

# Snake eyes good luck for Parkers

By Bill Shaw

## *The Facts*

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WEST COLUMBIA — A reptile in the middle of the road on the route out to the Varner-Hogg Plantation did not deter Grant Parker from holding onto a decisive lead in the annual San Jacinto Festival 5K Fun Run/Walk, and finishing first in the contest for the second consecutive year.

“There was a snake, probably a water moccasin, about 100 yards before the gate,” said Parker, 24, of West Columbia. “I thought it was dead, and I just ran around it.”

The snake was not dead; it slithered off the road by the time the next runner reached the same point.

Parker, who settled for second Saturday in the Flapjack 5K in Freeport, finished the 3.1-mile distance in the San Jacinto 5K in 18:17, a 5:54 mile average and 31 seconds faster than his Saturday finish. However, he was 58 seconds off his winning time last year, and 1:39 off the contest record set by Sweeny High School runner Randall Krauskopf in 2004.

Parker took the lead at the start of the race and never looked back for challengers.

“I make it a rule never to turn around and look back,” Parker said.

As she did last year in her

return to racing six months after the birth of her second child, Parker’s wife, Wendy, finished first in the overall female competition in 20:15, a 6:32 race pace.

Parker, 28, placed second overall in the female competition in 2005. This year, she improved her time by 27 seconds and finished the 5K distance 17 seconds faster than she did in the Flapjack 5K.

Trailing Grant Parker, Jason Culverhouse of West Columbia and David Alvarado fought fiercely for second place. In the sprint to the finish line, Culverhouse, 32, outdistanced Alvarado, 42, by 14 seconds.

Culverhouse finished in 19:24; Alvarado finished in 19:38.

“At mile two, we were together. We got next to each other, and I said, ‘Come on, brother, help me; I can’t take it in by myself.’ At the two and a half-mile mark, I took the lead,” Culverhouse said.

“He was coming back. I took one last glance back to make sure my kick was going to be enough.

“I faded out after he (Culverhouse) passed me,” Alvarado said. “If I were younger, I would have given him a better run for the money.”

Bob Bowden of Lake Jackson and Edwin Quarles of Angleton ran a close race for first-place honors in the male masters (40 plus) competition.

Bowden, 48, caught Quarles, 40, and running rival David Henry, 17, with a tenth of a mile to go.

Bowden finished in

20:10, a 6:30 race pace, to claim first in the masters competition by one second. Quarles edged Henry by four seconds.

“He talks about beating me, and this is the first time he ever has,” Henry said. “I didn’t have a good day.”

Sue Wheeler, 44, of Lake Jackson finished ninth overall and second in the overall female competition in 21:14.

Wheeler finished third overall in Saturday’s Flapjack 5K in a slower 22:07.

“This is the first time I have run races back to back, and I did pretty well,” Wheeler said. “I could see Wendy all the time in the race, but there was no chance I could catch her. After I passed someone with a ponytail at mile one, I was all by myself.”

Carmel Tosch, 30, former West Columbia cross-country and track coach, was the runner with the ponytail.

Tosch now coaches at Foster High School in Richmond. She finished 12th overall and third in the overall female competition in 23:03.

“I haven’t been running that much, so this was a sort of test to see what I could do,” Tosch said.

Ralph Corry, 57, who ran the Flapjack 5K in 23:19, finished 10th overall and third in the male masters competition in 22:04, 45 seconds faster than his previous day’s time.

It was déjà vu for female masters runners Kelly Colosimo, Marilyn Koons and Susan Lorms:

they placed one, two three in Saturday's Flapjack 5K and one, two three in the San Jacinto 5K.

Colosimo, 40, of Lake Jackson finished 17th overall in 25:07, an 8:06 race pace, and beat her Flapjack time by 1:47

"I feel much better today; no hills," Colosimo said.

"My ultimate goal was to beat my son. I caught him today but not yesterday."

Chris Colosimo, 14, finished 14 seconds behind his mom in 25:21 for second in his age group, just as he did Saturday.

"I told her that she should

enjoy it because she wasn't going to do it again," Chris said.

Koons of Alvin shaved 1:13 off her Flapjack time and finished in 26:58.

"I knew Susan was chasing me, and I thought she was going to catch me," Koons said.

Lorms of Lake Jackson shaved only 40 seconds off her Flapjack time and finished in 28:12.

Eighteen of the 40 runners and walkers in the San Jacinto 5K ran the Flapjack 5K Saturday, and all 18 placed in the top overall categories or won age

group awards in the San Jacinto 5K.

All runners agreed the weather was cooler and less humid Sunday and that running the flatter San Jacinto race route was much easier. Chevron Phillips and ConocoPhillips sponsor the San Jacinto 5K, which features one of the most rural and peaceful of venues.

"I love this run," said Susan Lorms. "No hills, no bridge, beautiful environment."