

RUNNING SHORTS

The agony and ecstasy of winter running

By Darren Grant



Kim Johnson was one of the six local residents in The Woodlands Marathon on March 3.

The cold that winter brings is perfect for long races—half marathons, marathons, and more. Local runners ran many of these this winter. Locally, the two most prominent were the Rocky Raccoon, in early February, which featured 100 mile, 50 mile, and 50 km distances, and The Woodlands Marathon, in early March.

Races of this length are a roll of the dice. There is no guarantee you’ll finish such a long race, but what a high you get if you do!

For teacher Kim Johnson, things went just as she hoped. Johnson was one of six local residents to run The Woodlands Marathon. They were joined by another twenty residents in the Half Marathon and Marathon Relay.

Johnson finished in 4:43:39, and said it was a great experience. “The supportive crowd and flat, single-loop course were advantages in completing my 26.2-mile milestone. Running this distance had been a dream for years, but after running a few difficult halves, I couldn’t wrap my mind around how I could double that distance.

“I finally just decided to sign up, knowing I’d never get serious about training unless I committed to the race. I’m so glad I did!”

Account manager Gary Kroll had a different experience when trying to complete the 100 mile Rocky Raccoon.

He told me, “My goal was to average about 7 hours per 25-mile loop, and get this thing done in about 28 hours.” He was ahead of schedule after his first two loops, when his “pacer” joined him to help out. But things no longer went as planned.

“The course was getting sloppy with all the foot traffic, and it started to take a toll on my body. Around mile 60, I could not even hold a walk pace with my pacer. I started to fall apart, and sat down and rested several times.

“At mile 70 my pacer ran out of gas himself, and then I was on my own. Those last five miles were torture, but I was determined to finish the loop. With a severely swollen left foot, I limped slowly through the forest back to the starting line.”

Kroll did finish that third loop, but did not make the time cutoff to start the fourth. So, 26 hours, 1 minute, and 41 seconds into the race, he became its last Did Not Finish.

Still, Kroll has persistence. This was his third crack at 100 miles, and his most successful yet. He says, “I can’t wait till next year to give it another go.”

(Ken Johnson compiles the “Recent Race Results” section of this column. Please send your race results to him at 1941runner@sbcglobal.net.)

Recent race results:

Run the Trails, 3 Miles, Non-competitive, Huntsville State Park, Mar. 18

Finishers

Chelsea Baker, 27

Danny Freeman, 62

Donna Freeman, 43

Brady Garner, 9

Emily Garner, 37

Jacob Gautreaux, 45

Kim Heimbecker, 56

Trina Hodge, 49

Kenny Johnson, 45

Marilynn Johnson, 72

David Keithley, 36

Johanna Keithley, 17

Velvia Keithley, 44

Gabrielle Legerski, 13

Kirstie Legerski, 47

Monica Lopez, 35

Tyler Mahler, 18

Christina Molina, 42

Jose Moreno, 56

Don Ortloff, 72

Jan Parks, 61

Sammy Skaggs, 38

Lena Slaughter, 46

Cesar Trevino, 39

Ethan Trevino, 9

Farrah Trevino, 36

Kylie Trevino, 7

Laura Trevino, 39

Nathan Winkelman, 35

Lucky Trail Half Marathon (13.1 miles), Seabrook, Mar. 17

Ken Johnson, 76 3:26:25

Bayou City Classic 10K (6.2 miles), Houston, Mar. 17

Dan Byrne, 59 40:24

Lucky Charm 5K, Katy, Mar. 17

Naomi Broussard, 21 32:49

Zooma Half Marathon, Lost Pine, TX, Mar. 10

Elizabeth Harrell, 38 2:28:23

Run the Woodlands 5K, Mar. 10

Ken Johnson, 76 41:40

Rock 'n' Roll 10K, New Orleans, Mar. 4

Mark Robinson, 71 1:28:17

The Woodlands Marathon (26.2 miles), Mar. 3

Derek Davis, 29 3:55:57

Julie Davis, 38 3:55:58

Jose Moreno, 56 4:07:00

Kim Johnson, 44 4:43:39

Nathan Sheppard, 41 5:50:45

Sherry Sheppard, 37 5:50:49

Half Marathon

Dan Byrne, 59 1:25:51

Venny Alub, 30 1:37:11

Melvin Neely, 61 1:49:35

Richard Singletary, 61 1:50:24

Daniel Breitzke, 41 1:55:40

Chris deMilliano, 41 2:07:55

Emily deMilliano, 38 2:07:55

Giovanni Valdivia, 32 2:14:14

Karly Culver, 22 2:18:50

Katrina Culver, 25 2:18:50

Kimber Juenke, 50 2:52:04

Denise Godkin, 41 2:55:49

Willard Oliver, 50 3:49:15

Judy Oliver, 49 3:49:18

Marathon 4-Person RelayEsteban Pecina, Angelina Santos,
Kenneth Wood & Timothy Davis 3:33:46Joshua Shadwick, Matthias
Woeckener, Nicole Niebuhr
& Eric Cooke 4:16:37**5K**

Shannon Ramsey, 48 28:30

David Keithley, 36 28:43

Sylvia Culver, 57 36:11

Cindy Pate, 57 39:56

Irvin Harvey, 72

53:31

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

April 21 – Spring Fling 5K & 1-Mile, Elkins Lake

April 29 – Gator Bait Trail Run, 13.1 Miles, 15K, 5K, Huntsville State Park

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