

Hospital run adds new twists, turns

By Bill Shaw

The Facts

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The Brazosport Regional Health System 5K, formerly the Brazosport Memorial Hospital 5K Fun Run/Walk, has a new name, a new route and a new race.

Race officials have redesigned the 5K (3.1-mile) course to use the Dow Centennial Bottomlands Trail and have added a more challenging 10K (6.2 mile) distance to the May 13 event.

"Over the past four years, we've had multiple requests to expand the race to include a 10K," said Owen Huett, race coordinator and Brazosport Regional Health System business systems analyst. "This year we had the support of our administration, who gave us the resources to plan a bigger race, and I finally felt like we had a team that was behind the idea of having a 10K. They were willing to do whatever it took to make it a success, so we went ahead with the planning."

The purpose of the race, Huett said, is "to promote fitness and wellness in the community while also raising money for the Brazosport Health Foundation."

Huett hopes the addition of a 10K and the support of the administration will build a significant community event.

"We averaged about 100 runners and walkers every year for the past five years that I've been involved with this race," said Huett. "Our goal is to have 300 runners next year and to have many more sponsors. We have also talked about making this a half marathon next year, too."

To attract competitive runners in the Gulf Coast Area, the contest offers cash prizes.

"There will be a total of \$600 of prize money given out: \$75 for first, \$50 for second and \$25 for third in both the overall male and female competition in the 5K and 10K runs," Huett said.

The USA Track & Field certified race routes also attract runners. A certified race route guarantees accurate distance and valid times.

Daryl Beatty, Brazosport Area Road Runners Association director of road racing and credentialed USA Track & Field course certifier, redesigned the 5K race route to use the Dow Centennial Bottomlands Trail and designed the 10K course route along the trail as well. The new certified courses will offer runners and walkers more scenic and challenging routes.

Former Brazoswood cross-country runner Jeremy Dye posted the overall male contest record, 15:32, in 1999; Melissa Hurta of Jones Creek set the overall female record, 18:16, in 2000. In the masters (40 and over) category, Scott Boyd set the male masters record, 17:18, in 2000; and Regina Schuetze of Houston set the female masters record, 20:18, in 1998.

Last year's overall male and female 5K winners, Carlo Deason of Houston and Brazoswood High School freshman Lauren Smith, fell short of the record marks with respective times of 17:28 and 19:40. Deason has registered for the contest again this year. Smith had not as of Wednesday.

Huett hopes this year's race turns out as well as the 20th anniversary race in 2004.

"We had a very good turnout with about 150 runners and walkers," Huett said. "We had Stephanie Guerrerro, Miss Texas USA, sign autographs and participate in the race, we had Oldies 107.5 FM here playing music and giving out prizes, and we ended up having beautiful

weather too."

Oldies 107.5 FM is scheduled to be at the race again this year.

The contest also features a non-competitive BASF-sponsored Kids Run for participants 12 and under. All participants receive T-shirts and finisher medals.

Those who already have registered for the race can pick up their race packets in the accounting department at Brazosport Regional Health System any day or on race day beginning at 7 a. m. The kids run begins at 7:45 a.m., and the 5K and 10K begin at 8 a. m.

Registration fees are \$20 for the 5K/10K events and \$1 for the kids run. Online registration is available at signmeupsports.com. For information, call (979) 285-1200.