

Aug. 6-7 Highlights

By Charles Clines

* Must be something about the heat, but what could be more refreshing than carrying a watermelon while running a half mile, and handing it off to your partner so he could do the same thing as the thermometer creeps toward the 90s? Well, maybe that isn't refreshing, but the refreshing part is when you can cut open the melon and dig in. That's what happened Sunday (Aug. 7) at the **FWRC's Watermelon Run**, a fun event that started several years ago when each of the two-person teams had to carry the melon for a mile. The past several years, the distance has been a half-mile for each runner – thankfully. You can find some inventive ways to carry a melon that far and none is very comfortable. Anyway, before the watermelon run, 159 runners and walkers finished a 5K with Denton Guyer High School runner **Ben Gillick**, 17, taking the male overall award with a 17:12.4, and **Esperanza Lopez**, 25, of Fort Worth winning the female award with a 19:31.7.

* **Ben Chesang** and **John Valentine** hooked up in a duel for the overall male award at the **Moni 5K for Children** in Farmer's Branch on Saturday morning (Aug. 6), and Chesang, 32, of Irving sped to victory with a 15:30. Valentine, 24, finished with a 15:51. **Clint Bell**, 37, of Dallas also rang up a nice time of 16:38 to finish third. **Kelsey Bruce**, 24, won the female race with a blistering 17:34, good for fourth overall. Bruce, who was a standout at Dallas Baptist University, where she didn't lose an NCCAA race since outdoor track in 2013. She also won 11 NCCAA National Championships in indoor and outdoor track. She's a four-time NCCAA National record holder and a four-time conference MVP. So, in a nutshell, she has some speed. And, yes, that was the great **Bill Rodgers** who finished with a 24:54. He is one of the top runners of all time, and his top feats include winning four Boston and New York marathons. Now 68, he is a prostate cancer survivor and makes several appearances at races across the nation each year. His other Texas appearance this year was at the Fit Foodie 5K in Austin in June.

* Well, I'm assuming the **Keith Johnson**, 55, who has been among top masters finishers the past several weeks is the same runner who practically dominated in area road-racing during his prime years. He moved away for several years and apparently is back. He ran a 20:16 at Wednesday night's **Jogger 5K** in Dallas, posting a 20:16, and was the male masters winner on July 31 at the **Carrollton Runners Club's 5K** with a 19:45.71. So, welcome back Keith. It was great watching and writing about you in the years I covered running while at the *Star-Telegram*.