

BOBBI GIBB RUNS INTO THE RECORD BOOKS

BOBBI GIBB became the first woman to complete the Boston Marathon yesterday in an inspiring triumph over prejudice in sport, *writes our sports correspondent, April 20, 1966.*

The 23-year-old Bostonian completed the 26-mile race in three hours, 21 minutes and 40 seconds, finishing ahead of two thirds of the male competitors. Gibb had demonstrated remarkable resolve just to make it to the starting line. After applying for an official place, she received a letter from race director Will Cloney informing her that women were “not physiologically able to run a marathon” and

that the race organizers could not “take the liability” of allowing her to compete.

Under the Amateur Athletics Union’s rules, women’s races are limited to a maximum distance of 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers). The furthest women are allowed to run in the Olympics is 800 meters.

Gibb, however, was determined to compete. Disguised in a hooded sweatshirt and her brother’s Bermuda shorts worn over a black swimsuit, Gibb initially hid in a forsythia bush near the start line. After half the runners had passed, she jumped out and joined the race.

Encouraged by the positive reaction of her fellow runners, Gibb further revealed her identity by taking off the sweatshirt. Spectators shouted their support—“Way to go, girlie!”—and by the time Gibb reached the finish, Massachusetts governor John Volpe was there to shake her hand.

Gibb’s achievement prompted a spokesman for the New England Amateur Athletic Union to say he will contact their headquarters to ask for a suspension of the current rules so that any woman can run in the Boston Marathon.