

Father-son moment at Big D Marathon

DALLAS -- For 19-year-old Andrew Smith, it was a first-time attempt at a marathon. The Californian, who grew up in Arcadia, wanted to run a good enough time to qualify for the Boston Marathon so he could possibly run with his dad, 48-year-old Kevin, next year.



He picked the Big D-Texas Marathon because it is relatively close to Garden Valley, where is attending a Christian ministry school for a year. Flying in from Arcadia to cheer him on were his dad, his mom, Maritza, two brothers and a sister. It turns out that Smith made a good selection despite the sweltering heat and humidity that greeted the some 2,300 who were running the marathon, half-marathon and 5K.

Not only did Smith beat the needed 3-hour, 10-minute qualifying time for Boston, he had the effort gift-wrapped by beating everyone to the finish line to win in 2:49:18 (Visit www.runontexas.com for full results). But the teen wasn't quite ready to start celebrating when he hit the finish line. Instead, the flushed Smith sagged to his knees, was helped to his feet by family members and still looked a little dazed a few minutes later.

He shook his head and said, "No, no, no," he never expected to win.

"It was my first marathon. I had no clue what I was doing. And I'm hurting," he said as he hung on to his dad (both pictured at left). He said his goals were to qualify for Boston and dip under three hours.

Though the heat and humidity tried to derail his efforts, Smith said he had no doubt he could finish.

"God was with me all the way. He gave me the strength," to finish, he said.

His mom said Andrew was a top cross-country runner in high school who helped his team to the state championship.

“He didn't expect to win, but he expected to do well,” she said. “His dad has run multiple marathons and qualified for Boston this year at Chicago. Kevin e-mailed training instructions to Andrew to help him prepare for the marathon.

“We wanted to run together next year, but I might write a letter to Boston to see if he can get in this year even though it's late,” Kevin said.

From looking at Andrew's spent face, though, he might want to wait a little longer than April 17 to try his next 26.2-miler.

Laura Eakin won the women's division with a 3:31:40.

Event planner/director Lewis George said about 2,300 had registered, and said a few glitches cropped up over the long morning. He said a few marathoners got off course after they started early. George said they apparently forgot about Daylight Savings that started the morning of the race, and arrived ready to run. But they were an hour early. So, they took off apparently before the course was fully set up. Then a few runners reportedly turned at wrong places in the seemingly well-defined 5K race.