

The Cowtown 2009



Todd Reynolds



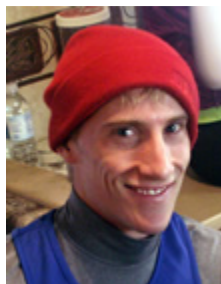
Jeff Arnier Jr.



James Jackson



Aja Clark



Nathan Collier



Chuck Engle

After two days of almost tropical weather, a cold front blew into Fort Worth to greet and chill a huge crowd (a record 17,829 registered) for the Saturday morning (Feb. 28) 31st running of The Cowtown in downtown Fort Worth. Despite temperatures dipping to the low 30s and the wind gusting to at least 30 mph after two days of warmer weather (almost 85 on Thursday), participants flooded the downtown area to compete in one of the multiple events -- ultra, marathon, half marathon, 10K or 5K.

The notable achievement was Krum coach Keith Pierce's third consecutive victory in the marathon. Two other men, Ricky Cox and Wesley Brown, have won three marathon titles, but neither won in three consecutive years.

Pierce took an early lead and was never challenged as he finished in 2:25:13, breaking his own course record set two years ago. There have been faster Cowtowns, but new records began when the course was changed and the start and finish were moved from the Stockyard area to downtown Fort Worth in 2004. Pierce ran a 2:30:23 in 2007 and a 2:34:42 last year when he struggled the last few miles and even had to walk some. But he had no problems this year. He was coming off a 2:23:07 effort on October 12 at the Steamboat Marathon in Scranton, Pa., and was ready to go at Cowtown. He ran with a pack of half marathon runners (they started together) until the course split at about the 8-mile mark and then he was alone until the finish. He said the gusty wind wasn't a problem until heading back into town and into the wind. Pierce said his weekly mileage was reduced somewhat after Steamboat because he was coaching basketball, but "based on my time at Steamboat, I was pretty confident."

Other winners: women's marathon -- Kris Lawson, Parker, Colo., in 3:02:47.

Men's 50K ultra: Todd Reynolds, Benbrook, 3:42:38; Women's 50K ultra -- Ana Martinez, Wylie, 4:28:18.

Men's half: David Boston, Lubbock, 1:11:40; Women's half -- Laurie Shea, Prosper, 1:24:32.

Men's 10K -- Jeffery Arnier Jr., Arlington, 32:51; Women's 10K -- Maria Trejo, Bedford, 39:39.

Adult 5K men -- Nathan Collier, Pottsboro, 16:38. Adult 5K women -- Aja Clark, Ardmore, Okla., 18:37.

Kids 5K male -- John Valentine, Arlington, 17:02, Kids 5K female -- Alexandra Davis, Ardmore, Okla., 18:58.

Kris Lawson of Parker, Colo., won the women's marathon title in 3:02:47. She had run the half last year, but crossed the wrong (10K) finish line. Lawson said she trains in a lot of wind, and travels a lot to Lexington, Ky., where she said the wind blows a lot. Camille Riggins of Grand Prairie kept Lawson in sight, but couldn't gain ground. Even so, she ran her PR in eight marathon tries with a chip time of 3:04.44. "She has a great stride," Riggins said of Lawson. Lawson was visiting a friend in Arlington and wanted to see how she could do in an early season marathon.

Todd Reynolds, 41, won the men's ultra, the second year for the 31-plus miles event. Reynolds, who set his 50K PR in his 10th ultra of 50K or longer, finished second last year in 3:44:24. This year, he breezed to victory as second-place Nicholas Beers of Fort Worth finished well back in 3:51:27. Reynolds said the wind was "brutal" in parts of the course. He ran with a couple of marathon competitors who were on about a 3-hour to 3:03 marathon pace until about mile 15, and "then we kind of did our own thing after that."

"It's pretty cool to kind of hold on (and win)," after a few runners-up finishes. "I think the cool air and dry air kept me going today." He was a little worried about a plantar faciatis problem he experienced when he ran a 2:54:12 at the Chevron Houston Marathon in January. Fortunately, it didn't flair up again and Reynolds, who didn't begin running until he was 30, breezed to victory.

The women's winner, Ana Martinez of Wylie, was surprised when her name was called out at the finish as the first ultra female. Martinez, 32, said she had no idea that she was in front. She also had run the Cowtown's first ultra last year when she ran a 4:41, but finished well back of winner Siri Terjesen, who ran a 3:50:16.

