

Going from Heavy Metal to heavy sweating

By Fiona Green



Being in good physical condition possibly helped Angela Eusery survive life-threatening blood clots on her lungs. Angela won the Hottest Half women's 40-45 age division. small details.

At first the idea of running a Half marathon in Texas in August sounded crazy. It's one thing to sweat through a 5K but running a Half seemed almost dangerous -- an event for those who like to live life on the edge -- and it was certainly not for me. However, a twist of fate that involved my husband buying tickets for a Heavy Metal show on Friday night meant that an early morning Saturday race was out of the question.

Reluctant to miss a weekend race, I registered for the Hottest Half at White Rock Lake on Aug. 24, hoping that I hadn't bitten off more than I could chew. As this was an inaugural event, I hoped that the race organizers had taken care of all the

I needn't have worried. Everything was perfect. With more than 1,000 participants for both the Half and the 10K, it appeared that many people enjoyed living life on the edge. Both the 10K and Half started at 7 a.m. (a great idea considering it was August) with runners staying together until around the 3-mile mark.

Water and Gatorade stops were plentiful throughout the race as were eager and helpful volunteers. The course was interesting and well marked, leaving runners with little chance of getting lost. After their hard efforts, all finishers received an attractive souvenir medal. Overall and Masters winners received a plaque, while age-group winners were presented with a sports mug.

Winner of the women's 40-45 age group in the Hottest Half was Angela Eusery of Grand Prairie. A regular participant in DFW races, Angela was also the overall female winner of a 5K organized by American Airlines one day earlier. The 40-year-old massage therapist has enjoyed running since high school, and now races all distances from 5K to the marathon.

Two years ago, the fact that she is a runner may have saved her life. After experiencing shortness of breath for several days, she decided to seek a medical opinion. The diagnosis shocked her -- pulmonary embolism, caused by several life threatening blood clots that had formed on her lungs. Doctors told her that she might have suffered a stroke or worse had she not been in such great physical shape.

She immediately began treatment and counts her blessings that she was able to make a full recovery. Her current training involves 50-mile weeks in preparation for the New York city marathon in November. Apart from her great smile, one of the most remarkable things about Angela is her flexibility. A former gymnast, she has maintained this over the years by continually stretching. It was her incredible flexibility that earned her a phone call from producers of the reality television show, "Survivor."

Although she didn't make the final cut to appear on the show, her video, in which she effortlessly contorted her body into all sorts of positions, made an impression.