

On a soggy morning, Human Race draws 9,500 runners, walkers in Santa Rosa

GUY KOVNER

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Human Race costume awards

Fastest centipede — Sutter Care at Home

Best centipede — Napa County Office of Education/Cal Serves

Centipede with most legs — Clover Stornetta's Lymphoma and Leukemia team

Best adult group — Food for Thought Food Bank

Best canine group — Greyhound Friends for Life

Most creative youth — Rhazi Kennard, 10, Warriors fan

Most creative adult — Brett McFarland, "Freedom, Baby"

Judges' choice — Clover Stornetta's Lymphoma and Leukemia team

Joe Hammerquist was happy to have walked the 3K course in the rain Saturday at the 35th annual Human Race, thoroughly unconcerned with how long it might have taken.

"It was fine, I'm here," he said, standing under shelter at Herbert Slater Middle School, the post-race festival site.

Considering his age, 92, Hammerquist had a right to boast a bit.

"I'm in good shape," he said, noting that it was his fourth time at the race, a hybrid sports event, community gathering and mega-fundraiser for local nonprofit groups.

Cool, damp weather failed to dull the spirits of an estimated 9,500 people of all ages, including preregistered and timed runners as well as folks who just showed up to run or walk the 3K and 10K routes through Howarth and Spring Lake parks.

When all the pledges and donations are in, the race is expected to reap \$500,000, which will be distributed to 250 Sonoma County nonprofit organizations, said Cami Kahl, executive director of the Volunteer Center, which sponsors the race.

Wearing a tan poncho and using a cane, Hammerquist walked with his wife, Yvonne, who gave her age as "only 89." The couple, residents of Friends House for 13 years, said they exercise daily in a fitness program at the Santa Rosa retirement community.

"We did backpacking in our 60s," Yvonne Hammerquist said, but their boots have long since been retired in favor of comfortable tennis shoes for walking.

Accompanying the couple were their daughter, Linda Garcia, 67, and her children, Kim, 38, and Eric, 41, who came up from Southern California, mostly for a relative's wedding later in the day.

Also making a family appearance Saturday were the three indefatigable Bowen sisters.

Rylee Bowen, 16, who's been setting track meet records around the country this year, had the top time in the 3K event at 10:23, while Kate Bowen, 14, finished third at 10:40.

At last year's event, Rylee had the top time in the 3K at 9:59 and Kate was the second-fastest female at 10:36.

Rylee Bowen ran the second-fastest mile in the nation this year for a female high-schooler when she took home the gold medal at the 58th annual Mt. SAC Relays in Southern California last month. It was Bowen's third meet record this year.

Taylin Bowen, 8, the youngest of the fleet-footed Santa Rosa family's runners, opted for the 10K course and covered it in 42:51, the second fastest female and 13th overall. Last year, Taylin was the third-fastest female at 44:01.

Yes, there are genetics involved: Their mother, Nika Bowen (née Horn), was a track and cross-country star at Santa Rosa High School in the early 1990s. Rylee Bowen, a sophomore at Sonoma Academy, is a two-time state cross country champion.

"I tried to talk them out of it" due to the rain, Nika Bowen said. "They wouldn't be denied."

Said Rylee: "The race is just for fun. A lot of fun."

Joey Johnson, 17, of Santa Rosa posted the top time in the 10K event at 34:56, coming in 21 seconds ahead of second-place finisher Kheva Mann, 16, of Sebastopol.

In the 3K competition, Lorenzo Ramirez, 47, of Santa Rosa came in at 10:36, the fastest male, finishing between the Bowen sisters.

Sarah Hallas, 36, of Santa Rosa was the fastest female in the 10K, finishing sixth at 37:36.

Scott Minaker of Fulton ran the 3K with his daughter, Melissa, 8, and two dogs — Doug and Solaris — on leashes. For Doug, a 6-month-old European golden retriever, it was a glorious first time at the race.

Solaris, a golden retriever that has run the 10K seven times, was apparently happy to turn onto the 3K course this year.

"He gave me a smile," Minaker said.

Mason Adams, 15, was a bit dismayed by his 53:05 time in the 10K, three minutes slower than last year.

"I'm definitely not proud of that, but that's all right," said the Maria Carrillo High freshman, who is competing in the long, high and triple jumps with the Pumas track team.

It was chilly, he said, after light rain started falling midway through the race, but it was worth maintaining a tradition by running with his mother, Jessica Adams, for the third year. He finished first, then ran back and accompanied her to the finish line at 1:08:30.

“He pushed me really hard, right to the end,” Jessica Adams said over a post-race breakfast of pancakes and sausage, under shelter.

Since 1981, the Human Race has raised \$16 million for local nonprofits, and Saturday was only the second time runners felt the rain, Kahl said. The last time was about 15 years ago. “It was pouring,” she said.

The Volunteer Center will continue taking donations through May 25.