

## Cowtown Revisited

### Elite runners come up short in bid to set Cowtown 10K records in 1996

Gwyn Coogan, a 1992 Olympian who had just competed in the Olympic marathon trials two weeks before Cowtown, and Russian Dmitri Kapitonov, who had won the Austin Marathon the week before in a course-record time, were in Fort Worth to challenge the Cowtown's 10K course records and pocket the \$1,000 Lite Challenge bonuses. This was when Cowtown had only a 10K and marathon and would invited a few elite runners to compete. Neither was able to crack the exiting records, but both came agonizingly close.

Coogan, who was trying to beat the female's record of 33:14 set the year before by Jody Hawkins, breezed in with a "comfortable" 33:32. Coogan said she was pleased with her effort, which she had described as comfortable, because it showed she had recuperated from the trials. After finishing fourth in the marathon trials to miss qualifying for the Games in Atlanta, Coogan said she was now focusing on trying to qualify in the 10K.

Kapitonov ran a 29:35, and missed the course record of 29:17 set by Stann Vernon in 1981. However, he was somewhat peeved because he heard only one mile split yelled out and never saw one of the mile markers. "He didn't know how he was standing. He didn't know his pace," said fellow Russian Serei Karaseyv, who was acting as an interpreter. Kapitonov said the only mile split he heard was at the 5-mile mark. "He's angry," said Karaseyv, who coached the runner while they lived in Austin.

Coogan also said she never heard a mile split called out, but said (with a laugh)if she had, "I might have slowed down. It's nice to know (the splits), but I'm not going to say anything bad. Maybe it helped me not to know."

Ludmila Ilina, another Russian living in Austin, took second in the 10K, nosing out Megan Flowers of Fort Worth by a second with a 34:31. Flowers, a senior at the University of Arkansas at the time, had qualified for the Trials in the 5,000 meters. Paul Stoneham of Fort Worth was the male runner-up with a 30:20, a time that would have won eight other Cowtowns at that time.

In the marathon, Gayle Seefeldt of North Richland Hills, who labeled herself as a 5K runner, won the women's title in 3:03:32. But she knew the distance because she had run the Honolulu Marathon in 1993 and had competed in the Dallas White Rock Marathon the previous December. She wasn't planning to run the marathon at Cowtown, but husband Chuck had put together an entry in the team competition, and when three-time Cowtown winner Ricky Cox decided to run the 10K rather than the marathon, Gayle was pressed into duty as the team's third runner.

"First, I wanted to finish. Second, I wanted to break three hours," Seefeldt said after winning. Though she missed her time goal, she more than made up for it by winning. Seefeldt, who said she has been battling injuries the past few years, returned to the local running scene in January at the Lake Benbrook Half and again in February at the Haltom Stampede, winning her 45-49 age division at both events.



Gayle Seefeldt, right, the 1996 Cowtown Marathon women's winner, visits with a fellow competitor after winning her age division at the Haltom Stampede.

Mario Pena of Leon, Mexico, won the men's title in 2:20:55. Pena almost didn't make it to the starting line after obtaining a visa on short notice and then missing his scheduled flight because Air Mexico lost his ticket in their computer program. He caught a later flight and arrived at 9:30 the night before the race. He hadn't eaten all day, so he ate a plate of spaghetti and hit the sack about midnight.

Runner-up Brad Hawthorne, an Olympic Trials qualifier in 1984, '88 and '92, also had his travel problems. He also arrived the night before the race from Tulsa, Okla. He took his time leaving the Comfort Inn the next morning, figuring he'd had plenty of time. "But I ran into a traffic jam getting here. Almost missed it," he said. He finished in 2:22:03.

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### **Treacy couldn't beat long-standing men's 10K record, but Smith lowered her own 10K women's mark**

If John Treacy had had someone to push him in 1993, the four-time Irish Olympian possibly would have beaten the long-standing Cowtown men's 10K course record. However, Treacy broke away from the field and ran alone to finish in 29:28, 11 seconds off the men's record of 29:17 set in 1981 by Stann Vernon. "It was very hard to run alone and fast," he said.

Francie Larrieu Smith of Dallas, an Olympian who was accustomed to setting records, lowered her own women's 10K course record by 36 seconds with a 34:19. Smith has set 36 U.S. records and 12 world records during her illustrious career, which includes being on the U.S. Olympic team five times.

In the marathon, two Metroplex residents won the men's and women's titles, the first time locals had won both since 1983. Joni Dodson of Fort Worth, won the women's title in 2:54:11 and said she was inspired by running in front of the home crowd, which included her mother and sister. She had dedicated the run to her mother, who Dodson said had been her greatest source of inspiration. It wasn't easy, though, as Dodson had to overcome Marjory Stewart of Lubbock in the final half mile. Stewart finished in 2:54:30.

Ernesto Caballero of Dallas won the men's title in 2:34:38, the slowest winning time in 15 years. But he wasn't being pushed as runner-up Mike Cregeen of La Vista, Neb., came in with a 2:36:38. Caballero had some valid reasons for his "slow" time as he had to overcome bronchitis and diarrhea during the 26.2-mile trek.