

Macon's Heaton top 10K woman

Numbers up as fee drops

By Pierce W. Huff
The Macon Telegraph

Macon's Suni Heaton doesn't act like most 37-year-old women.

She has been participating in triathlons since 1987. She won the Hephzibah Triathlon in May and the God and Country Triathlon last week in Jacksonville, Fla.

Heaton is an MRI technician at Radiology Associates and teaches an aerobics class two days a week at the Macon Health Club. Her weekly training regimen consists of biking 50 miles, running 25 miles and swimming two miles.

The hard work and rigorous training schedule paid off for Heaton on Monday. She had a personal-best time of 38:53 to win the women's 10K race in the Labor Day Road Race.

"My winning this event shows that all women can do whatever they think they can do," said Heaton.

Ethiopia's Arega Abraha, who entered the race on Sunday, had a time of 31:17 to win the men's 10K.

The 16th annual race was free of the controversy that surrounded last year's race, which drew 921 runners, partly because of an increase in registration fee from \$12 to \$20. The fee was reduced to \$12 this year, and there were 1,360 participants on Monday, still below the 1,640 in 1990.

"Dropping the entry fee by eight dollars made a big difference in the number of participants," said Jennifer Harding, marketing manager for *The Macon Telegraph*.

Race director Pat Madison agreed.

"This race has always been a strong and popular event and the

10K leaders			
MEN'S		WOMEN'S	
No. Name, Hometown	Time	No. Name, Hometown	Time
1. Arega Abraha, Decatur	31:17	1. Suni Heaton, Macon	38:53
2. Adam Pinkston, Asheville, N.C.	31:35	2. Cynthia Street, Dunwoody	38:53
3. Jim Scheckel, Atlanta	33:09	3. Susan Johnson, Lawrenceville	40:34
4. Alfie Cronin, Decatur	33:31	4. Amy Smith, Pinehurst	41:14
5. Bill Causey, Macon	33:43	5. Teressa Powell, Perry	41:15
6. Todd Dixon, Carrollton	33:59	6. Susan White, Montezuma	41:42
7. Todd Tepp, Alpharetta	34:12	7. Julie Bonbrake, Macon	41:48
8. George Pierce, Warner Robins	34:29	8. Sally Gray, Macon	42:17
9. Perry Thomas, Vienna	34:59	9. Tara Bray, Norcross	42:26
10. Rusty Jones, Valdosta	35:03	10. Barbara Polk, Jackson	42:38

"I didn't run last year because I wasn't going to pay the \$20. Going back to \$12 this year was fine. I think that most runners wouldn't mind an increase to \$15, but the increase to \$20 was just too much."

— Andrew Mathis,
Fort Valley

fact that the numbers have increased from last year demonstrates that people have always wanted to come, but the \$20 was just a little too much," Madison said.

Madison also said the success of the race will help next year.

"A lot of runners came up to me

after the race and said that they were pleased with how things turned out and that they'll come back," Madison said.

Participants said that the eight-dollar increase made a big difference.

"I wouldn't have run in this race if it cost \$20," said Tom O'Bryant, who won the men's 5K.

Added Heaton: "Cutting the price back down to \$12 was a smart move. This is an excellent race and a lot of people come here because the organizers do a good job."

Some runners said they were driven away from the race last year because of the price.

"Two years ago I got 12 girls on our basketball team to run, but last year I didn't even ask them to get in because the price was too much," said Windsor boys and girls basketball coach Kurt Greene.

Added Andrew Mathis of Fort Valley, who has competed in 14 of the 16 races: "I didn't run last year because I wasn't going to pay the

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Heaton takes women's 10K

Abraha signs up on last day, wins men's

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\$20. Going back to \$12 this year was fine. I think that most runners wouldn't mind an increase to \$15, but the increase to \$20 was just too much."

Heaton burst through the pack to take the early lead at the Museum of Arts & Sciences on Forsyth Road and coasted to victory. The course record for the women's 10K is a 34:43 set by Shirley Silsby in 1980.

"I was a little scared because I didn't know if the people were going to come from behind and catch me, but it feels good to have done this well in a race at my age," said Heaton, whose previous best time in six Labor Day races was 40:10 in 1990. "At the beginning of the race I was thinking that I was just going to see how fast I could run."

