

1990

# Cranford, Elam run to victories in 5K race

By Steve Elkins

Macon Telegraph and News

A Labor Day Road Race veteran and a newcomer were the winners in the 5K portion of the race Monday.

Shelly Cranford of Cochran won the men's race for the second time, in 15 minutes, one second. Lynn Elam of Norcross won the women's 5K in her first Labor Day race with a time of 17:51 over the 3.1-mile course.

Cranford, who also won the race in 1987, ran ahead of the field almost the entire way and easily outdistanced second-place finisher Danny

Daniels of Jasper, Fla., by 34 seconds.

Elam, 29, has come all the way back from a broken leg that threatened her career two years ago. She shattered her previous personal best time of 19:06 by more than a minute.

She stayed back in the pack until there was about 1/2 mile left, then took the lead from Janis DeHaye. DeHaye placed second, 12 seconds behind Elam.

Elam broke her leg in 1988 when she slipped on some ice while running.

"I've got nine pins and a plate holding it together. I was told I wouldn't run again. I

shattered my lower leg."

She took up running only six years ago.

"I was smoking two packs of cigarettes a day and was 20 pounds overweight. I decided I needed to make some serious changes."

Elam won the Griffin Five-Miler last weekend, in 31:59, but wasn't expecting such a fast time Monday.

"It's a fast course. I was trying to pace myself. I'd heard that the course was pretty much downhill. I ran a 5:20 the first mile, which was faster than I wanted to be running. I'm amazed (See 5K, page 6D)

## 5K

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at the time."

Patti Patterson was third in 18:12, followed by Tracy Steele in 18:30 and Lisa Carr-Thomason in 18:40.

In the men's race, Cranford took the lead 200 yards from the start and never seriously was challenged. He ran a 4:39 first mile, then a 4:54 in the tougher second mile.

"I never saw anybody after about 200 yards," said Cranford, who ran track and cross country at Georgia before graduating in 1989.

He has run his four fastest times on the course, including a best of 14:53, and was second in 1988 and fifth in 1989.

"The field wasn't as strong as last year. It was mostly local competition from around Middle Georgia."

Cranford, an elementary school physical education teacher and the track and cross country coach at Bleckley County High School, was doing his best Bo Jackson imitation Monday. After the race, he returned to Cochran for a golf tournament.

Daniels, 34, who ran track at Albany State, was running in the Labor Day race for only the second time. He spent most of the race chasing Cranford and tried to make a move near the end, but finished well back.

# Francis wins wheelchair 10K

By Cindy English

Macon Telegraph and News

Darryl Francis couldn't help but smile after winning the 10K wheelchair division of the Labor Day Road Race Monday.

Francis, 27, an AT&T computer technician from Marietta, finished in 26 minutes, 30 seconds, a personal best in the 6.2-mile race. Jerry Allred finished second in 27:19, followed by Eric Maxwell (30:21), Phillip Wells (34:37) and Glenn Brewer (41:50).

Francis competed in his first wheelchair race, the Pepsi-Vulcan, last November in Birmingham, Ala., and finished in 38 minutes. He wasn't satisfied with his time.

"I was really disappointed," Francis said. "I thought I would've done better than that. I decided that I needed to start putting in more time training if I was going to be serious about the sport."

On Monday, all the sweat and hard work paid off.

It wasn't the first time that Francis had been over the course. He competed in last January's Macon Marathon and had a good idea of what to expect.

"Going up the hills are the toughest," he said. "The last six miles of the (marathon) course are the worst. But after the marathon here (in January), I started training on hills at home. I knew Jerry was good on the hills

because he left me in the Macon Marathon."

Francis has been confined to a wheelchair since May 1988. He hit a patch of gravel while riding his motorcycle and flipped over the handlebars.

Francis lost weight as part of his training and improved enough to compete in the Los Angeles Marathon and the Peachtree Road Race in Atlanta and even went to England to represent the USA at the World-Stoke Mandeville Championships.

"I'm really happy about it," he said of winning Monday's race. "I finally think I'm really competitive. There's still lots of room for improvement."



# Two from FSU take 10K titles

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By Chuck Thompson  
Macon Telegraph and News

A pair of runners from Tallahassee, Fla., who decided just a few days ago to run here, ran away with the men's and women's 10K titles in the 14th Macon Labor Day Road Race Monday.

David Keen, 23, a former cross country runner at Florida State who is now a graduate student, won the men's race in 31 minutes, 12.7 seconds, the slowest winning time in the history of the race. Vikki Saga, 29, also a Florida State graduate student who has been running for only three years, won the women's race in 38:01.6.

Both were running the Macon race for the first time, and they each won by better than 30 seconds. Neither came close to the course records, however. The previous slowest men's time was 30:58 by Lee Fidler in the first Labor Day Road Race in 1977. Saga was 3:18 off the women's record time of 34:43 that Shirley Silsby ran in 1980.

