

## Small turnout didn't detract from nice event

Race organizer Steve Looney was hoping for a better turnout for the inaugural Fort Worth Marathon, but realized it probably wouldn't happen considering the late announcement of the race being rescheduled and the number of other options for runners over the Nov. 10-11 weekend.



Marathon winner Gary Anderson.

Yet, for the 20 who did register for the marathon and half marathon, there was no lack of food and support along the course on the Trinity Park Trails for the out-and-back tests on a warm and breezy morning. And Looney had some nice perks for the participants, who started and finished inside LaGrave Field. Each participant received a brick with the name and logo of the race engraved on it and a souvenir replica of the baseball field. The winners of both events also received handy running-gear bags.

The first winners of the marathon were Gary Anderson of Benbrook, who ran a 3:03:06, and Siri Terjesen, who teaches at TCU and who won the 2007 Cowtown Marathon. She ran a 3:45:40 after pacing one of her TCU students for the first six miles. Half marathon winners were TCU standout runner Eliud Njubi in 18:18 and the women's winner was one of his students in the Run Like A Cheetah program, Christel Chase. She finished in 1:39:39.



Siri Terjesen won the women's marathon title.

The race originally was scheduled to start and finish at Botanic Garden, but the event went into limbo when a major sponsor dropped out, Looney said. Then when another stepped up, the race was on again, but Looney had less than two weeks to get the word out.

So, what was the attraction for the ones who did register?

Anderson, who didn't begin running until about five years ago, said, "The last year or so, I've been doing about a marathon a month. I'm targeting White Rock (Dec. 9), so I'm looking at it as a good, hard training run. And the goal of this marathon is to raise awareness of childhood obesity, get into the schools and work with kids. That's Steve's goal, and I'm all for that. I like to help out wherever I can....And, I would have done 22 or 23 today anyway, so now I can run with some of my friends and have a little fun doing it."

One of Gary's friends is Todd Reynolds, who finished second just two weeks after he won the Miracle Match Marathon in Waco. "I guess the main reason was to support local running,...trying to keep the local events going," Todd said. Todd said during marathon season that it's not unusual for him to run marathons two to three weeks apart.

He said he's "lucky" to be able to bounce back quickly.

Njubi said his first attempt at a half marathon was a "wonderful experience. The breeze was tough. It slowed my time down."

The runners were going against a headwind the first half of the race, but the breeze helped on the way home. Njubi said he averaged about 5:40-5:45 the last three miles.

Njubi said a friend told him if he could maintain his pace at 6-minute a mile, he could finish in 1:16 or faster. But Njubi, who said he's coming back from an injury, said the wind was too stiff to realize that goal.

He's also the main coach for the Run Like A Cheetah program, and had 26 who started the marathon and half marathon program in February. He said 90 percent of those who finished the program improved their times.

Njubi said he came from Kenya to the U.S. in 1998 and went to Dodge City Community College, where he was a 12-time national champion in indoor and cross country competition. At TCU, he was a five-time All-American. He ran a 3:56 mile at the Penn Relays in 2001, and says "I'm a miler."

Chase, who completed the Cheetah program, had praise for the training. "It was really good. A great level of coaching."

The 35-year-old mother of three said she has been running seriously since about 2004. She said having a competitive husband and wanting to do something with him spurred her into the sport.

Chase said she has run eight half marathons and has a 1:36 PR at Cowtown. She said it would have helped Sunday to have had someone to push her to the finish, but "It was good. It's great to support Steve (and his program). I'd do anything to help them out. My kids go to a charter school in the Fort Worth ISD and they have no running program, and I think running is such a great motivator for kids....I encourage my kids to run."

She qualified for the Boston Marathon in her first stab at the 26.2-mile event at White Rock in 2005. She said if she qualified for Boston, it would be the end of her marathon career. She ran a 3:36 at White Rock and finished Boston in 3:45.

Anderson also won \$1,000 in a drawing that included the marathon entrants. Randy Williams, dad of half-marathon runner-up Brent Williams, won \$250 in the half-marathon drawing. Brent, a freshman at Arlington Lamar, ran a 1:37:09. In the best water stop contest, the one at the six-mile mark manned by Elite Running Club won \$250.

Looney said his objective is to incorporate his program into the schools to help promote healthy lifestyles and ward off childhood obesity. He's using the Fort Worth Marathon to help support the program, and promises it will be bigger and better next year.