

Laura Nelson continues her prolific and successful running career in 2011 after winning the Runner of the Year award in 2010



Laura Nelson won the Female Runner of the Year award in 2010 and followed her great year with another in 2011. Laura, a masters runner at 46 years old, is one of the most active and successful runners in the DFW area. In 2011, she won 37 overall titles (40, she said, if the three beer miles are counted) and 19 masters victories. For those achievements, Laura has been selected the 2011 Female Masters Runner of the Year.

Even with those numbers, she didn't run away with the selection as a few others were in contention. But her second consecutive masters victory at the competitive DRC Half in November is what cemented her selection. It again showed she can win at various distances.



Laura said some of her 2011 highlights included two sub-19s in the 5K. She set a masters personal record of 18:44 at the Dallas Komen run and an age group PR in the 10K with a 39:47 at the Fort Worth Runners Club Mercury Run on back-to-back days in October. She also ran an age group PR of 2:42 in the 800 meters, won the RRCA Southern Region title in the 15K at the Fort Worth Runners Club Labor Day run; was the masters winner in the Dallas Komen 5K; the DRC Half masters champ, and took the overall title at the RRCA 10K Texas Championships at the LGRAW Double Trouble. And, she includes the three beer miles among her highlights. That's an event where participants must drink a beer each lap. She set a beer mile PR of 8:04.

"Also, I won some track events, mostly in the Masters division," she said.

Laura has set her 2012 goals as trying to stay fit, be injury free and competitive in the Masters and age group divisions in all distances. She formerly was a successful long-distance runner and said he "hopes to be able to run ultras and marathons again in a few years."

Some of her other masters victories included the Cowtown 5K, the Mayfest 5K, the xSIGHTment 5K, the FW Labor Day 15K, the Tour des Fleurs Challenge 10K, the Lake Joe Pool Pumpkin 10K and the Arlington Turkey Trot 5K.

Her female overall victories included the LGRAW Bold In The Cold 15K, the Germanfest 5K, the American Heroes 10K, the Vineyard Run 5K, and several Fort Worth Runners Club and Carrollton Runners Club races.

The impressive thing about Laura is that she not only competes often, sometimes on back-to-back days, but that she also manages quality efforts. Maybe she's able to do this because of her training and competing at ultra distances.

She began running in January, 1985, when she registered for a jogging class at a community college. "I figured I'd get one credit for taking the class and also lose weight. I soon decided to join the cross country team because they needed an extra person, and they were really desperate. That turned out to be a lot of fun for me."

She ran her first 5K cross-country race in 20-22 minutes and continued to drop her times into the 19-20 range.

Laura ventured into ultra running shortly after the birth of her daughter Ellie, who's now in her 20s, when a friend talked her doing the JFK 50-miler in Maryland.

"I finished it, but I almost dropped dead," she said. But she not only survived and but came back to win the JFK 50-miler trail run four times. She also has won "about" 15 marathons, including three Atlantic City titles. She ran her first 100-miler at the Umstead trail run in 2003 and won.

In her late 30s, she qualified twice for the 100K National team and ran for the U.S. in Asia and Europe. After turning 40, she qualified twice for the 24-hour U.S. National team, and won the USATF Open National 50-mile championship in 2004 at Tussey Mountain in Pennsylvania.

But the longer distances started wearing on her and she backed off to the shorter runs and continues to excel.

Here's a list of her all-time PRs:

5:15	--	1	mile
17:29	--		5K
35:25	--		10K
54:51	--		15K
1:20:49	--	half	marathon
2:51:05	--		marathon
6:59	--	50-mile	trail
8:38	--		100K
18:30	--	100-mile	trail
124.3 miles in 24 Hours			