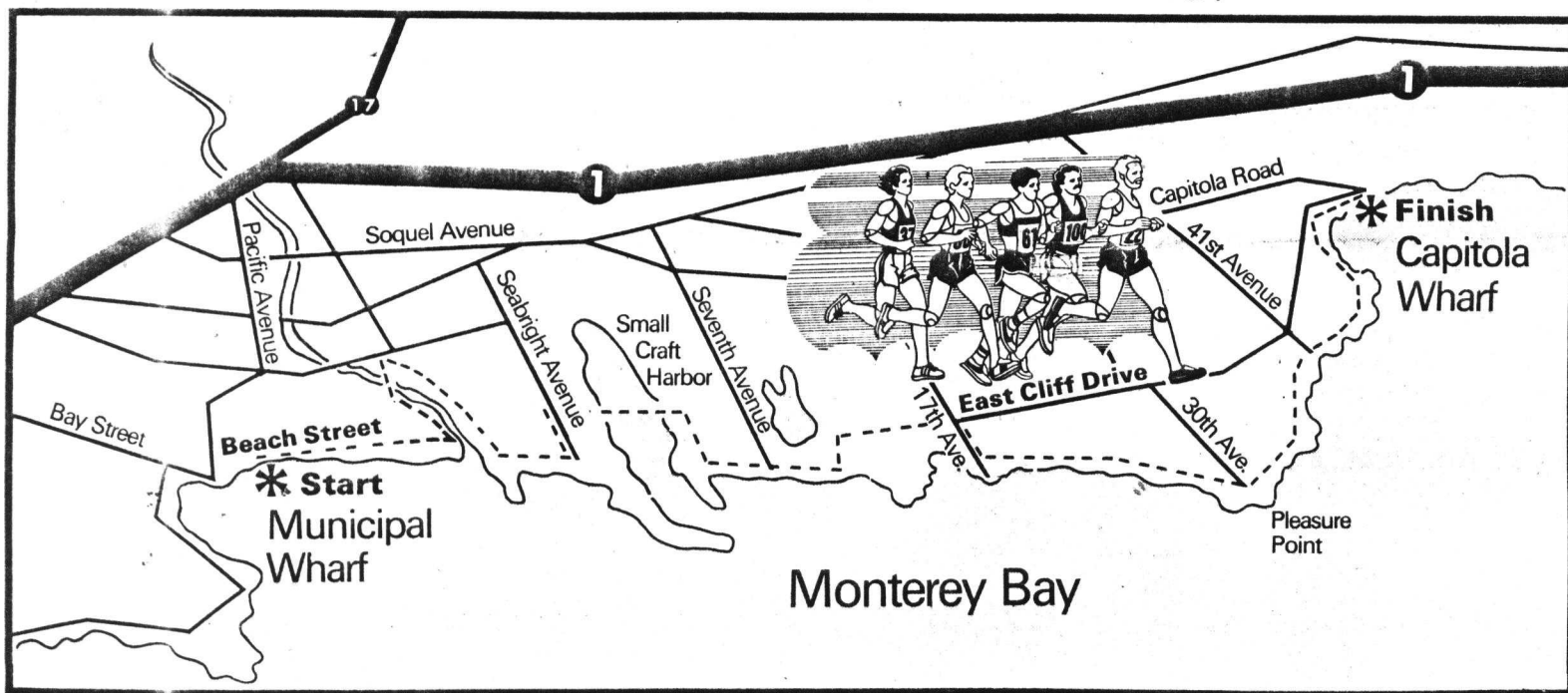


Wharf To Wharf

Sports



More than 15,000 runners will take this six-mile route in today's 16th annual race.

The streets are alive with the sound of running

By JOHN ROBINSON
Sentinel staff writer

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SANTA CRUZ — Today is the running of the 16th Annual Wharf To Wharf Race. More than 15,000 runners are expected to compete.

The six-mile course winds along the ocean, starting on Beach Street in front of the Coconut Grove and ends in downtown Capitola. Along the way, the course curves along East Cliff Drive through the Seabright neighborhood, over the Small Craft Harbor, around Twin Lakes, brushes Schwan Lake and runs along the bluffs of Pleasure Point as it descends into Capitola.

The race starts at 8:30 a.m. and local streets will be closed to traffic during the race, opening soon after the last runners pass. Santa Cruz Police figure it should take the runners a half-hour to pass the Seabright Avenue-Murray Street intersection, and a

■ Wharf To Wharf numbers a "hot ticket" — Page D1

Capitola Police spokeswoman said streets there will be closed until about noon.

The race attracts world-class runners and serious joggers as well as thousands who run for fun. For many, the Wharf To Wharf is the only race they run.

Last year's winner, Jay Marden, set a course record, finishing in 28:14 — about the time the back of the pack was hitting the first-mile mark. He is not running today, having competed at the U.S. Olympic track and field Trials (10,000 meters) Saturday night.

Thousands of spectators also line the course, cheering friends or just partaking of the spectacle.

The race has become an institution, outgrowing its local roots as it attracts an ever more varied field of runners from around the country. The first race, run in 1873, drew just 250 runners. Every year it has grown until it now threatens to overwhelm race coordinators and facilities.

This year, race officials limited entries to 12,000, all of which were snapped up by the end of June. The organizers are actively discouraging the unofficial "bandit" runners from joining in.

Last year's race was marred by the death of a runner. Joseph Wonder, 39, of Elk Grove, an unregistered runner, collapsed and died of an apparent heart attack halfway through the course. It was the race's first fatality.

The Wharf To Wharf Race is what you make of it — a serious race, or celebration.