

History of The Irish Sprint



The Irish Sprint began as an intense San Francisco-based competition between the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps in 1981. In 2010, the event moved to Marine Corps Base Quantico and was opened to public participation.



In the first three years, many people called the run the Irish Beagle Sprint. Two famous beagles by the names of Bilbo and Frodo Baggins participated in the run. The event served as a unique blending of San Francisco's military family: Coast Guard, Army, Navy and Marine Corps - active and reserve.

Later, the event was organized by the Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Northern California. The race has had bagpipers, cheerleaders, concerts by the United States Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps and many other events all designed to make it a special happening. The race was held in Lake Merced, three miles south of San Francisco's famous Golden Gate Park and approximately one mile from the Pacific Ocean. Many remarked the site resembled the Lakes of Killarney in Southern Ireland.



A perpetual trophy, now permanently on display in the Marine Corps Marathon building, was dedicated by General P.X. Kelley in March 1981. The trophy was awarded to the winning teams in the early incarnation of this event. Recognized as the Commandants Trophy, the award was won by the USMC won nine times (1981, 1983, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2003). The US Coast Guard won in 1982, 1984-1987, 1989, 1992-1994, 1996, 1997, 2000-2002 and 2005. The US Navy won in 2007. The MarForPac (Marine Forces Pacific) won in 2006. The Young Marines won in 2004.