

## RUNNING SHORTS

### **Virtual races are all about the bling**

By Ken Johnson

If you search online for a race, you are likely to find a few “virtual races.” Virtual races have become popular for some runners in the past several years.

Here’s how they work. You pay your entry fee online, run the distance somewhere on your own and then receive a finisher medal (the “bling”) and maybe a race T-shirt in the mail.

Organizations may establish virtual races to raise money for a charity and there are even companies that just sell finisher medals for any distance you want to run.

For the organization putting on a virtual race, there is no need for a course, timing, refreshments, road guards, liability and all the other work involved in a real road race. The organization just collects the entry fees, pays for the medals and race T-shirts and shipping, and keeps the profit for the charity.

Runners get to run the distance at their convenience and receive their medal and T-shirt in the mail.

If the bling and race T-shirts are important to a runner, virtual races are good for both the runner and the organization raising money for a charity or the company simply selling medals..

However, most runners participate in races for the competition and social interaction with other runners and the bling is secondary.

Twenty years ago, about the only races awarding finisher medals were marathons (26.2 miles) and even then, they were rather small. Now, many shorter races are giving finisher medals. And, the medals keep getting larger. The Texas Marathon finisher medal is probably the largest at 3.3 pounds. The Little Rock Marathon medal is not far behind.

Regardless of your motivation to race, the important thing is to run and stay healthy.

#### **Recent race results:**

##### **Sunday Night 5K, The Woodlands, Apr. 5**

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| Donna Fabian, 40 | 24:36 |
| Leah Koester, 48 | 27:59 |
| Ken Johnson, 73  | 36:53 |

##### **Dogwood 5K, Woodville, Apr. 4**

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Ken Johnson, 73 | 36:02 |
|-----------------|-------|

##### **Hell’s Heels 25K (15.5-miles) Trail Run, Smithville, Apr. 4**

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Cheri Ryba, 33 | 2:48:45 |
|----------------|---------|

##### **April 4 - Autism 5K, Silsbee**

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Steve Allen, 42 | 22:06 |
|-----------------|-------|

**Mesina Hof Half Marathon, Bryan, Mar. 29**

Terrie Grivich, 65 2:51:43

**Texas 10 Series Boerne, Mar. 29**

**10-Mile**

Dan Byrne, 56 1:05:10

Jose Torres, 22 1:08:39

Steve Bickford, 54 1:19:02

Steve Allen, 42 1:19:15

Ray Sarno, 67 1:49:06

Ken Johnson, 73 2:11:32

**5-Mile**

Donna Fabian, 40 38:18

Cathy Bickford, 53 58:41

Haley Torres, 19 1:01:10

**Wipeout Run, 5K, Untimed, Baytown, Mar. 28**

Kelly Bielamowicz, 40

**Running of the Bears 5-Miler, Montgomery, Mar. 28**

Ken Johnson, 73 59:41

**Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon, Dallas, Mar. 22**

Tiffany Zeitouni, 33 2:18:37

Ashley Bible, 24 2:36:01

**Run the Trails, 3.5 Miles, Untimed, Huntsville State Park, Mar. 22**

Steve Allen, 42

Brian Backhaus, 31

Tony Cao, 30

Anitra Edney, 39

Cade Edney, 13

Calloway Edney, 8

Hutton Edney, 10

Kevin Edney, 39

Toben Edney, 7

Stacey Feser, 31

Dana Formon, 26

Danny Freeman, 59

Jacob Gautreaux, 42

Darren Grant, 50

Marsie Grant, 52

J. C. Guzman, 43

Clayton Heald, 44

Matthew Heald, 9

Esther Herklotz, 52

Erin Herrin, 27  
Jordan Herrin, 27  
Andie Ho, 33  
Trina Hodge, 46  
Shawnaka Holland, 35  
Becca Houts  
Ambria Hutton, 32  
Ken Johnson, 73  
Marilynn Johnson, 69  
Shawn Lane, 44  
Gabrielle Legerski, 10  
Kirstie Legerski, 44  
Sophia Legerski, 14  
Lois Livingston, 60  
Monica Lopez, 32  
Andrew Maly, 31  
Michelle Martnet, 33  
Lara McCain, 30  
Stacey O'Bannon, 26  
April Russell, 38  
Diana Sarno, 64  
Ray Sarno, 67  
Dana Schaefer, 33  
Jody Slaughter, 51  
Simon Slaughter, 9  
James Spencer, 34  
Jordyn Spencer, 2  
Kerry Spencer, 34  
Rene' Talley, 41  
Farrah Trevino, 33  
Kim VanWagner, 42  
Jason Wallace, 40

**Bearathon Half Marathon, Waco, Mar. 21**

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| Tyler Livezey     | 2:13:06 |
| Jim Weber, 53     | 2:16:44 |
| Myla Weber, 51    | 2:31:15 |
| Virginia Matthews | 2:38:32 |
| Cayla Weber, 21   | 2:44:40 |
| Ken Johnson, 73   | 2:56:08 |

**5K**

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| Courtney Weber, 25 | 29:54   |
| Joy Mejia, 14      | 43:48   |
| Carla Weber, 18    | 1:04:21 |

**Run Your Bass Off 5K, Orange, Mar. 21**

Steve Allen, 42      21:23  
Donna Fabian, 40    22:13

**Warrior Dash, 3.7 Miles, Untimed, Smithville, Mar. 21**

Kelly Bielamowicz, 40

**Bayou City Classic 10K, Houston, Mar. 14**

Dan Byrne, 56      39:29

**Texas Independence 5K, San Jacinto, Mar. 14**

Jose Torres, 22      18:16

Charles Frazier, 81   46:26

**Run the Woodlands 5K, The Woodlands, Mar. 14**

Donna Fabian, 40    23:23

J. C. Guzman, 43    32:31

**Cleft Smiles 5K, The Woodlands, Mar. 7**

Dan Byrne, 56      18:48

**Upcoming races in Huntsville:**

April 18 – Hog’s Hunt 50K, 25K, 10K Trail Run, Huntsville State Park

April 18 – Spring Fling 5K, 1-Mile, Elkins Lake Sub-division

May 2 – Five-0 Color Run, 5K, 1-Mile, Kate Barr Ross Park

May 9 – Run Forest Run, 5K, 1-Mile, Forest Glen Camp

May 25 – Memorial Day 5K, 1-Mile, Timberwilde Sub-division

For more information about these races and others in the area, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.