

Big D Jam

An accident just west of the Fair Park exit had traffic jammed and backed up as runners were trying to reach the Big D Texas Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K. It was another good reason why runners should arrive early at a race. Or maybe it was just a cruel April Fool's joke.



Januarius Bongkiyung, 35, of Cameroon, Africa, won the Big D Texas Marathon in 2:48:44. He said this was first time to run out of his country. His goal was to qualify for the Boston Marathon, which he did.

Fortunately, the start was delayed for 15 minutes Sunday (April 1) morning at Fair Park to accommodate the late arrivals, and the start line was kept open for at least 40 minutes.

The men's marathon winner, Januarius Bongkiyung shook off Juan Vielma to win in 2:48:44. Bongkiyung is from Cameroon, Africa, and Vielma is a Venezuelan living in Houston. He finished just steps behind in 2:48:48. Vielma showed commendable sportsmanship near the end of the race when he saw Bongkiyung go off course. He said he yelled at Bongkiyung, then slowed down to allow the African to pass him. Vielma said Bongkiyung had maintained a lead throughout the race and he didn't want to take advantage of the mistake.

However, Vielma said he tried hard over the last miles to catch Bongiyung, but just couldn't overtake him. Women's winner, Lisa Cron of Irving, was running her first marathon and finished in 2:55:12. And as most marathons, she learned a lesson. "I started out too fast," she said, noting the difficulty of the last part of the 26.2-mile trek.

One note about the women's 5K. Jody Hawkins of Frisco, a top masters runner, was the first runner across the line, finishing in 17:51. Molly Tucker, 10-year-old who has been getting a lot of attention because of her running feats, finished in 18:45, almost matching her 18:43 best at Run To Joe's in Fort Worth the week before. And, as after Joe's, she had a soccer game to play in that day.

The 5K men's winner was Todd Dye of Fairborn, Ohio, with an 18:45; the half marathon winners were in the men's division Sergio De Paz Galicia of Mexico in 1:12:38 and the women's division winner is Frances McKissick of Irving in 1:30:03. This website author also had wondered if Melanie Wilcox had won in approximately 1:28 after interviewing her when she had finished. However, a representative of Racing Systems, the timing company, said she is not in their database. Also, a picture of her near the finish doesn't show a bib number. So, it's assumed she ran as a bandit (didn't enter).



Lisa Cron of Irving won the women's marathon in 2:55:12. It was her first marathon attempt.



Holley Sweeney of Dallas finished second in the women's marathon with a 3:13:45. She also had finished second in the Cowtown Marathon in February.

There certainly was an international flair at the Big D Texas Marathon on Sunday (April 1). The marathon men's winner, Januarius Bonkiyung is from Cameroon, Africa, and the men's half marathon winner, Sergio De Paz Galicia, is from Veracruz, Mexico.



Sergio De Paz Galicia of Veracruz, Mexico, won the men's half marathon in 1:12:38. Galicia, who said he has a 1:09 PR in the half, said the course was fairly difficult because of some hills.

However, there also was plenty of local flavor as Lisa Cron of Irving won the women's marathon title with a 2:55:12 in her first attempt at the 26.2-mile distance; Jody Hawkins of Frisco won the 5K in 17:51; and the women's half was won by 44-year-old Frances McKissick of Irving.



Frances McKissick, 44, won the Big D Texas Half Marathon women's title with a 1:30:03. Frances, of Irving, turns 45 on April 22.

Race director Lewis George said about 2,400 participated in the event that included a marathon, half marathon and 5K.

Most were in the half as he said about 1,600 to 1,700 were entered. The start was delayed by 15 minutes to accommodate runners who were delayed by an accident near Fair Park, where the race started and ended. The start was kept open for several minutes after as runners and walkers continued to arrive late.