Monday's second-place finishers were a pair of former winners, Macon native Adam Pinkston, who ran a 31:43, and Atlanta's Deanna Stouder, who ran a 38:40. Pinkston won the men's race in 1988 with a 30:02 and has finished in the top five each year since. Stouder won the women's race last year in 38:17.

Keen made his move to pull away from the other leaders at the end of the first mile of the 6.2-mile race. "I was waiting to see what developed, but no one else seemed to want to set the pace so I went on. I ran the first mile in 5:16, then did a 4:52 in the second mile."

By then, he had a comfortable lead that he was able to maintain. "I was surprised no one came with me. Once I got in front, I tried to use the downhills to increase my lead. I did a little through the first three or four miles, but then my legs started going dead. But I was still able to maintain the same interval between me and the sec-

ond-place runner."

Pinkston, who lives in Asheville, N.C., said he was disappointed in his

race. "I've been running well and thought I might could go for the (See 10K, page 6D)

## 10K

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record here. But when I saw how hot it was this morning, I knew I couldn't get the record. Still, I hoped to run in the 30:15 range.

"But I couldn't get going at the start. The guy who won had the perfect strategy, to go hard after the first mile. But I sat on my hands when I should have gone with him. I finally got to running well the last couple of miles, but that was too late. It's hard to make up ground on this course unless those ahead of

you just die."

Saga said the key to her victory was a new emphasis on hill training she began three weeks ago. "I haven't run a lot of hilly courses before. But my boyfriend convinced me to start training on some hills, and that really helped me today," she said. "I was able to stay with the leaders on that first hill, then I pulled ahead and was able to stay out in front the rest of the way."

Bill Crooks finished third in the men's race with a 32:27, followed by Michael Murphy at 32:47 and Gary Jenkins at 33:12.

Rounding out the top five in the women's race were Sherri Odom at 38:53, Suni Heaton at 39:14 and Andrea Pease at 40:04.



Ed  
Grisamore

## Running: No thanks

A total of 1,640 people ran in Monday's Labor Day Road Race. According to the recent U.S. Census count, 814,656 people live in Middle Georgia.

By my calculations, that means 813,016 Middle Georgians chose to boycott Monday's race.

So, as one of the non-participants, I'm safely in the majority when I say this: Running is a pretty overrated way of getting around.

I stood on the hill at St. Paul Apartments early Monday morning and watched hundreds of runners support my theory.

The dawn was cool and the sun was a beautiful orange ball coming up over the city. But none of these runners had a smile - at least not much of one - on his or her face as they tried to find enough torque in their leg muscles to pull that hill.

"I keep asking myself (gasp!) what am I doing (pant!) in this race (cough!)" one woman tried to tell her friend as they reached the halfway point of their dutiful ascent.

If you're morally opposed to running, the hill at St. Paul is the best place in the race to rubber-neck at the agony. When you view its murderous incline, you know why man invented the wheel.

The foreboding hill is deep enough into the race to be a formidable obstacle, yet too temptingly close to the finish line to reject its impending challenge.

After all, if your legs haven't fallen off by the time you reach the crest at College Street, it's mostly downhill for the final 1½ miles.

The fastest 10K runners - those "lungs with legs" as I've heard them described - attacked St. Paul without breaking much of a sweat on Monday. But many of those everyday runners - out to either lose some weight or their sanity - went on the defensive once they braked down Forsyth Street and crossed the interstate.

Their competitive morning run faltered to a jog and then reduced itself to a walk. From the bottom, three-tenths of a mile up the hill to the top, the Labor Day Road Race had ceased to become a race. It was a mountain climb.

Yes, you're right. I don't run. Not much, anyway. I was the second-fastest boy in the fifth grade. I once ran track in high school. But, now that I've slowed down, I mostly walk. It's better for you, anyway.

Oh, I still run when I see a snake. I run when my 3-year-old gets suspiciously quiet with a box of crayons in the next room. I run when the rain catches me without an umbrella. I run when I have to make deadline.

But running for the sheer pleasure/torture of it? No, thanks. I fully understand the purpose of running. I just don't understand the attraction.

Running enthusiasts lay claim to this "runner's high," a mysterious psychological-physiological state this side of heaven. (I prefer sunsets.)

Runners defend their addiction as the best form of exercise to increase their pulse rate. (Personally, Kim Basinger movies do the same thing for me.)

While I don't question the value of exercise and the motives of runners, I sometimes question their methods.

I see them running on the sidewalks downtown in the middle of the day, when it's hotter than a 6-million watt microwave oven. Is that supposed to be good for you? Ask your cardiologist.

I see them running on major roads, often oblivious to heavy traffic and sucking in all those wonderfully healthy automobile exhaust fumes. I see them subjecting their muscles, joints and bones to the shock and stress of hard surfaces.

I won't rest my argument here. I've got plenty of company. Mike Royko, the syndicated newspaper columnist, once wrote that it is "unnatural for people to run around city streets unless they are thieves or victims. It makes people nervous to see someone running. I know that when I see somebody running on my street, my instincts tell me to let the dog out after him."

