Al-Samarrai, who took the proposal to the Iraqi Sports Federation.

"When Ali participates in this important event, that will help Iraqi sports in general," said Al-Samarrai. "And it will show the world how good and kind are the relations we have between Iraq and the States, and (that) it is different from what the media is showing."

After winning the regional half-marathon race in southern Iraq and the Baghdad Marathon in early October, Ali was selected by the Iraqi Sports Federation as their choice to run in Sacramento.

"He is young and therefore represents the future of sports in Iraq," the colonel said.

Mansoor said athletic, scholarly, and cultural exchanges bring Iraqis and Americans closer together and give them a different view of each other apart from the daily contact of U.S. soldiers on patrol in a combat zone.

"Sports in Iraq were decimated under the evil regime of Saddam Hussein and his band of thugs," he said. "Women's sports in particular were almost completely wiped out."

Soon, the people of Sacramento will meet the young athlete with a dream to run for his country.

"We are very excited that the CIM will be the first athletic event in the world to host an athlete representing the 'new' Iraq," said John Mansoor. "Ali represents the new face of Iraq -- hopeful and optimistic. His country is ready to be an active member of the world athletic community again."

"I pray that Ali has a wonderful time," he said. "May he run well, and may he run in peace," Col. Mansoor said.

News...

Bremer Warns of More Attacks in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - The top U.S. administrator in Iraq, L. Paul Bremer, warned Friday that attacks against coalition forces will likely escalate over the next few months as the occupation authority prepares for a transfer of sovereignty to a new Iraqi government. The warning came after a roadside bomb hit a U.S. military convoy in Baghdad, killing one soldier, the military said. Two Iraqi civilians also died and 13 were injured.

AP: Iraq to Create War Crimes Tribunal

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Iraq's U.S.-appointed government will establish a tribunal for crimes against humanity in the coming days that could try hundreds of officials, including Saddam Hussein and his top aides, Iraqi and American officials said. Some human rights groups criticized the plans, saying Iraq's U.S. occupiers have too much of a hand in them and that Iraqi judges and prosecutors may not have the experience needed to try the cases.

40 Killed in Train Blast Near Chechnya

YESSENTUKI, Russia (AP) - A suicide attacker set off an explosion that tore through a commuter train Friday near the rebellious region of Chechnya, killing 40 people and wounding scores of others in a bombing that President Vladimir Putin said was intended to disrupt this weekend's parliamentary elections. Authorities said a man triggered the shrapnel-filled bomb and three women also were involved in the attack. Two of the women jumped from the train before the rush-hour blast and a third was gravely injured and unlikely to survive.

Winter Storm Dumps Snow Along East Coast

The region's first real winter storm of the season swept up the East Coast on Friday, clogging roads with a daunting mixture of snow, sleet and slush. In Maryland, where up to 8 inches of snow fell, a steady downfall of snow and sleet closed schools and clogged rush hour traffic Friday as state road crews struggled to keep major arteries clear.

Chaplain's thought for the day...

"Our Mission"

In the eleventh century, King Henry III of Bavaria grew tired of the royal life and the pressures of being king. So, he went to Prior Richard at the local monastery, making application to spend the rest of his life as a monk. "Your majesty," said the Prior, "do you understand that the pledge here is one of obedience? That will be hard because you have been a king."

"I understand," the king replied. "The rest of my life I will be obedient to you, as Christ leads you."

"Then I will tell you what to do," the Prior said. "Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has put you." Years later, when the king died, a statement was written: "The King learned to rule by being obedient."

When we tire of our roles and responsibilities, it helps to remember that God has planted us in a certain place and told us to be an obedient soldier. Christ expects us to be faithful where he puts us, not where we want to be.

Sports...

Army on Verge of Worst College Season Ever

By DAN GELSTON, AP Sports Writer
PHILADELPHIA (AP) -- The number is in Army's face like the level stare of a drill sergeant. Everywhere the players go, there are questions, criticism and - worst of all - sympathy from Navy over a season that's a loss away from the first 0-13 record in major college football history.

Army currently owns the nation's longest losing streak at 14 games, has dropped 23 of its last 24, including last year's 58-12 loss to Navy, and has been outscored by 242 points this season.

Coach Todd Berry was fired at midseason and replaced by John Mumford on an interim basis. Berry was responsible for the season's first six losses; Mumford the last six.

Mumford knows a win Saturday against Navy (7-4) won't salvage the season. Then again, maybe it will.