Heaton said that her training was an advantage.

"I think that my cross-training helped me to be stronger in the later part of the course," Heaton said. "I didn't do anything special for the race. I just trained the way I usually do."

Adam Pinkston of Asheville, N.C., who had a time of 31:33 to win last year's men's 10K, finished second with a time of 31:35. The course record is 29:45, set by Kevin Moates in 1982.

Abraha, who lives in Atlanta and was running his first Labor Day Road Race, set a fast pace early, but Pinkston managed to keep things close. Abraha sprinted to victory in the final mile.

"I love this course because I like competing in small towns, it's not a lot of hills and most of the race was on flat surfaces," said Abraha, a national-class runner who has won seven Heart Trek road races in Atlanta. "I tried to push myself and get the pace going fast from the start."

McWhorter gets repeat in 5K women

By Carroll Rogers
The Macon Telegraph

Duke repeated. So did the Chicago Bulls. On Monday it was Macon's turn, but not on a court. On the road.

For the second straight year Susan McWhorter of Marietta won the 5K at the Labor Day Road Race with a personal best time of 17:20. She beat last year's time by 30 seconds and her previous best by 29.

The only other woman to win

back-to-back races was Kelly Cook in 1987 and 1987. This was the eighth 5K race.

Finishing 18 seconds behind McWhorter in second place was last year's 10K winner, Jean Long, from Macon.

The course record for the 3.1-mile race is 16:58, set by Marcia Wentworth in 1989.

In the men's 5K, Tom O'Bryant of Commerce won in 14:40 and kept last year's winner — Andy Blackburn — from repeating as champi-

5K leaders					
MEN'S		WOMEN'S			
No.	Name, Hometown	Time	No. Name, Hometown	Time	
1.	Tom O'Bryant, Commerce	14:40	1.	Susan McWhorter, Marietta	17:20
2.	Andrew Blackburn, Rome	15:04	2.	Jean Long, Macon	17:38
3.	Eric Collins, Macon	15:39	3.	Barbara Howitz, Macon	18:27
4.	Peter Heidebreder, Dunwoody	15:41	4.	Pattie Petterson, Oxford	18:42
5.	Lee Fidler, Stone Mountain	15:48	5.	Deb Baber, Macon	19:28
6.	Lance Martin, Leesburg	16:04	6.	Lynda Clary-Burke, Covington	20:15
7.	Jack Durkin, Athens	16:17	7.	Jessica Crowe, Eatonton	20:32
8.	Chris Peterman, Thomaston	16:44	8.	Val Reckhow, Macon	20:43
9.	Jerry Banks, Decatur	16:45	9.	Bonnie Evans, Tifton	20:48
10.	Steve White, Marietta	16:46	10.	Anne Wright, Macon	20:48

on. Blackburn finished in 15:04, 12 seconds faster than his race last year.

The men's course record is 14:19, set by Marty Flynn in 1989.

McWhorter made her move early, passing the only runner ahead of her on the way up the hill on Forsyth Street near the start of the race. After that she never lost her lead.

"That was my plan," she said. "If anybody was in front of me, I'd take her on the hill. I did that. I

passed her on the hill and gunned it in to win."

She trained specially for this year's 5K by increasing her track workouts and running 40 to 50 miles per week. In the last year and a half she has concentrated on 5K races and had her eye on Macon.

"I was targeting it this year," she said. "I wanted to come back and repeat."

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O'Bryant wins men's race on his first try

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The Road Race is a favorite of McWhorter's, she said, because she grew up in nearby Ocilla where her family still lives. Now she lives in Marietta where she works for Coca Cola as a manager of package marketing and development.

McWhorter said she likes not only the location of the race, but also the course.

"You get your uphill over with and it's mostly downhill after that," she said. "You don't find that at a lot of races."

McWhorter was prepared for the uphill part, having recently run a 5-mile race in Maggie Valley, N.C. that was 2½ miles downhill and then 2½ back up.

She started running competitively six years ago when she joined a running club at Coca Cola with some of her friends.

"Running gives you a sense of accomplishment, to set a goal and work hard for it," she said. "You know you've got diligence in running, so you can transfer that over to your work and other areas of your life. It makes you a disciplined person."

McWhorter said she will run races every two weeks until December when she will finish off the season with a half-marathon in Atlanta. In the spring she'll start training again for the 5Ks that she likes best.

