

Arnier Jr. among best at age 16

By Fiona Green



While most of the top finishers in the Mayfest 10K (2008) were seasoned athletes with more than a few miles on their shoes, one runner stood out. Recording the sixth fastest time with a PR of 33:07 was 16-year-old Jeff Arnier Jr.

Considering the fact that he is a teenager, Jeff is charming. Despite his obvious talent, he is down to earth, polite and eager to share tales of his running experiences.

Before the race, he was relaxed and confident, hoping to "hang with the lead runners" for as long as he could -- pretty brave for a kid who specializes in running the mile and 2-mile on his Arlington Lamar track team. He enjoys the challenge of the longer races, citing the 15K and the half marathon as his favorite distances and casually mentioning that he ran a 1:22 at the White Rock Half at the age of 12.

Arnier trains with the Metroplex Striders, where he is coached by Terry Jessup, a well-known tutor for several area runners and for whom Jeff has great admiration.

As for future plans, Jeff has not decided whether he will continue running in college. Already proficient in French, he is interested in traveling and is contemplating applying to Oxford University to study languages. Having already visited London a couple of times, he feels drawn to the city and would welcome the opportunity to experience life there.

For now, however, Jeff was looking forward to his next race - a 3000-meter steeplechase later that evening at UTA.