"We have never addressed 0-12. We have never addressed anything about the record," Mumford said. "We continued to press on. The kids are getting hit in the corps; they're getting hit with it in the media. We just try and keep our eye on the ball of our daily work habits."

The Black Knights have been outscored 124-45 the last three games, and have been shut out twice this season. They are the worst rushing team at 61.9 yards per game and lead the nation with 42 turnovers.

"It's frustrating. I thought we had the talent," wide receiver Clint Woody said. "Not doing what we set out to accomplish is real frustrating. There's a sense of failure. It's definitely not what we wanted."

Forget the glory days of the 1940s and 1950s when Army was winning national titles and producing Heisman Trophy winners. Right now, Army would settle for a return to the mediocre 1990s when it finished at .500 or better four times, highlighted by a 10-2 record in 1996.

The reasons for the decline are as numerous as the losses.

Berry, who turned Illinois State into a winner, tried to turn Army's wishbone into a passing attack, a plan that flopped because there isn't enough talent at skill positions such as quarterback, running back and receiver.

With barely enough talent to field a competitive team as an independent, Army joined Conference USA in 1998.

Instead, Berry was fired with a 5-35 record in 3 1/2 seasons. Earlier this year, the school pulled out of the league and will return to independent status in 2004.

"Some things may not have worked like we hoped, but we're getting back to what Army is all about," Mumford said.

If Army needs any added inspiration, it can look across the field at Navy. Two years ago, Navy went 0-10; after the Army game, the Mids will play in the Houston Bowl this season.

"They brought in the right coach and a fresh approach," Woody said. "They've shown you can have success at the academies. We have before and hopefully we will again, even if I'm not around to be a part of it."

Second-year Navy coach Paul Johnson felt compassion for Army and said he roots for the Black Knights in every game except one.

"There are positives and you have to accentuate the positives. There are some things you cannot change," Johnson said. "We know why the academies are there. The things you can change and that you can work on, you need to. I think that's important in anybody having success at the academies. It's a challenge, but it can be accomplished if you approach it the right way."

Beating Navy is more important than usual this time.

"It would be sweeter than going out 0-13," Woody said.

