

## Jackson's speed barely slowing at age 49

By Fiona Green



Whenever James Jackson shows up to a race, the first thought that crosses my mind is “I wonder who will take second place?” and the next is “I hope he doesn't lap me.”

The 49-year-old apparently from Denton has defied the laws of aging and is still running times that leave his high school-age rivals in the dust. At Saturday's (April 2) March for Water 5K in Colleyville, Jackson clocked 16:44.7 -- that's a blistering 5.23 mile pace.

The course was somewhat complicated as it consisted of a couple of snaking loops around a school parking lot. Jackson, whose times are fairly consistent, noted that the course appeared a little long and that, according to his watch, he had reached the 5K mark in 15:58. While he didn't have too much competition with runner-up Randy Bobe finishing in 18:00, he shared with me the story of his recent experience at the Bearathon Half Marathon in Waco, where the competition was more intense.

The Bearathon is, according to the event website, the toughest half in Texas. The course, which features several challenging hills, is definitely not for the faint of heart. Jackson, however, decided to embrace the challenge and almost topped the entire field.

He was second to Brad Miles (perfect name for a runner), an athlete half this age and who was an outstanding runner at Baylor. Toward the end of the race, Miles apparently struck up a conversation with Jackson. He told Jackson it had been an honor to run with him but that he wasn't ready to be beaten by someone old enough to be his father. Then he took off, leaving Jackson speechless. Actually the speechless part might have had something to do with the fact that he was holding a 5:41 pace on a hilly course!

Jackson used their interaction as motivation and managed to dig deep and push hard over the last couple of miles. While it wasn't quite enough to beat Miles, it was enough to earn him a finish time of 1:14:24 and the respect of everyone watching the race. Jackson's next challenge will be the Pittsburgh Marathon on May 1 where he hopes to break 2:30. We will be rooting for you James!

(Shown in photo from left are Ken Hall, 52, who ran a 19:20, overall female winner Fiona and James Jackson)