

Records smashed in 2005

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*The Facts*

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I began this column as I turned west into the wind at about three and a half miles of a 5.5-miler along the Old Brazos River where the shrimp boats dock.

I reflected, as I promised in my last column, on last year.

The biggest story of 2005 was the inaugural Brazosport Area Road Runners Association Surfside Beach Marathon/Half Marathon. When Daryl Beatty, BARRA director of road racing, proposed this project, no one expected such an enthusiastic runner response.

Sixty-two runners finished the marathon and 129 finished the half-marathon. Runners from 13 states participated in the only marathon run almost entirely on a beach.

BARRA looks forward to an even bigger turnout for the second annual contest Feb. 11.

In 2005, area runners broke seven race records.

In January, Houstonian Francisco Perez romped through the 10K (6.2 miles) Spectacle Spectacular course in Angleton in 34:19 and broke the male masters (40-plus) record by 20 seconds with a 5:32 average mile.

In April, four records fell.

BARRA member Sue Wheeler, now living in Houston, broke the Gator Gallop 5K female masters records. Wheeler finished the in 3.1 miles in 23:16, a 7:30 pace that beat the previous record by eight seconds.

Local resident Linda Young, 41, finished the Flapjack 5K in 22:58 and broke the female masters record set by Wheeler the year before by 37 seconds.

Brazoswood runner Aaron Lopez finished the Family Fitness 5K in 18:21, a 5:55 race pace, and broke the contest record by 1:47.

Susan Walters of Wallis, who holds both the open and masters records in the Spectacle Spectacular, finished the San Jacinto 5K in 19:39, a 6:21 race pace that broke the previous female masters record by 58 seconds.

In July, Walters added two more records to her resume. In the Firecracker 4, she ran a hot four miles in 25:52 and beat the female masters record by 2:12. In the Mosquito Chase 5K, Walters buzzed around Clute in 19:54 and posted the fastest time ever by a masters female.

In 2005, Grant and Wendy Parker of West Columbia established a race presence. Grant finished first in the San Jacinto 5K, the Flapjack 5K, the Firecracker 4 and the Mosquito Chase with respective times of 17:29, 18:08, 23:18 and 17:31. Wendy finished first in the Flapjack 5K in 21:29 and second in the San Jacinto 5K in 20:53.

Rookie-of-the-year honors go to Brazoswood teen Lauren Smith, 14. Smith finished first in the female competition in the Family Fitness 5K in 21:43 and in the Monster Dash (2.9 miles this year) in 17:49. She finished second in the Flapjack 5K in 21:47 and first in the Brazosport Memorial Hospital 5K in 19:40.

Race registration in 2005 decreased by 7 percent. However, the Flapjack 5K and the Family Fitness 5K increased registration, respectively, by 59 and 22 percent.

Male participants in local races outnumbered female participants by 456 to 259, 64 to 36 percent. Forty-year-old males and 30-year-old females made up the most participants at 28 and 27 percent.

BARRA member Carlo Deason ran the fastest 5K of the year, 16:58 in the Spectacle Spectacular. Janessa Dunn of San Antonio ran the fastest open female 5K in the Mosquito Chase, 19:37. Out-of-towner Kurt Pepper ran the fastest male masters 5K in the Mosquito Chase, 18:17, and Walters ran the fastest female masters 5K in the San Jacinto race in 19:39.

The local 2006 racing season begins Jan. 28 in Angleton with the Spectacle Spectacular 5K/10K.

I won't be breaking any records, but I hope to see you at the starting line.

Bill Shaw's running column appears every other Monday in The Facts.