

Another successful event in the books

[By Bill Shaw](#)

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I polished up this column in my head at the top of the Brazos River bridge, 3 miles into a 6.2-mile run Saturday morning about 7:30. I was running uphill against a 25 mph wind; the wind chill was 42, and the raindrops hit like pinpricks.

Runners in last Saturday's Surfside Beach Marathon and Half-Marathon faced more difficult conditions.

Those finishers fought 30 mph winds and exuded courage and heroism when they crossed the line in the sand at Stahlman Park.

Twenty-six of those finishers were locals. Three bettered their peers; one broke a record.

Lauren Smith, 14, a Brazos-wood freshman from Lake Jackson, finished third overall in the half-marathon and broke the open female record set last year by 4:44. Smith ran the 13.1-mile race route in 1:34:05, a 7:11 mile pace.

Jason Culverhouse, 32, of West Columbia, chased Brandon Langlinais, 36, of Houston from mile nine and crossed the line in 1:33:01, 53 seconds behind Langlinais, to capture second place in the male competition.

Mary Williams, 16, another Brazoswood runner, finished 10th overall and third in the open female competition in 1:41:33. Thirteenth overall and not far behind his sister, John Williams, 13, finished in 1:46:00, first in the male 19-and-under age group.

Two other Lake Jackson locals earned age-group awards. Theresa Hermel-David, 30, finished third in the 30-39 bracket in 1:51:15, Orville Kremmer, 73, was second in the 70-and-over age group in 2:02:50.

Half-marathon finishers from Angleton were Kermit Licklider, 2:09:13; Hensley Jackson, 2:33:55; and Denise Jackson, 2:49:58. Brazoria finishers were Spencer Hurley, 2:14:09, and Alanda Hurley, 3:32:53. Other Lake Jackson finishers were Armando Caceres, 1:59:25; Kimberly Rauch, 2:05:56; Stacey Davis, 2:12:25; Peter Norris, 2:16:23; Deborah Wing-Leonard, 2:20:12; Jeremy Todd, 2:21:30; Laverne Lippman, 2:29:47; and Ronda Zgabay, 2:35:24,

Seven local runners finished the 26.2 miles from the start near Stahlman Park out to San Luis Pass and back with the 30 mph wind in their faces halfway.

Tom Young, 47, covered the distance faster than any other local in 3:48:56 and placed sixth in his age group. Trina Dominguez, 21, of Clute finished second in her age group in 5:29:24.

Paul Eby and Ellen Eby from Angleton finished, respectively, in 4:48:49 and 5:53:52. Other Lake Jackson finishers were Jacob Cherian, 4:13:26; Hushang Bakhtiari, 4:29:52; and James Phillips, 5:30:13.

This year 115 marathoners and 193 half-marathoners finished the Surfside Beach Marathon/Half-Marathon, the only race in the United States run completely on a beach.

The numbers surprised Daryl Beatty, Brazosport Area Road Runners Association director of road racing, whose vision the contest became.

“We were overwhelmed by the response and turned away 100-200 additional registrations,” said Beatty. “We would rather have (300) happy runners than 600 unhappy ones had we accepted more.”

The Hope Fellowship Church of Lake Jackson provided a hot, happy meal for the participants, a barbecue dinner with all the trimmings.

Runners from 21 states ran on Surfside, along with internationally-known Japanese marathoner and globe-trotter Hajime Nishi, 56, of Japan, who made Surfside Village his destination to complete his 434th marathon. Nishi, a journalist, evaluates marathons world wide.

“I would rate it (the Surfside Beach Marathon) higher than marathons in Dallas and Houston and give it the highest rating in Texas,” said Nimshi. “When I write about it, people all over Japan, Europe and the world will want to come to it.”

Congratulations to all the local finishers and thanks to the major sponsors, ConocoPhillips and OverNite Software, to Hope Fellowship Church, to Surfside Village for facilities and EMT support, to Save Our Beach Association volunteers, to the Brazoswood Honor Society for serving at the water tables and to all BARRA members who made the event possible.