

## Perennial champs Alem Kabsay and Kari Proffitt are the top male and female finishers in the 17th annual Memorial Day Run

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**A**lem Kabsay ran scared. Strange for someone who entered yesterday's Memorial Day Run with an unprecedented string of six straight victories in Staten Island Triple Crown races.

"I'd never run against him (Gary Dennis)," Kabsay said, "and I saw right away that he had very good form. I was scared."

But form and grit could only take the former Lafayette College star so far. Just past the halfway point, the two-mile mark, on the Hylan Boulevard incline approaching Poillon Avenue, Kabsay was unable to answer one of the surges which have become the Ethiopian's trademark.

Kabsay pulled away from there and was accompanied only by the appreciative applause of the crowd which lined Luten Avenue to the finish line, outside Tottenville High School.

Kabsay finished in 20 minutes, 5 seconds for his third consecutive Memorial Day title, while Dennis was timed in 20:35. Mike Crowe was third in 20:59, followed by Curtis HS star Claudius Caesar (21:12), who barely held off Kevin White (21:13).

Three-time women's Triple Crown winner Kari Proffitt got a leg up on an unprecedented fourth title as she posted an unchallenged wire-to-wire victory.

The Fort Wadsworth resident was timed in 23:53, while Lafayette College star Megan Smith was second (24:05), Josephine Piccinic third (24:41), Jeanine Sluck fourth (25:53) and Cheri Walsh fifth (25:57).

The race was sponsored by the Staten Island Advance, the Sisters of Charity Health Care Systems and Staten Island University Hospital.

"Kabsay started surging at the very beginning," Dennis said. "I guess he was trying to feel things out."

"I decided to just go with him."

Which is precisely what Dennis did, down Luten Avenue, south along Hylan Boulevard and through the tight turn as the pair headed north to begin crossing the course's T.

"I was testing him with the surges," Kabsay said.

Dennis appeared ready for an "F" about 1½ miles in. Kabsay surged on an incline and Dennis didn't respond.

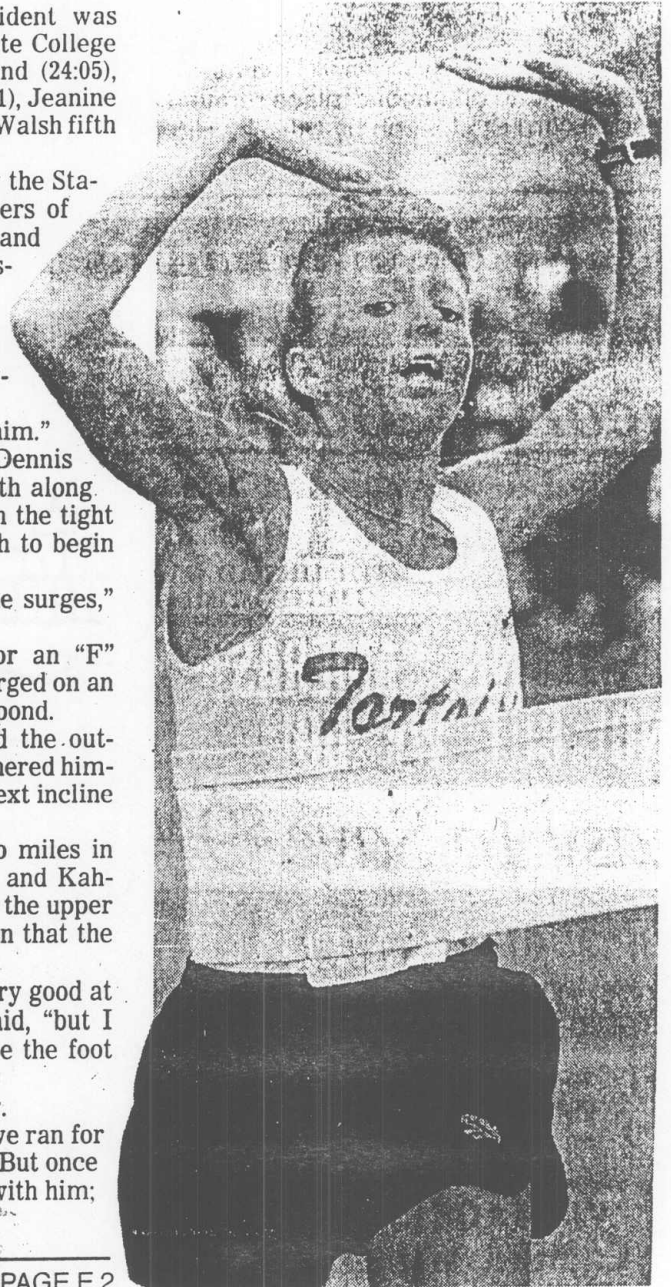
But just when it appeared the outcome was history, Dennis gathered himself and came back, ran the next incline hard and took the lead.

The pair went through two miles in 9:56 with Dennis in the lead, and Kabsay tucked in behind him, but the upper Manhattan resident knew then that the race was his.

"He (Dennis) is probably very good at longer distances," Kabsay said, "but I knew then that he didn't have the foot speed."

Dennis' assessment exactly.

"I did all right at the pace we ran for the first two miles," he said. "But once he picked up, I couldn't stay with him; the legs didn't respond."



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