

Area teen conquers hill to win Flapjack

By Bill Shaw

The Facts

Published April 23, 2006

FREEPORT — Brazoswood High School junior Weston Caceras put on a burst of speed on the return route over the Velasco Memorial Bridge in the Freeport Flapjack 5K and left last year's winner, Grant Parker of West Columbia, watching him widen his lead by almost half a minute to the finish line.

The 3.1-mile Flapjack 5K features challenging inclines and hills like no other area race. Runners begin on Park Street downtown and climb onto Brazos Street, which runs parallel to the river, and face the first challenge about a half mile into the race with a hill along the docks. After the first mile marker on Second Street, the route runs north over the Velasco Bridge, loops around the Freeport Service Center, back over the bridge then along Second Street to finish on Park Street.

Parker held his own until the second mile, and the return over the bridge. "We were pretty much together until the second crossing of the bridge," said Parker, 24. "He handled the bridge a lot better than I did, and I never caught back up."

Caceras, 16, said, "I put on a burst of speed on the bridge to break him. I started kicking right after the bridge to come in.

The bridge is a little challenging."

Caceras crossed the finish line in 18:21, a 5:55 mile pace; Parker finished in 18:48, 40 seconds slower than his winning time in last year's race. Caceras fell short of the 17:16 contest record posted in 2000 by Brazoswood runner Bryan Kerr.

Kevin Regis, 46, of Lake Jackson finished third overall in 19:53, one second slower than his third place time last year.

Regis and first-place female finisher Lauren Smith sparred for third overall, and at the finish, Regis finished 15 seconds ahead of her.

"I caught her just after the bridge and passed her with about a half mile to go," said Regis.

Smith, 15, a Brazoswood freshman, finished in 20:08 to beat last year's winner, Wendy Parker, 28, Grant Parker's wife, by 44 seconds; Parker finished in 20:52.

"She was in front the whole time," said Parker. "Unless she has a bad day, that's where she's going to be."

Edwin Quarles of Angleton squeezed in between Smith and Parker to finish fifth overall and first in the male masters (40-

plus) competition in 20:50, a 6:43 pace. But Quarles looked over his shoulder for his frequent competitor Lenord Burns.

"I'm always worried about him," said Quarles, 40. "I passed him at about the half mile mark and was ahead of him the



Sgt. Jay Newton (left) receives a special award from Police Chief Jeff Pynes for the top 5K finish by a Freeport police officer.

rest of the race. I knew he was right behind. I know he's going to be close to me in all the races."

With his eyes on Quarles, Burns, 59, passed Wendy Parker in the last half mile, only to watch her get to the finish line before he did. Burns finished seventh overall and second in the masters competition in 20:55.

"She snuck up on me and flew by me about 100 yards before the finish," said Burns. "Edwin was ahead of me the whole way, but I had him worried."

Stewart Crouch, 44, who was unavailable for comment af-

ter the race, finished eighth overall and third in the male masters competition in 22:04.

Sue Wheeler, 44, of Houston finished 10th overall in 22:07 and rounded out the overall female competition.

“Lauren and Wendy were ahead of me the whole time,” said Wheeler.

In her first female masters competition since turning 40, Kelly Colosimo of Lake Jackson, finished 35th overall and first in the female masters competition in 26:54.

“It was a lot slower than I anticipated,” said Colosimo. “The bridge got me; I had to walk it both ways.”

Frequent female masters

competitors Marilyn Koons, 58, of Alvin and Susan Lorms, 59, of Lake Jackson met each other face-to-face for the first time after the race.

“She beats me in every race,” said Lorms. “But I just love this race. I love those shrimp boats.”

Koons finished 38th overall and second in the female masters competition in 28:11; Lorms finished third in 28:52.

Meeting the challenge of Freeport City Manager Ron Bottoms, police officers and firefighters romped the Flapjack route.

Firefighter Brett Astor finished 15th overall in 23:13 to meet the challenge, with Bottoms

18th overall in 23:34, 22 seconds behind Astor.

“I just wanted to beat the city manager, and I did,” said Astor.

“I challenged Sgt. Jay Newton and Brett four years ago, and I beat them handily,” said Bottoms. “I beat them the next year, but last year Brett beat me. I’m slowing down and he’s speeding up.”

New Freeport Police Chief Jeff Pynes presented a trophy to Newton, 44, who finished 27th overall in 25:47, an 8:19 pace, and first in the group of Freeport police officers who ran the race.

Newton outlasted younger fellow police officer Sgt.



Winners in the Flapjack 5K, front row from left to right, Weston Caceres, first overall male; Lauren Smith, first overall female; Grant Parker, second overall male; Wendy Parker, second overall female; Kevin Regis, third overall male. Back row, Edwin Quarles, first masters male; Lenord Burns; second masters male; Marilyn Koons, second masters female; and Susan Lorms, third masters female. Not pictured are Sue Wheeler, third overall female, and Kelly Colosimo, first masters female.

Corey Brinkman, 33.

“We were together until the second trip over the bridge,” said Brinkman, who finished 34th overall in 26:52. “I got tired.”

“I never lost my pace,” said Newton. “I’m happy to see all these police officers; we had 17.”

“We had a great turnout, and it’s an example of what we can do as a team at the police department; everybody finished,” said Pynes, 39, who finished 52nd

overall in 30:48.

“We had a good turnout, 98, and it was a perfect day except it was a little warm,” said Mary Lee Stottler, second-year race coordinator and Freeport Main Street director. “I think we shall just keep getting better. The Kids Race sponsored by BASF was just great.”

The top male and female finishers in the overall and masters competition, as well as the top three male and female finish-

ers in age groups from 12 and younger to 70 and older received a Main Street cooler with a pound of cooked shrimp provided by B&B Seafood, Capt. Mark’s Seafood, On the River Restaurant, Po’ Boys Seafood, Port Café and Windswept Restaurant.

Other supporters and sponsors of the race were BASF, Dow, Texas Gulf Bank, Veolia Water, Texas Burrito Factory, Waste Management, Offshore Oil and McDonald’s.