

# Black uses '98 runner-up finish as motivation to win '99 crown

## Eatonton runner claimed 5K crown two years ago

By Chris Hughes

The Macon Telegraph

Monday was more like the memorable holiday Alan Black had wanted.

Black, a 25-year-old from Eatonton, ran away with the men's 10K championship from the 23rd annual Labor Day Road Race in Macon.

And like any good holiday Black spent it with friends and family.

But those friends and family had to wait a little more than a half-hour before Black could join them in celebrating.

First, Black had a little work to do and it didn't take him all that long to get it out of the way. Black completed the 6.2-mile course in a personal-best 31minutes 44 seconds with very little competition. Adam Pinkston was his closest challenger, finishing in 33:56, nearly three minutes ahead of third-place Josh Myers.

"After the fourth mile I slowed down," Black said. "I was hurting from that last hill. But I knew the race was in good hands."

The men's 5K race was considerably more competitive. Michael Strickland held off Macon's Ken McLeod by about as narrow a margin as possible, winning with a time of 15:01 in front of McLeod's time of 15:03. McLeod was the defending champion.

In the premier event, Black demonstrated a pretty good understanding of when someone's in control of a race. Some of that expertise developed out of last year's experience as Black trailed David Matherne across the finish line to place second.

That memory served as pretty good motivation.

"I had a bad race," Black said of last year. "That upset me a little bit. I'm happy. I prayed last night. I did everything I could. I've always wanted to win the 10k."

### Tops in 10K

Alan Black	31:44
Adam Pinkston	33:56
Josh Myers	36:13

### Tops in 5K

Michael Strickland	15:01
Ken McLeod	15:03
Joel Stewart	15:18

It gives Black another Labor Day trophy. Black was the 5k winner two years ago.

But the longer race is what Black prefers. It took Black a little while to pick up running. But once he started it didn't take long to figure out he would be accomplished at the activity.

After graduating from Putnam County High in 1994, Black's father suggested he take up running. Not much later Black ran in the local Tar Baby Road Race and with very little training finished with a time of 46:43.

"I didn't know how far a 10k race was until I ran it," said Black who is a member of the Atlanta Track Club. "I just ran it that one day to see how well I'd do. Everybody told me how great I did."

Since then Black has become a pretty competitive and serious runner. Black, who works as a floor supervisor at Horton Components and is a volunteer cross country coach for Georgia College and State University, runs 50 miles a week and races two to three times a month.

"It's more than a hobby," Black said. "It's the main part of my life now."

In a year's time Black took two minutes off his time from last year's race. Having to make up for that race certainly helped.

"Last year was very disappointing for me and my family also," Black said. "I wasn't quite ready for it."



# Kelly reaches goals of winning, improving on her time last year

## Atlanta mother of four defends title, cuts 20 seconds off her 1998 time

By Michael A. Lough

The Macon Telegraph

Beads of sweat dotted her shoulders, arms, face, neck, legs and through her shirt and shorts.

Jogging a little bit would've done the trick, let alone run in a 10K race.

That's how Sue Kelly looked and that's what she did. But the smile belied what should've been a fairly tiring morning.

Kelly was happy to win the women's division of the 23rd annual Labor Day Road Race in Macon.

She was downright thrilled with her time, 35 minutes and 57 seconds, 20 seconds sliced off last year's mark when she won the race in her first visit.

"I wanted to break 36 (minutes)," she said, "and I just got it, didn't I?"

Where was that boost?

"I forgot about that last hill."

Kelly wasn't sure about her pace early on, but she was far ahead of her female competitors and won by nearly six minutes.

"It was really spread out," she said. "The leader was way ahead, then there was the second-place guy."

"Then I got into a battle with this little kid, this 15-year-old."

Not for long.

"Through about mile three, then I dropped him," she laughed. "I kept thinking he was going to catch me, so that kept me going."

The motivation to avoid being caught pushed her.

"I thought, 'This would be

### Tops in 10K

Sue Kelly	35:57
Sherri Hintz	41:40
Vickie Johnson	42:58

### Tops in 5K

Kathy Perez-Wolski	16:59
Tracey Kuhn	17:39
Laura Brewer	18:08

great to be third overall, I've never done that in a race," she said. "I wanted to stay ahead of him."

Kathy Perez-Wolski of Smyrna won the 5K competition in a little closer than the 10K, topping Tracey Kuhn of Jacksonville by 40 seconds. Laura Brewer of Atlanta edged Macon's Kathi Stewart by three seconds and Siobhan Keenan of Macon by eight.