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December 6, 2003

myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 06, 2003					As of: Friday, December 05, 2003 9:45:04 PM	
Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
00:00	NFL FILMS PRESENTS	HEADLINE NEWS	THE LIFE OF MAMMALS			00:00
00:30		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO			HEADLINE NEWS	00:30
01:00	AROUND THE HORN		BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER : - FAMILY	BEAR IN THE BIG BLUE HOUSE (YR. 6) : - TO CLEAN OR NOT TO CLEAN	LESTER HOLT LIVE	01:00
01:30	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN		FRANKLIN : - FRANKLIN'S CRYSTAL/FRANKLIN'S ADVICE		01:30
02:00	SPORTSCENTER		IRON CHEF : - HORSE MACKEREL/MICHIBA VS TATSUO UMEMIYA	ROCKET POWER : - TO BE, OTTO NOT TO BE/ REGGIE/ REGINA	HEADLINE NEWS	02:00
02:30		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD		THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	02:30
03:00		TORAI TORAI TORAI	THE VIEW	YU-GI-OHI (TV-7): - DUEL WITH A GHOUL	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT	03:00
03:30	NBA SHOOTAROUND			THE PROUD FAMILY : - CROUCHING, TRUDY, HIDDEN PENNY	CBS EVENING NEWS	03:30
04:00	NBA - SAN ANTONIO SPURS @ ORLANDO MAGIC		LIVING BETTER WITH CARRIE WIATT	OUTWARD BOUND: COSTA RICA/ COLORADO (TV-7): - EPISODE 16	THE NEWSHOUR	04:00
04:30			HOMES WITH STYLE : - COUNTRY LIVING THANKSGIVING	THE BEST OF : - TAKE OUT		04:30
05:00			WHILE YOU WERE OUT	FRIDAY NIGHT FIGHTS - LIGHTWEIGHTS: COURTNEY BURTON VS FRANCISCO LORENZO	HANNITY & COLMES	05:00
05:30		LOVE AND DEATH				05:30
06:00			THE AMAZING RACE : - THAT'S ME, THAT'S MY FACE. JUST HIT MY FACE. HIT MY FACE!		THE NEWS WITH BRIAN WILLIAMS	06:00
06:30	NBA - MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES @ SACRAMENTO KINGS					06:30
07:00		HEADLINE NEWS	GILMORE GIRLS : - LET THE GAMES BEGIN	SPORTSCENTER	BET NIGHTLY NEWS	07:00
07:30		ESPNEWS			NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT	07:30
08:00		HEADLINE NEWS	THE DIVISION : - SEDUCED AND ABANDONED	WWE RAW!	LARRY KING LIVE	08:00
08:30		HEADLINE NEWS				08:30
09:00	SPORTSCENTER	BEAR IN THE BIG BLUE HOUSE (YR. 6) : - TO CLEAN OR NOT TO CLEAN	THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN	TRADING SPACES FAMILY : - PENNSYLVANIA/ STUMP ROAD	NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN	09:00
09:30		FRANKLIN : - FRANKLIN'S CRYSTAL/FRANKLIN'S ADVICE				09:30
10:00	NFL TOTAL ACCESS	ROCKET POWER : - TO BE, OTTO NOT TO BE/ REGGIE/ REGINA		HEADLINE NEWS	PAULA ZAHN NOW	10:00
10:30		THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS		NAVY/MARINE CORPS NEWS		10:30
11:00	NHL - PHOENIX COYOTES @ PHILADELPHIA FLYERS	YU-GI-OHI (TV-7): - DUEL WITH A GHOUL	THE VIEW	ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT	NIGHTLINE	11:00
11:30		THE PROUD FAMILY : - CROUCHING, TRUDY, HIDDEN PENNY			ARMY NEWSWATCH	11:30
12:00		TRADING SPACES FAMILY : - PENNSYLVANIA/ STUMP ROAD	LIVING BETTER WITH CARRIE WIATT	HEADLINE NEWS	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS	12:00
12:30			HOMES WITH STYLE : - COUNTRY LIVING THANKSGIVING	ESPNEWS		12:30
13:00		OUTWARD BOUND: COSTA RICA/ COLORADO (TV-7): - EPISODE 16	WHILE YOU WERE OUT	ONE ON ONE : - DADDY, I DON'T NEED AN EDUCATION	THE O'REILLY FACTOR	13:00
13:30	NFL MATCHUP	THE BEST OF : - TAKE OUT		ACCORDING TO JIM : - THANKSGIVING CONFIDENTIAL		13:30
14:00	SPORTSCENTER	ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT	THE AMAZING RACE : - THAT'S ME, THAT'S MY FACE. JUST HIT MY FACE. HIT MY FACE!	THE PRACTICE : - FINAL JUDGMENT	DATELINE NBC	14:00
15:00	INSIDE THE NFL	WWE RAW!	GILMORE GIRLS : - LET THE GAMES BEGIN	LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT : - PANDORA	CNN SATURDAY MORNING	15:00
16:00	NBA - MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES @ SACRAMENTO KINGS	ONE ON ONE : - DADDY, I DON'T NEED AN EDUCATION	THE DIVISION : - SEDUCED AND ABANDONED	HEADLINE NEWS	20/20	16:00
16:30		ACCORDING TO JIM : - THANKSGIVING CONFIDENTIAL		SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE (03'-04') : - EPISODE 9		16:30
17:00		THE PRACTICE : - FINAL JUDGMENT	THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN		SATURDAY TODAY	17:00
18:00	SPORTSCENTER	LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT : - PANDORA		LIVE IN HOLLYWOOD		18:00
18:30	COLLEGE GAMEDAY					18:30
19:00		HEADLINE NEWS	THE VIEW	THE ENTERTAINERS	WALL STREET JOURNAL	19:00
19:30		NAVY/MARINE CORPS NEWS			AMERICA'S BLACK FORUM	19:30
20:00	NFL TOTAL ACCESS	SPORTSCENTER	LIVING BETTER WITH CARRIE WIATT	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - BIG TEN: OKLAHOMA @ MICHIGAN STATE	NEWS FROM CNN	20:00
20:30			HOMES WITH STYLE : - COUNTRY LIVING THANKSGIVING			20:30
21:00	COLLEGE FOOTBALL - BIG EAST: NOTRE DAME @ SYRACUSE	NFL LIVE	WHILE YOU WERE OUT		DATELINE NBC	21:00
21:30		COLLEGE BASKETBALL - 2003 JOHN R. WOODEN CLASSIC - PAC-10: KENTUCKY VS UCLA				21:30
22:00			THE AMAZING RACE : - THAT'S ME, THAT'S MY FACE. JUST HIT MY FACE. HIT MY FACE!	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - ACC: ST. JOHN'S @ DUKE	HEADLINE NEWS	22:00
22:30					ARMY NEWSWATCH	22:30
23:00			GILMORE GIRLS : - LET THE GAMES BEGIN		20/20	23:00