

RECREATION

Want to submit an event?

Fax items to 434-6241. Mail items to: Sports Calendar, Pensacola News Journal, Sports Department, P.O. Box 12710, Pensacola, FL 32591 or e-mail to sports@pensacolanewsjournal.com

Deadline is the Sunday before publication date

Bad weather can't stop Bushwacker 5K's return to beach

The Capt'n Fun Runners' "Back to the Beach" slogan for this year's Bushwacker 5K rang true despite a severe thunderstorm that struck Pensacola Beach during the early morning hours before the event.

"We were a little worried when we got an early weather report from the management over at the Capt'n Fun's," race director Johnny Graves said. "The wind and lightening were so bad they had to close down before 2 the morning of the race, but by race start time the weather was perfect for running."

The temperature and humidity were perfect for running, but the wind was not. Blowing hard from the south, the wind gave runners



Paul Epstein
On running

an extra tough time when they were traversing the Bob Sikes Bridge, which makes up about a third of the 3.1-mile course.

"The wind was tough and totally unexpected," said Carol Cross, 68, of Gulf Breeze. "In the seven years that I've run the Bushwacker, the wind has never been this strong."

Cross, who finished third in the women's 65 to 69 age group, said she was happy with her

finish time given the weather conditions.

"I'm going to start a new training program so that I can get faster for my next run," she said. Pensacola's Warren Garmeson, 82, said he uses the races as his training program.

"The Bushwacker was my first run in about six weeks," Garmeson said. "I use the elliptical trainer and walk a lot to help stay in shape."

Garmeson, who finished third in his age group, said he loves the fellowship and camaraderie he experiences at local races.

"The thing that helps keep me going is all the encouragement from the people at the finish line," he added.

One young man was so focused on his competition that he didn't really notice the wind. Dylan Hanks, 9, a fourth-grader at Oriole Beach Elementary School, won the 1 to 9 age group by finishing almost a minute ahead of the second-place competitor.

"He came up from behind and kept trying to run in front of me, but after the water stop I just started sprinting and never looked back," Dylan said.

Although he's a talented runner, Dylan primarily runs to stay in shape for his true passion — baseball.

"Running helps me steal bases," he said. "Also, I like to run with my dad. He's like my pace car."

Pine Forest timed mile Saturday

With the University of West Florida's track in its final days of refurbishment, the 5th annual Pine Forest High School cross country team's timed mile Saturday will be a premier event. The event begins at 7:30 a.m. and is expected to continue as long as participants show up.

All ages are welcome, and there is no pre-registration required. The team requests a \$5 donation for each participant. For more information, call coach Greg Pack at 484-2795, or by picking up a flyer at Running Wild.

Race calendar full during September

The September race calendar begins our local fall running season with a race every weekend.

Starting with an evening 5K on Sept. 8 and closing out the month with the PRA's Seafood Festival Run on Sept. 23, there is an event for everyone.

Race flyers and information about local events is available at Running Wild or by calling 435-9222. Look for details about upcoming September races in the next column.

Paul Epstein owns Running Wild on Palafox Place. Call him at 435-9222 or e-mail paul@werunwild.com.