Staying ahead of the 15-year-old in this race was a bit of a pride issue for Kelly, who said she has qualified for the Olympic Trials in the marathon.

"I'm just starting to get back into doing short, shorter speed work," she said. "I just wanted to get under 36 today."

The Trials are in Columbia, S.C. in February, and she has competed in marathons recently this summer and will do a half marathon in two weeks in Philadelphia and a full one in Chicago.

"I'm doing longer stuff, but I

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thought it would be good to get out and do a 10K," she said. "When you're training for 10K, you're doing a lot of shorter stuff, to get your leg speed up, and I haven't been doing that."

The 38-year-old mother of four in Atlanta rose at 4:30 Monday morning to make the trip. Her husband Drew stayed home with their 10-year-old boy, 8-year-old girl, and 4-year-old twins.

But's a running marriage:

Drew has been a runner for 10 years and embarks on 100-mile jaunts.

"He'll go out and run for eight hours," she chuckled. "It is sick. I'm a marathoner and I don't understand that."

She began running soon after the twins were born.

To get out of the house?

"I have to go run again," she laughed. "Bye!"

Kelly, who moved to Atlanta from San Diego about 10 years ago, admitted 38 is a bit on the older side for a marathon, but said it will put her in a good situation for Master's competition, which begins at age 40.

"I feel like I'm better off because I didn't beat myself up when I was 20 or 25," she said. "I didn't really start running seriously until I was about 34."

And it's a safe bet she'll keep this race on her schedule.

"I love this race, I'll keep coming," she said. "People ask me what makes it so great. It's well-organized. It's just the atmosphere's good, it's a great course."

"You've got long, good straightaways, you've got some hills to separate the good from the not-so-good. It's got a lot of good straightaways, and the hills really bad. I just love this course."

And for the second year in a row, it seemed to love her right back.



1999

# Fun is at the heart of the Labor Day run

**By Rob Kitchel**

The Macon Telegraph

There was more to the 23rd annual Labor Day Road Race than just winners Alan Black and Sue Kelly, who took the men's and women's 10 K. Much more.

There was Violet Carden striding across the 5K finish line in 49 minutes, 59 seconds. Quite a time for the 74-year-old. There was Mayor Jim Marshall, an avid runner himself, congratulating the 10K finishers and encouraging them as they crossed the finish line.

There was the festival atmosphere of the whole event, with Oldies 99.1 on-hand providing music, and tents set up with water and snacks for the runners and the occasional non-runner scavenging for food. There was the fire department with a truck set up to spray the hot and sweaty runners as they came across the finish line, both to clean them off and cool them off. And of course, there was plenty of fun.

Ricky Omlight ran the race with his son, Adam. Well actually, he ran and Adam, 3, sat in a stroller and caught a nice breeze. The pair finished in 38:17, good enough to finish in the top 10 in his age group.

Not bad for Omlight's second foray into the race, and his first with the stroller.

"I probably could've done better if I wouldn't have had the stroller, but it wouldn't have been as much fun," Omlight said. "We were just out here having a good time, but I guess it was a little embarrassing for some people to be passed by a guy with a stroller."

But it probably wasn't too embarrassing for most because most folks were just out there to

have a good time. Some people set personnel marks to pass, like John Phillips who came down from Athens to run in the race for a fourth straight year.

Phillips, a student at the University of Georgia, wanted to finish under 37 minutes, but with the heat and humidity, that was a little too lofty of a goal. Phillips was still happy with his 37:09 and 10th-place finish, an improvement of about 30 seconds and four places from a year ago. The time was good enough for Phillips, 22, to win the 20-24 age group.

"I can't think of a better way to spend a day off from class," Phillips said. "I would have liked to have run a little faster, but it was just so humid."

The humidity didn't seem to bother Sy Jones, Jimmie Reeze and Kevin Lamar. They were all just happy to be out and about on a beautiful day. All three students from the Georgia Academy for the Blind took advantage of a day off from class to run in the 5K.

Reeze and Jones were running in their first Labor Day race and finished in a little more than 29 minutes and just less than 47 minutes, respectively. Lamar is totally blind and ran with the help of Greg Hudgins, an instructor at the school. It was their second year running the event together and they shaved about two minutes off their time from a year ago, down to 30:50.

"Next year it's the 10K," Lamar said boisterously after he had a chance to catch his breath and down a few shots of water.

Hudgins wasn't so sure, though.

"I don't know about that. He may have to find another partner for that one."