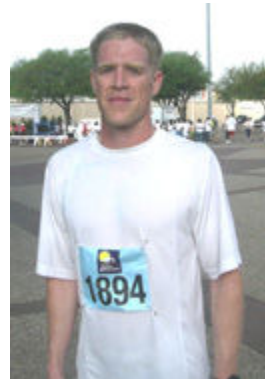


Training run for Boston

Boston was on the mind of another winner Saturday (April 2) at the Big D event in Dallas. Men's half-marathon winner Keith Pierce was logging his last hard run before the April 17 Boston Marathon. He passed his training run easily and his 1-hour, 22-minute, 24-second (see www.runontexas.com for all results) effort whipped the half marathon field. Later, Andrew Smith, 19, qualified for Boston in his first marathon attempt by winning the Big D.



Pierce, who grew up in Childress and ran for Rice, said he just tried to stay relaxed over what he considered a fast course.

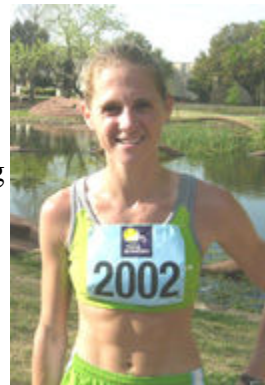
“There were a couple of pretty good size hills about 9 miles, but it was a good course to run fast,” Pierce, 25, said. “I would have liked for it to have cooler.” A lot of runners could say amen to that as the temperature was in the low 70s at race time, and moved into the 80s before many in the half and marathon fields finished.

It was cooler climes that attracted the Krum teacher and coach to go to the Steamtown Marathon in Scranton, Pa., in October for his attempt to qualify for Boston. He and Krum coaching buddy Charles Willison, who also ran the Big D half, qualified at Scranton.

Long run with company

Emily Field's training schedule called for a long run, so she chose to do it at the Big D half marathon. “I decided I need to be with some people,” she said. It was her first try at the 13.1-mile distance, and, as the men's marathon winner, the venture proved quite promising. Especially for someone who says she's a “miler.”

Field won the half marathon women's title with a 1:26:17 clocking (see www.runontexas.com for all results). “I was just going to hook on with someone and keep a good pace, and see how I felt. And that's what I did.” (Note: The first results posted had Stephanie Hill winning the half. I originally had Field winning, then changed it to Hill. This is the corrected version of the corrected version. Whew!)



Her time could have been faster if she had not taken a few wrong turns. Field said she ran off course a few times, but was quickly directed the correct direction.

“It's a great course, but maybe they need more cones,” she said of the orange pylons that help direct the runners.

“However, this is a common occurrence for me. So, it might just be me and not the race,” she added with a laugh.

Field is a former Highland Park High School runner who ran for the University of Texas before leaving and continuing her education at SMU.

“I needed a break,” she said of her decision to leave Texas. Field said she was spurred to the finish when, with a tenth of a mile, she heard someone yelling, “Go, Cathy.” She didn’t look back to see how close the woman was, but she put her miler sprint into high gear and that was about the same as the cartoon roadrunner beep-beeping.

McKissick a little tired!

Frances McKissick is a virtual running machine. She shows up at race-after-race, often back-to-back. But sometimes the 43-year-old gets a little tired. If we could all be so tired.

McKissick finished the Big D half marathon in about 1:35:13 (see results at www.runontexas.com) to finish as second in the masters division, but said her legs felt a little tired. She said it might be because she ran a 5-mile race the day before. Or it could also be attributed to her training during the week that had her engaging in speed work and logging runs of 6 and 10 miles. Not that the training was heavy, but it came after she won a half-marathon title the weekend before Big D at the Hogey Half Marathon and Marathon in Fayetteville, Ark.



She said the course was super hilly, as one might expect in the Ozarks. Even though McKissick was in treading in territory that would seem to favor the locals, she passed several Arkansas women on the last hill to take first place with a 1:34.5. But it was that effort over the hills that might have “slowed” her at Big D.