"I decided to train a little harder (for this one) to see how I could do," Martinez said. "I was happy with my time. My husband told me I had to be back at noon to take my son to a soccer game. I made it." Martinez said she was just having fun and called it a "perfect day" except for the cold when they started and the strong wind she battled between miles 24 and 26.

Jeff Arnier Jr., of Arlington won the men's 10K. The 17-year-old from Arlington ran a 32:51 to beat 1992 10K winner James Jackson, who finished in 34:22. Jackson returned to competitive running about a year and a half ago after injuries sidelined him for several years.

"I've always wanted to win," Arnier said. "I've finished in the top 10 two or three times." Arnier said the wind was a factor as it whipped between the downtown buildings.

Jackson said he has been motivated by his 13-year-old son. "I started tagging along with him (on training runs) and noticed my big belly flopping around and that got me motivated (to run more). And then he said he was going to beat me, and that got me more motivated."

Maria Trejo of Bedford won the women's 10K in 39:39 with Cora Turner of Alvarado just behind in a PR time of 39:54. Turner said it was the first time she has dipped below the 40-minute mark. Trejo, who hadn't run Cowtown the previous four years, said the wind bothered her, but she led from the start. She also won the DRC Tal Morrison 15K in Dallas on Jan. 31 with a 1:01:11.

Ultra runner-up was Michelle Smith-Harden, 45, of Norfolk, Va. Smith-Harden is part of the Black Marathon Club and wanted to meet Tony Reed of Dallas, the first black to run a marathon in all seven continents. This was her first ultra, and she was taking off for Waco to run in Sunday's Miracle Match Marathon, the first time she has attempted back-to-back marathons.

In the men's half marathon, Texas Tech runner David Boston, running about eight miles with roommate and teammate Chase Wade of Arlington, won in 1:11:40. They said they figured running the half would be a replacement for their weekly long run. Boston said he was a little surprised by his time, considering the conditions, but the spectator support on the course helped him continue his fast pace. Wade said he dropped back with the next group, and was outkicked near the end by Kiplimo Chemirmir, a Kenyan living in Dallas.

Adult 5K winners were Nathan Collier of Pottsboro in 16:38 and Aja Clark of Ardmore, Okla., in 18:37. Winning the Kids' 5K male division was John Valentine of Arlington in 17:07 and the female

winner was Alexandra Davis of Ardmore, Okla. The 14-year-old beat her hometown friend, 13-year-old Jessica Woods by a second, 19:03 to 19:04. **Notes: Kiplimo Chemirmir** of Dallas and third place finisher in the men's half marathon with a 1:13:42 said he's moving to Austin. Chemirmir had become one of the area's top runners since moving here about a year ago from Kenya....**Riva (Rahl) Graeme** of Dallas, last year's women's marathon winner, was trying to become a four-time winner, but finished third with a 3:12:22. "I tried my best, but just didn't have it," she said after posting a time that was nearly 4 minutes slower than last year....**Chuck Engle** of Dublin, Ohio, said it's sort of disheartening to know that when he lined up for the marathon that he knew he was shooting for second place because he saw that **Keith Pierce**, winner of the previous two Cowtowns, was back shooting for his third in a row. However, Engle gave it his best shot and took second with a 2:35:36, still far behind Pierce. "I was second here in '05 and lost by nine seconds. I've been watching Keith the past couple of years and I knew someone had to come out of the woodworks to take him out. But it's kind of sad to walk into a race and say, "you know what, I'm shooting for second. He's such a great runner and I knew he was in great shape....I stayed with him for about two miles." Engle said he has run about 180 marathons since he started his 26.2-mile treks in 2000. "I love to run," he said, "and God gave me a gift to recover fast." Engle is planning to run the Miracle Match Marathon in Waco on Sunday (which he won). He ran 32 marathons last year and 29 the year before....Among the masters (40+ older) winners was **Fiona Green**, who repeated as champ in the half marathon with a 1:31:51. She was ninth woman overall.



John Valentine, Mason Wrobel
First, second in Kids' 5K



Jessica Woods, Alexandra Davis
In the day's closest race, Davis beat Woods 18:58 to 18:59 for the Kids' 5K women's title. Both are from Ardmore, Okla.



Camille Riggs, Kris Lawson
Lawson won the women's marathon and Riggs finished second.



Ana Martinez, Michele Smith-Harden
Martinez won the women's ultra in her second try. Harden was second in her first ultra. She also wore a red tutu around her running shorts.