

Mercer grad wins women's Labor Day 10K for second time



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Normally, a holiday means downtown Macon will have almost no early-morning traffic.

That's not the case at least once a year, on Labor Day.

Josh Myers of Smyrna and Lauren Grant of Savannah finished atop the list of runners who took part in the 31st Labor Day Road Race in Macon as overall male and female winners.

Myers finished the 10K race in 33 minutes and 16 seconds while Grant was first on the women's side in 39:30.

Macon's Jeff Dobias was third on the men's side while Amy Smith Boyer of Forsyth — a previous winner — finished third among women.

Myers and Grant defended their titles by repeating.

Grant has been in this race only twice, and won it both times, setting a personal best Monday when Mother Nature provided one of the less humid days on which the run has taken

Please see PAVEMENT, 3C

Pounding the pavement

PAVEMENT

Continued from 1C

place.

"I've run this course before," said Grant, a 2005 Mercer University graduate who works for the Savannah Music Festival. "It was a beautiful day. Last year was pretty warm."

She cut about 20 seconds off her previous best, and admitted forgetting one little part of the course.

"It's a quick course, considering that hill in the middle," she said of a spot on Vineville. "I always forget that once you get past that one hill, you still have two more miles to go."

"That's the longest two miles of the entire race."

The 10K started just south of Wesleyan College on Vineville, veered onto Georgia Avenue, then to Mulberry and Walnut downtown with the finish line at Central City Park.

Runners came from as far away as Oklahoma, and the field included participants from the Carolinas, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi, as well. More than 1,700 competed in the 10K, 5K, and 1-mile fun run.

"Our numbers were definitely up this year," said co-race director Kerry Oedel, who was the overall female masters winner, along with John Roberts of Decatur. "We added a number of things, trying to give people a good race experience."

Michael Strickland of Marietta and Katlyn Will of Corinth, Miss. were the overall

winners of the 5K race, which had 1,176 competitors.

Lauren Clark of Eatonton finished second behind Will, while Caleb Hammons of Macon was third among men.

The largest ovation during the lengthy awards ceremony went to Violet Carden, of Macon, who at 82 years old finished the 5K in 43:22, ahead of some younger competitors in the 65-69 and 70-74 age brackets.

This year's race featured a team competition, and it was run in conjunction, albeit a day later, than a Labor Day sister race in Baghdad, Iraq.

"We got an e-mail from their morale, welfare and recreation coordinator asking if we would sponsor them, and we thought that was a great idea," said Oedel of the troops stationed at Camp Rustamayah. "We sent them shirts, trophies, and numbers. It was great."

State representative Jim Marshall was again a participant, but added a little something extra. He promised an award to whoever among the troops beat his time in the 5K.

"They were calculating, and 13 of them had beat his time from last year," Oedel said. "They were waiting and watching."

Marshall ran a 22:21 in the 5K, good enough for fourth in the men's 55-59 age group. About 125 troops ran in Baghdad.

Unofficially, 14 men beat Marshall's time, and they'll soon get a framed certificate saying something along humorous lines, according to race official Dave Oedel, that they "whipped the congressman" in the race.

Top finishers

10K overall male

1. Josh Myers, Smyrna, 33:16
2. Leo Foley, Savannah, 34:10
3. Jeff Dobias, Macon, 34:22

10K overall female

1. Lauren Grant, Savannah, 39:30
2. Katharine Showalter, Atlanta, 42:10
3. Amy Smith Boyer, Forsyth, 42:45

10K masters male

1. John Roberts, Decatur, 34:36
2. Mike Mead, Lake City, 37:19
3. Bedford Cox, Fayetteville, 38:19

10K masters female

1. Kerry Oedel, Macon, 43:01
2. Shirley Maddox, Eastman, 49:24
3. Lori Archer, Tennille, 50:00

5K overall male

1. Michael Strickland, Marietta, 15:47
2. Joshua Farris, Alpharetta, 16:23
3. Caleb Hammons, Macon, 16:31

5K overall female

1. Katlyn Will, Corinth, Miss., 17:22
2. Lauren Clark, Eatonton, 18:38
3. Connie Robertson, Hapeville, 18:50

5K masters men

1. Fred Eaton, Macon, 17:26
2. Dave Ketelsen, Sharpsburg, 17:29
3. Jerry Herrin, Milledgeville, 18:01

5K masters women

1. Cheryl Cowart, Alpharetta, 20:07
2. Kellie Eyre, Atlanta, 21:00
3. Paula May, Peachtree City, 21:03

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