

My View

Some Highlights from 2016



Well, 2016 ended with races mostly enjoying nice weather throughout the year, and several runners added to their already impressive résumés in area races. So, here are some of the runners who enjoyed rather exceptional seasons. Note: Overall and Masters victories from area races might not be accurate even though I tried to keep a list of area race winners. If not accurate, they should be close and at least will give an idea of these runners' accomplishments.

* One that I thought should top the list is **Keith Pierce's** victory at the **Dallas Marathon**. Much like 2015 when **Logan Sherman** won, this was Pierce's first Dallas victory. Also, Pierce is a three-time winner of the **Cowtown Marathon** and he has won the **Austin Marathon**. Sherman, who was runner-up at Dallas, also has a Cowtown feat by winning all the distances in Fort Worth – 5K, 10K, half, marathon and ultra.

* And speaking of Cowtown feats, **Elizabeth (Eder) Northern** joined Sherman as the only two to have won all the Cowtown distances. Only two weeks after competing in the Olympic Marathon Trials, the Fort Worth runner won the Ultra to sweep all the distances. She had to limit her running most of the year because she became a mother. Also at Cowtown, Pierce finished second in the 35-39 male age division with a 2:33:39; **Ricky Cox**, the first to win three Cowtown marathons, was third in the 55-59 division in the half marathon; **Thomas Okazaki**, 59, of Southlake finished his 200th marathon, and the never-aging **Larry Lichnovsky**, 67, was among the few to complete their 100th marathon, running an impressive 3:38:33; and **James Jackson**, who won the 1992 Cowtown 10K with a 30:19, was third overall in the 10K last year, clocking a 33:12.

* Among the females who took home multiple overall awards including **Emily Field**. She netted at least 14 overall female victories, including **Too Cold to Hold 5K** in Dallas on Jan. 31. Some other impressive victories came at the **Trinity River Levee 5K**, which started a string of wins in March and April, including the **Paddy Dash 5K**, the **Dash Down Greenville 5K**, the **Fort Worth Zoo Run**, the **Skyline Half Marathon**, the **Bagel Run 5K** and the **Run for Human Rights**. Whew. She was busy. But she wasn't finished and closed out the year with a victory at the **Chocoholic Frolic 10K** on Dec. 4. **Magly Soto** also had a sterling year, posting at least 14 overall victories. She started last year the same as this year by winning the **Jiggle Butt Run** in Arlington. Among her victories were the **Wounded Warriors 5K**, the **Lake Joe Pool 5K** and the **Azle Lake Run Half**. She also became a masters runner last year when she turned 40 and took at least two masters awards. Our own reporter **Fiona Green** had at least 11 area overall victories and won at least 18 masters awards. **Laura Nelson** and **Sheila Natho** put together a sterling season, too, bagging several overall and masters awards. And then there's longtime area competitor **Francis McKissick**. After overcoming a health problem a few years ago, she collected at least eight overall awards and 15 masters awards. Where do they keep all these?

* On the male side, **Clint Bell**, another longtime area competitor, racked up at least 11 overall victories and wasn't too far behind winners in other races. He usually stuck to the 5K distance, posting impressive times, but did win the **Plano Pacers 5-Mile Fling** in September. **Froylan Franco** also had a rewarding season, taking home at least seven overall awards and eight masters awards. **Sergio Hernandez** was another masters runner who bagged multiple awards, taking at least 11, including varying distances such as the **Lake Benbrook Half**. **Keith Johnson**, who once was among the runners to beat in the area before moving away, has returned and won at least six masters awards. **Matt Celone** proved to be difficult to beat as he collected at least eight masters awards and an overall award. **Trever Napier** had the next highest masters total wins with six, including the **DRC Love the Loop 5K**.

There are numerous other runners who deserve to be mentioned. Actually everyone who laces up for a race deserves to be mentioned. The dedication and hard work to maintain the physical conditioning to run or walk is admirable. Possibly more than me wearing out my TV remote buttons.