

RUNNING SHORTS

Plenty of great local races this fall

By Ken Johnson

If you want to participate in a race and do not want to drive very far, you are in luck. Huntsville and nearby cities have plenty of races this fall.

Participation in races is an important part of the sport, whether you need and desire the competition or you just want to finish as a personal goal. Besides, races are fun and you get to meet a lot of other people with similar fitness goals as yourself.

Huntsville's big race is this Saturday, October 11. Over 400 runners are expected for the 30th Annual Huntsville Half Marathon and 5K Run/Walk. The half marathon is 13.1 miles and the 5K is 3.1 miles. Both races start and finish at the Health & Kinesiology Center on the Sam Houston State University campus. There is still time to register. Entry forms are available at Wiesner-Huntsville, Nautilus, Iron Works and at the Chamber of Commerce. A printable entry form and online registration is available on the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us>. Awards will be given by age group in both races and all half marathon finishers will earn a finishers medal.

Next is the Raven Run on Saturday, October 18. This includes a 1-Mile Walk at 7:30 a.m. and a 5K run at 8 a.m. This is an annual event of Recreation Sports at Sam Houston State University. It is open to SHSU students, faculty and staff and alumni. Pick up a registration form at the Health & Kinesiology Center.

The following Saturday, October 25, is the Shiitake Mushroom Festival 5K in Madisonville. The race starts at 8:30 a.m. After the race, stay for the festival in downtown Madisonville.

For runners who want longer distances, there is the Rocky Raccoon Trail Run at the Huntsville State Park on Saturday, November 8. There are two options, a 25K (15.5 miles) or a 50K (31 miles). Several hundred runners are expected for this annual event.

Next is the Kats for the Cause 5K and 1-Mile Family Fun Run, to be held on the SHSU campus on Saturday, November 15. Both races start in the Bowers Stadium parking lot at 8 a.m.

A great Thanksgiving Day race is the Run Thru the Woods 5-miler in The Woodlands on November 27.

Follow that up with the Leftover Turkey 10K (6.2 miles) and 5K (3.1 miles) in Huntsville on Saturday, November 29. Both races start at 9 a.m. at the southwest corner of the West Hill Mall parking lot. This is an annual event of the Seven Hills Running Club.

The Sunmart Texas Trail Endurance Run will be held at the Huntsville State Park the following Saturday, December 6. This includes a 50K (31 miles) and a 50-mile race. Over 1,000 runners from all over the United States and many foreign countries are expected to participate in this race. It is the largest race in the United States over a marathon (26.2 miles) in distance.

There is a link to all these races, and more, on the Seven Hills Running Club web site, <http://www.7hills.us>. Click on Race Schedule.