

# B'wood sophomore breaks Monster Dash record

By Bill Shaw

## The Facts

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**L**AKE JACKSON — On a perfect day for running, Houstonian Carlo Deason won his third consecutive Monster Dash and Brazoswood sophomore Lauren Smith finished first in the overall female competition and broke the contest record.

Deason, 37, had to out-distance another Brazoswood cross country runner, Westen Caceres, 17, to defend his Monster Dash title. At the finish, Caceres trailed Deason by only 13 seconds.

“He was pushing me for the first mile and a half, and we were trading off on the lead,” Deason said. “After the second mile mark, I started picking it up and stayed in the lead after that.”

Deason finished the USA Track & Field certified 5K course in 17:08, a 5:31-pace per mile, which was 55 seconds off the contest record set by Randall Krauskopf of Sweeny in 2003. Caceres finished in 17:25.

“I started losing him with about a half mile to go,” said Caceres, who finished 11th in the district meet in a 17:58 slower 5K. “He really picked it up at the



From left to right, Carlo Deason, first overall male; Lauren Smith, first overall female; Westen Caceres, second overall male; Jenny Gustin, second overall female; Cliff Wittig, third overall male; and Vera McCray, third overall female. Photo by Bill Shaw.

three-mile mark; I was hopeful I could catch him until then.”

In the wake of her first-place finish in the District 24-5A cross country competition Thursday, Smith finished third overall in 17:43, a 5:43-pace, 18 seconds behind Caceres. She broke the overall female contest record set by Melissa Hurta of Jones Creek in 1999 by 1:07.

“The weather was perfect for running,” Smith said. “I felt good after district and ran a personal 5K record today. I feel like I have improved over last year.”

Cliff Wittig, who finished 29th in the district meet in 19:47, ran a faster 5K in the Monster Dash and finished fourth overall and third in the male competition in 19:15.

“I stayed right with Lauren for the first mile but slowed down,” said Wittig, 17. “In the third mile I sped up and tried to catch her but couldn’t; I was tired from the district meet.”

Behind the younger frontrunners, male masters (40-plus) runners, including Brazoswood cross country coach Devin Theriot, ran a close, competitive race. At the finish line, Steward Crouch, 44, of Angleton pulled ahead to claim first-place honors in 20:36, 6:39-race pace. Edwin Quarles, 40, also from Angleton, finished second in the masters competition in 20:41, and Theriot finished third in 20:51. Crouch finished 1:38 slower than the masters contest record set by Kevin Regis of Lake Jackson in 1999.



Monster Dash masters winners, from left to right, Steward Crouch; first male masters; Robin Crouch, Edwin Quarles, second male masters; Janice Moody, second female masters; Devin Theriot, third male masters. Not pictured, Susan Alvarado, third female masters. Photo by Bill Shaw.

band, Robin Crouch, 42, finished 29th overall and first in the female masters competition in 29:05.

”I was trying to catch Vera, but she was way too fast,” Crouch said.

Janice Moody, 46, of Freeport finished 31st overall and second in the female masters competition in 29:41. Susan Alvarado, 52, finished 37th overall and third in 31:19.

“I broke 30 minutes, and that was my goal,” Moody said. “I didn’t even see her (Crouch) and thought I was first in the masters competition.”

Alvarado was unavailable for comments after the awards.

“My goal was to break 21 minutes, and I did,” Crouch said. “Edwin was ahead of me for about two and a half miles. I thought he was playing possum, but I ended up catching up, and when I picked it up, he didn’t respond.”

“We stayed together for a while and talked a bit,” Quarles said. “He had me when we crossed the Bottomlands Trail bridge. He had a few strides on me, and I couldn’t get them back.”

Theriot was unavailable for comments following the race awards.

In the middle of the pack of 58 finishers, youth and experience battled for second place in

the overall female competition, with youth winning out by 36 seconds.

Jenny Gustin, 17, a Brazoswood senior, finished 21st overall and second in the female competition in 26:17; Vera McCray, 42, finished 22nd overall and third in 26:53.

”I passed her after two miles, but she was right behind me,” Gustin said. “I was ready to finish.”

”There was no one behind me, and all of a sudden she came up,” McCray said. “I didn’t hear her, and she passed me, but I said to myself, ‘That’s the last girl that’s passing me.’”

Not to be upstaged by her hus-

First-time race director Michelle Parrish, administrative/marketing assistant of the Recreation Center-Lake Jackson, the sponsor of the race, coordinates special events and thought the Monster Dash went “great.