

Looking back at 1991-2 and 1997; surprises highlighted the years

Sometimes I will take nostalgic trips, and this is one of those times. So, get out your magic carpet and come with me. Going back to 1997 and 1991-2:

In '97, the Cowtown was inviting elite runners mostly for the 10K and offering a Miller Challenge \$1,000 bonus for beating the 10K course records. The invited female elite runner was Gwyn Coogan, who, among her many accomplishments had competed in the 1992 Olympics. Even among the talented local runners, no one was expected to challenge Gwyn, and she was expected win for the second consecutive year and to set the course record. She did set the course record by four seconds.



The only problem was she came in second.

She ran a 33:10, but a late unnoticed entry upstaged her with a sizzling 31:32. The surprise winner, at least to the media because she hadn't been announced as an entrant, was Catherina McKiernan from Ireland. She had been Gwyn's nemesis in other races and just happened to stop the night before in Fort Worth en route to Europe from New Mexico. She was somewhat perturbed after her victory because few in the media knew of her background, and that Cowtown officials supposedly had not given her the same hospitality as Gwyn. But being a late entry, she might have been expecting too much. Both were awarded the \$1,000 bonus money for beating the previous record of 33:14 by Jody Hawkins, so that probably soothed her somewhat.

In 1991, another surprise occurred, this time at the summer Trinity 5000 series. James Jackson – yep the same runner who's gathering masters awards these days – was collecting numerous overall awards and had been the male winner in the All Saints Grand Prix Series, which offered a \$4,500 purse. \$500 was awarded to the male and female winners. Runners had to compete in four of six races and they earned points according to their finishes. Traci Kramer of Denton was the female winner.

So, no one expected James not to win this particular 5000 race. He already had beaten the area's best, including Keith Johnson, Agapius Masong, Shawn Gardner and newcomer Doug Hanson. But it was Hanson who got even that Thursday night.

Doug and James were fairly close coming down the stretch and then Hanson turned on the afterburners and blazed to the finish with a course record 14:55.

James extracted a little revenge, though, in the 1992 Cowtown when the two were expected to battle for the 10K overall title. But Doug wasn't up for the challenge as James took control when racing up the North Main Street bridge from the Stockyards (that was the original course) and won with a 30:19. The women's winner was Francie Larriue-Smith, an elite runner from Dallas, who notched a 34:19.