

Runners earn victory and cash in race

By Bill Shaw

The Facts

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LAKE JACKSON — Brazoswood freshman Lauren Smith and Houstonian Jose Lara dominated the 22nd annual Brazosport Regional Health System 5K, while Melissa Hurta of Jones Creek and Houstonian "Indian" Perez established benchmark records in the inaugural 10K contest.



David Henry, first open male finisher in the 10K race. Photo by Bill Shaw.

Lara, 30, denied Carlo Deason, 36, his second consecutive 5K (3.1 miles) title by taking the lead at the start and never relinquishing it — and sometimes, in fact, getting directions from Deason.

"He (Deason) was guiding me where to go," Lara said.

"I ran the course before the race, so that's why I could tell Jose where to go," Deason said.

Lara finished in 17:03, a 5:30 average mile pace; Deason finished in 17:15, 12 seconds behind him but better than his 17:28 winning time last year.

Smith, 15, a freshman, finished seventh overall and posted her second consecutive overall female win in the 5K contest in 19:30, a 6:17-mile pace; she finished last year in 19:40. Her closest competition finished almost five minutes behind her.

Smith took the lead at the beginning of the race and tried to keep up with the lead male pack ahead of her.

"There was a boy in front of me running a good pace, and I tried to stay up with him," Smith said.

One of the runners in the male pack Smith chased was classmate Weston Caceres, 16, a junior, who finished third in the overall male competition in 18:20, more than a minute behind Deason.

"I went out with them (Lara and Deason) then slowed down and figured I'd catch up with them at the end," said Caceres. "Someone passed me before two miles and stayed in front of me; in the last 400 meters I sprinted and got him."

Angleton High School senior Krystal Lux, 18, finished 24th overall, and second in the



Melissa Hurta, top female finisher in the 10K. Photo by Bill Shaw.

overall female competition in 25:11.

"I was about 20 yards behind Lauren at the mile," said Lux, "but she was running fast, and I just tried to hold on to second."

Finishing 43rd overall, Lauren Bowles, 33, placed third in the overall female competition in 32:16. Bowles finished her first 5K after a seven-year layoff.

"I'm just getting back into running. I have a six-year-old, a three-year-old and a four-month-year old," said Bowles. "I did pretty well. It encourages me to do some more running and more races."

The top male and female finishers received, respectively \$75, \$50 and \$25. However, Smith and Caceres are restricted from receiving prize money because of the University Interscholastic League rules, and Lux, under college eligibility rules, cannot receive cash awards. Caceres and Smith donated their cash to the Brazoswood cross-country team;

Lux donated her cash to the Mount Zion Church in East Columbia.

In the 5K male masters (40-plus) competition, Phillip Athey finished first in 20:10, Edwin Quarles finished second in 20:54 and Stewart Crouch finished third in 21:02 for the men. In the female masters competition, Stephanie Ayala finished first in 32:43, Tonya Ilseng finished second in 34:00 and Janett Hernandez finished third in 34:33.

In the inaugural 10K (6.1 miles) competition, "Indian" Perez and Melissa Hurta finished first and second overall and blew away the competition: Perez finished in 35:46, a 5:46 race pace, and Hurta finished in 41:55, a 6:46 pace. Perez finished 7:56 ahead of the second-place overall male finisher David Henry, 18, of Angleton, who finished in 43:42, a 7:00 race pace. Hurta finished 11:33 ahead of Jones Creek neighbor and second-place overall female Karin Slough, 35, who finished in 53:28.

"Nobody was even close," said Perez.

"I went out in third behind David Henry and passed him at about mile three and ran alone the rest of the race," said Hurta. "I was a little bit lonely, but it was fun. Miles four and five were against the wind, and I could feel it."

Since Perez did not declare he wanted to be in the "open" competition, a race requirement, he placed first in the male masters competition. As a result, David Henry, an "open" runner, earned the \$75 prize money. Hurta, also a masters runner, declared "open" competition and collected the \$75 cash.

Slough, who finished seventh overall, earned \$50.

Abby Artley finished 13th overall, and third in the open female competition in 55:57, to earn \$25.



"Indian" Perez, top male masters finisher in the 10K contest. Photo by Bill Shaw.

Henry will not compete in college, so collected the cash.

Henry made no attempt to run with Perez.

"I never saw him because he was so far ahead," said Henry. "When we came off the Bottomlands Trail, Melissa was ahead of me and widened the gap; I could see her, but I couldn't catch her."

Henry worried more about masters runner Bob Bowden dogging his heels.

"He was behind me pretty much the whole way, but he was unable to catch me," Henry said.

Bowden finished fourth overall and second in the masters competition in 44:34. Masters runner Ed Madenjian finished fourth overall and third in the male masters competition in 49:28.

Celebrating his sixth wedding anniversary and running his first 10K race, Gabriel Villanueva, 35, of Clute finished the distance in 54:30 to earn second place in the male open competition and \$50. He had to beat Richard Romero, 38, of Lake Jackson to earn his money.

"We stayed together pacing off each other," said Villanueva.

"He took the lead to stay at around the five-mile marker and kept it," said Romero. "I had hopes, but my hopes were dashed. He was relentless."

In the female masters competition, Kelly Colosimo, 40, of Lake Jackson finished first for the third contest in a row in 54:46, an 8:49 pace. Colosimo won the masters titles in the April 22 Flapjack 5K and the April 23 San Jacinto Festival 5K.

Susan Lorms, 59, of Lake Jackson finished second in the masters competition in 59:06, and Janice Moody, 45, of Freeport finished third in 60:46.

"The race went well. I was a little worried about the course but it was marked, and I didn't hear any complaints," said Owen Huett, race director and Brazosport Regional Health System business systems analyst. "It was a little windy, but the weather was beautiful."