Satchel Paige, the Hall of Fame pitcher, listed among his six "Rules for Staying Young" to "avoid running at all times." Abe Lemons, the great college basketball coach, once explained that he didn't jog because "If I die, I want to be sick."

But a college buddy of mine once provided the best excuse of all.

"I tried running one time," he said, "but it made my beer foam up."



# A high-mileage week no problem for Keen

By John DeShazier  
Macon Telegraph and News

The way David Keen had it figured, he had no chance to win the men's 10K portion of Monday's Labor Day Road Race.

First, there was the competition.

"I saw this guy at the starting line and I thought he was Kenyan," Keen said. "I said, 'Oh, no. It's gonna be a long day.' You never know who will show up at a race. If there are a lot of foreigners, you can get beat by six or seven guys."

Second, he thought he wouldn't have enough energy after pushing himself through a rigorous workout last week.

"It was a high mileage week for me," he said. "I ran 115 miles, the highest I've ever run in my life. I figured that by the time I finished, I'd look like I was gonna die or something. I didn't think I was going to have enough left to win."

Instead, Keen broke away from the field to win the 6.2-mile event in 31 minutes, 14 seconds, edging out Macon native Adam Pinkston by 29 seconds. It was the first time Keen, 23, a Tallahassee, Fla., native, had run the race.

"I ran with the front pack the first mile, and we ran a slow (5:16) mile," he said. "I just wanted to see what it was like. Then, I changed gears and kept at a faster pace, and no one came with me, thank goodness."

Keen, a graduate student at Florida State and a member of the Seminoles cross country team, said friends invited him to come to Macon after another graduate student, who graduated from Mercer, told Keen about the race.

"Now I can go back and tell him, 'I ran your little race in Macon,'" Keen said, laughing. "My main motive was to win so I could go back and surprise him."

The day proved as prosperous for Keen's running mate, Vikki Saga, who also attends Florida State and won the women's 10K. Keen said several other members of the FSU cross country team also ran.

"I think (the team) had a pretty good showing," he said.

Keen's time was 1:30 off his personal best and was the slowest winning time in the race's 14-year history. Had he attained his personal best, it would have set the race record.

"I was hoping to run it in 30 (minutes) flat," Keen said, "but I figured that would be impossible unless the course was all downhill. It had a few hills, but I'd have to rank it as one of the quicker courses I've run."

"Considering the mileage I put in last week, I was pretty pleased (with the time). Any time you can run a 10K in the summer, you're doing all right. If they had (this race) in the winter, there would be a lot faster times."

# Along for the ride, Saga gets second win of year

By Kamon Simpson  
Macon Telegraph and News

Maybe David Keen is a lucky charm for Vikki Saga. Keen, the winner of the Labor Day Road Race 10K, is a friend and training partner of Saga, who won the women's 10K in her first Macon race.

Saga, 29 "and holding," was not exactly a favorite. She never had a chance to survey the race course, and she made the decision to come to Macon almost at the last minute, not wanting Keen and her coach, Bill Crooks, to come alone.

"I just came up for the ride," said Saga, a graduate student from Florida State. "I didn't want the guys to be on their own. You never know what they're going to do."

But this wasn't the first time Saga had experienced the sweet taste of victory. She finished first in the Palace Saloon 5K in Tallahassee, Fla., this spring. The winner in the same event for the men was Keen.

"The Palace Saloon is just a fun thing where you drink beer all afternoon after the race," Saga said. "I don't know if that really counts. The faster you win the race, the faster you get to the beer. It was some incentive."

This time, the goal was just to relax and enjoy the race, which Saga said was a pleasant romp over a well-designed course, with just enough hills to keep it interesting. Saga, accustomed to running on flat stretches in Florida, has been working with Crooks on

hills lately, and Monday that preparation paid off.

Saga finished in 38:01.6, more than a half a minute ahead of Deanna Strouder (38:39) and well ahead of Sherri Odom (38:53) and Suni Heaton (39:14). She was well off the course-record 34:43 set by Shirley Silsby in 1980.

"I knew she'd do well," Crooks said. "She talks it down, but when we looked at the results from last year, we knew she was going to come close. She ran a good race. She held back and paced herself."

Crooks had a racer's perspective of Saga's feat. He ran the race, finishing in 32:27, toward the front of the pack and not far off the heels of Keen, who wasn't surprised by Saga's performance either.

"She's something," Keen said. "I ran 115 miles this past week to train for this. She ran 29 miles. In the long run, I'm training for longer races. But if I only ran 29 miles a week, I would have finished way back. With me, it's hard work. But with her, it's natural talent."

Saga only has been running competitively for three years. A veterinarian who recently has entered graduate school to pursue a degree in business, 10K is her typical distance, although she's planning on running in a 15K this fall and eventually would like to get into marathons.

"I don't know though, because I don't train very much," she said. "I guess running is my serious hobby. But I'm lucky if I'm able to run 30 miles in a week. It's a social thing for me, not a serious thing."