

2009

# Fruits of the labor

## Familiar faces finish in front at Macon Labor Day Road Race

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Central Fellowship senior Dylan Swafford has run in the Macon Labor Day Road Race since he was in the eighth grade. And while his times have improved almost every year, the closest he had come to winning the road race was a seventh-place finish last year.

But after being paced perfectly in the first mile and feeling

**ALSO** fresh in the end, Results, 5-6B Swafford was able to pass his

final competitor with a mile remaining Monday and coasted to a nine-second win over second-place finisher Rashaun Tanner.

"The whole key to my race was the first mile and Sam Martinez paced me at 5:25, which could not have been any better for me," said Swafford, who finished second in his classification in last year's GISA state cross country meet. "After that, I was able to drop to around 5:05 or 5:10, and it was pretty comfortable. My goal was to go below 16, which I wasn't able to do, but it's still a great thrill to win such a big race.

"My coaches at CFCA, Anna Beth Sizemore and Tommy Chambers, have helped me so much this year with my pace and confidence, and I feel like I am running very well mainly because of them. I never really expected to win this year."

In the women's 5k, 14-year-old Grace Tinkey easily outdistanced her competition for the second straight year, defeating second-place finisher and FPD teammate Jessica Smith by a minute and 35 seconds.

"It was great to win again, but what makes it so great is having all my FPD teammates being here too," said Tinkey, also the defending GISA Class AAA cross country champ. "They all ran great (Monday), and Jessica finishing second just made it more special."

Tinkey, who had a goal of breaking 19 minutes last year and went 18:45, had another number in her mind this year.

"I want to break 18 minutes this year and I went 17:25, so I am pretty happy with my performance. The weather was just about perfect for running. I was able to keep

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my pace where I wanted, and I was very surprised I went that fast."

Savannah's Loren Grant captured her fourth straight women's 10k with a time of 40:23.

The former Mercer cross-country runner says she will continue to come back to Macon to defend her title.

"I love coming down here on Labor Day," said Grant, who now serves as the marketing director for the Savannah Music Festival. "It is a great chance to visit friends, and I love the course. I use this race as a start to my fall running season, and it lets me know where I am as far as in being in shape. I didn't run the time I wanted to run, but I am very pleased to win. There are always such great runners here, and

it's an honor to win it four straight years."

Mount de Sales cross country coach Jeff Dobias captured his second straight men's 10k title, defeating Jordan Turner from Canton by 13 seconds.

Dobias led from start to finish, but he gave credit to Turner for making it close.

"I know that Turner had a great second part of the race," Dobias said. "I first noticed him at about the four-mile mark, and when I got into Central City Park, someone yelled that I had about 15 seconds on him. It would have been nice to coast in for the win, but he pushed me to the very end. There was no cruising in (Monday)."

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