"I'd like to come back next year and break 17 minutes," she said.

This was O'Bryant's first Labor Day Road Race, and he almost didn't run. Until shortly before Sunday's 5 p.m. registration deadline, he wasn't sure if he would be ready for it physically. He had run in the 5K Michelin Midnight Race in Anderson, S.C. on Friday night and didn't know if he would have enough strength to run again on Monday. But a seventh-place finish in Anderson convinced him to run in Macon.

"I ran lousy," he said. "I was about a minute and ten seconds slower (than Monday). I was really determined in this race to redeem myself."

That he did by not only winning the race but also by taking 10 seconds off his best time.

"I was surprised I ran that fast," he said. "I just wanted to run in about 15 minutes."

O'Bryant trailed Blackburn for most of the race.

"He went out so fast, and I played catchup the whole time," O'Bryant said. "With three-tenths (of a mile) to go, he shortened his stride. I took advantage and passed him."

O'Bryant ran track and cross county at Tennessee-Chattanooga. He has been running since he graduated in 1986 but was slowed by a knee injury that kept him out for 1½ years. Ten months ago he started training again and worked up to 35-40 miles per week.

He is the executive director for the Commerce Downtown Development Authority. He used to work in Macon at the Middle Georgia Regional Development Center and was a member of Macon Tracks running club. He has recently joined the Atlanta Track Club where he hopes to pick up some cross county running again.

"I enjoy the competition," he said. "I like it because after college you can still compete at all age groups. It always gives you a goal, something to work for."

O'Bryant's wife Emily finished third in the women's 5K in 17:58.

In fourth place was Barbara Howitz with 18:27, and Patti Patterson finished fifth with 18:42.

Eric Collins came in third for the men in 15:39. In fourth place was Peter Heidebreder with 15:41, followed by Lee Fidler with 15:48.

1992

Wheelchair racer beats 1991 time

By James Mays Jr.
The Macon Telegraph

In recent years there have been few entries in the 10K wheelchair portion of Macon's annual Labor Day Road Race. Last year there were five, with Loganville's **Jimmy Green** winning in 24:39. Macon's **Tina Hopper**, who finished last in that race with a time of 1:27:19, was the only female competitor.

In that respect, Monday's 16th annual running of the Labor Day race was no different. In fact, it drew an even smaller crowd of participants — one dedicated entry.

Eric Maxwell, 33, of Peachtree City didn't let being the sole competitor in his division alter his performance. Maxwell finished in 23:24, taking 36 seconds off last year's winning time. He was 7:53 faster than **Arega Abraha** (31:17) of Atlanta, the winner of the men's 10K race.

"Sometimes a guy in a wheelchair can do better than a guy that's not in one," said Maxwell, who lived in Macon from 1988 through 1991 while completing law school at Mercer. "I always want to beat the fastest foot-runner by at least six or seven minutes."

Maxwell, who had two third-place finishes in 1990 and 1991, said that since graduating from law school he has had time to thoroughly condition himself for his sixth consecutive Labor Day Road Race. His preparation included 10 to 15 miles per day, five days a week.

"Once I got that pressure off I

Notes

was ready to train," said Maxwell. "I've been racing, but I'm just now really getting back into it."

GRAND PRIX SERIES: The Labor Day Road Race was Macon's second race this year in the "Run and See Georgia" Grand Prix Series. The series, which is designed to get Georgia's runners to visit various cities and boost local tourism, includes a nearly 70-race schedule that spans from mid-January to December.

At each race that is a member of the series, points are awarded to the top 20 finishers in each age group, both male and female. At the end of the series the top 20 points holders in each age group will be honored at the "Run and See Georgia" awards banquet. The seventh annual Run for Missions on March 7 was Macon first series race of the year.

YOUNG, OLD IN 5K: For those who weren't quite up to the task of the grueling 10K (6.2 mile) run, the 5K (3.1 miles) offered a comparable consolation. **Tom O'Bryant** of Commerce set the standard in the 5K with a winning time of 14:40. But everybody wasn't out to win or break records, such as **James Campbell** or **Viola Banks**. At 6 years old, Campbell was the youngest runner to participate in the race. At 92 years old, Banks out-aged the entire road race field.