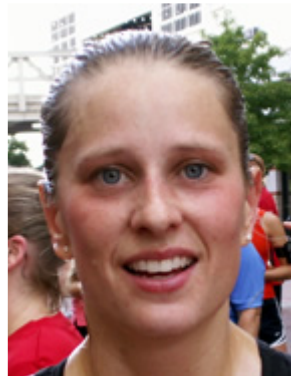


15K state champs decided at FWRC Labor Day Run



Runners are off at the Fort Worth Runners Club's Labor Day 15K, serving as the RRCA State Championship, Monday (Sept. 7) morning at a new venue -- Montgomery Plaza -- and over a new course. A record 1,458 registered for the 15K and 5K, plus there were 300 kids in the 1K. A warm, humid morning greeted the participants, who also were treated to hot dogs, lettuce wraps, drinks, Panera's bagels and other goodies. Plus, sponsor Luke's Locker offered a sidewalk sale of shoes and apparel.



Jared McNeil, a Tarleton State junior who was selected the Lone Star Conference's 2009 Track Athlete of the Year, won the men's 15K to take the RRCA State Championship at the FWRC's Labor Day Run on Monday, Sept. 7. McNeil, who ran for Boswell High School, posted a 51:06 to win by about 3 minutes.

Wendy Ragle is the RRCA women's 15K State Champion after beating the female field at the FWRC Labor Day Run. Ragle ran a 58:06 in her first competitive attempt at the 9.3-mile distance. Ragle is a former Duncanville High athlete.



Men's 5K winner
Craig Ottman ran a
16:33.9.



Caitlin Keen ran
a 19:16.8 to win
the women's 5K.

Jared McNeil, a cross-country runner at Tarleton State and the Lone Star Conference's 2009 Track Athlete of the Year, and Wendy Ragle, racing her first competitive 15K, won the Fort Worth Runners Club's Labor Day 15K on Monday (Sept. 7) morning and also bagged the Road Runners Club of America's (RRCA) State Championship titles.

It was the first time the FWRC had been host to an RRCA state championship and the timing was near perfect. The event, which included a 5K and a free kids run, had been moved to a

new venue from the cramped University Village on University to Montgomery Plaza, off 7th Street, and a Labor Day record of 1,293 registered to try the new courses. Judging from the feedback from several participants, the event is likely to get even bigger next year. There was plenty of room in the spacious parking lots for several vendors, a bounce house, clowns, face painting, food (hot dogs, lettuce wraps and Pantera bagels among other things), drinks and ample space for a sidewalk sale of shoes and apparel by sponsoring Luke's Locker. The refurbished Montgomery Plaza, which once housed Montgomery Ward, is home to retail stores, restaurants and apartments.

Although the temperature was warm (80s and climbing), McNeil, a former Boswell runner, breezed to a 51:06 to win the men's title by more than three minutes. McNeil, a junior, is prepping for the beginning of cross country season that begins next week and was pleased with his time. He runs cross country and the 1,500 and 5,000 distances in track. He was among the many participants who liked the new course that has a challenging small hill down the backstretch of the 9.3-mile run. He took control of the race after three miles and let the lead bike pace him to the finish. Kiplimo Chemimir finished second in 54:57.5, with Ken Hall following in 55:11.9. Hall, 45, of Colleyville, won the masters title. McNeil set school records in the 1,500 (3:48.75) and 5,000 (14:53.96) last season.

Ragle, a former runner at Duncanville High School who attended Memphis State, said this was her first 15K and wasn't sure what might happen in the latter miles of the run. She has posted a 39:08 in a 10K, but was unsure if she could hold her pace Monday for the extra three miles. But it was no problem. After passing the 10K mark in a PR 37:30, she never wavered down the stretch and finished in 58:06.8. Patricia Vargas of Ennis was right behind in 58:46.4.

Other winners included Terry Marcott, a former local competitor who has recently moved back to Flower Mound, who won the Grand Masters title in 1:04:29.1; Paul Johnson of Arlington, who won the Senior Grand Masters in 1:15:38.8; Cora Turner of Alvarado, who won the women's masters title in 1:03:10.8; Kim Andres of Irving, who won the women's Grand Masters in 1:13:44.4; and Joyce Hightower of Haltom City, who won the Senior Grand Masters in 1:40:48.3.

In the men's 5K, Craig Ottman of Keller, went to the front of the pack after the first mile and won in 16:33.9, with Richard Neill finished second in 17:07.8. Neill, 53, won the masters title. Ottman said he's preparing for the San Antonio Rock 'n' Roll on Nov. 15, an event he placed 15th overall in the half marathon last year with a 1:13:22. In the women's 5K, Caitlin Keen, 17, a runner at Nolan Catholic, won in 19:16.8. Christina Bell of Dallas finished second in 20:45.2. Keen was coming off an impressive cross country showing Saturday at Flower Mound Marcus. She ran individually and competed in the 5A division and placed eighth in the two-mile event among 155 participants.