

The Sandy Post

Sports and Recreation



Runners crowd the start of the Sandy Almost 10-K in July.

Runners always chasing, never catching winners

by HANK EMRICH

Many are called but few are chosen.

That Biblical verse could very well fit the prospects of the thousands of runners who each weekend participate in organized road races.

From fun runs to 26-mile marathons, the races are usually packed. While Sandy area runners are admittedly sparse among the elite who first cross the finish line, many are proud to have crossed it at all.

Terry Houston has competed in 20-25 races this year, but has

yet to receive a trophy or a winner's check.

"I'm competitive but not good enough to win," said Houston.

Houston, 31, runs 50 miles a week, and is training for one of two marathons he runs each year. Knowing he won't be first causes him to look elsewhere for the thrill of competition.

Like many other runners, he enjoys the better organized races, where accurate timekeeping enable him to try to better his own personal records and compete against others matched by age groups.

Of nearly 7,000 runners in

Portland's Cascade Run-Off, Houston finished 254th.

Farther back was Wayne Berglund, who finished "somewhere near the middle of the pack."

Running for the third year, Berglund remembers all entrants being asked to sign a form stating whether they would accept prize money if they won, thereby jeopardizing their amateur status.

"I was ready to give mine up, but I guess I didn't need to worry," he said.

The Run-Off has the fastest

runners line up at the front, with increasingly slower runners to the back.

"I don't even see the winners until the award ceremony," said Berglund.

Still, Berglund enjoys the races both as motivation to keep him running, and for social reasons.

"After a while you start to see the same faces," said Houston.

Bill Blazek says most runners run alone and races give them an opportunity to be involved in the sport with other people.

"It's not like racquetball or tennis where you always have a

partner," he said.

Blazek said the races are secondary to his running and he does it as an emotional release.

"Everybody needs a little freedom sometimes," he said.

Laurie Espenel runs often with her husband Bob, and a group of several friends.

"A lot of it is the social aspect, but there are many other reasons for entering a race," said Laurie.

She says some people prefer entering races where the scenery is nice, some prefer small races, and others like the

crowds.

"I like them at least organized enough that cars aren't running you over," she said.

For some road races will never be their "thing." Jeanine Blazek said she doesn't plan on running another after the recent "Almost 10-K" run in Sandy.

"Just to finish was great, it was fun, but the hills were a little shocking."

Jeanine and her husband Bill, who ran with her to help with her breathing, were the last to cross the finish line in that race.



Runners at the back of the pack at the Hoodland July Fly.

Hectic schedule draining

Judi Duff, 16, batted nearly 400 for the Sandy Pioneers last spring. So how did she do this summer against Churchill pitching ace Kim Moe?

She placed a softball in right field, but unfortunately it was also hit directly to the right fielder.

"It's something I won't forget because she is really good," Duff said, though she thinks batters sometimes have a tendency to get psyched out when facing Moe.

The Emmert Industries Diamonds of Milwaukie, the senior fastpitch team on which she played, finished second in the Mid-Willamette Valley League with an 8-1 record, took third in the 12-team state tournament at Canby and was fifth in the 20-team regional tournament recently in Tacoma, Wash., having lost only to

the champions of Oregon and Washington. They were 21-10-1 overall.

Softball games and practices weren't the only activities to occupy her time. She also practiced volleyball all winter and through June, when the Mt. Hood Volleyball Club completed its season with a 208-team tournament in Los Angeles. Fifty-five of those teams were in their division. In March the Mt. Hood Club finished fourth in regional competition.

"You get tired of it," Duff admitted. "One practice you can say, 'No more,' but the next practice you're fired up again. It's draining, but it's fun."

Duff said volleyball and softball are the two sports in which she wants

to excel. She believes a person just begins to get proficient in a sport at the time the high school season ends, thus explaining her participation on non-school teams.

Having just turned 16 a few weeks ago, she depended on her parents for rides to practices and games. "It took a lot of time for my mom and dad to let me play on this team (the Diamonds)," she said, "but it was good for me to be on a team with people who really wanted to play." She said they "almost always" had perfect attendance at practices, though they had team members from Milwaukie, Putnam, Gladstone and Oregon City.

Duff was a pitcher and occasional third baseman for the Pioneers, but played left field for the Diamonds, a



Judi Duff

position she hadn't played for five or six years.

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Trouble's worth it

Wendy Heckard, 16, was on the road a lot this summer as a member of the Milwaukie Kleats softball team.

"It was a lot of driving, but it was worth it," said Heckard, whose team won the Mid-Willamette Valley League with a 9-0 record.

There were also players from LaSalle, Putnam, Oregon City and Canby on the team, with the competition tougher than what one faces during the school year. "The people who go out want to play," Heckard said.

Heckard, a two-year letterman for Sandy High School in softball, earned second team Mt. Hood Conference honors at shortstop her sophomore year. She also participates in volleyball, and started on the varsity basketball team last winter.



Wendy Heckard

Hwy. 26, Sandy Phone 668-8058

PAOLA'S PIZZA BARN

Congratulations to:
TONY HALE

Hale, 13, had the best average this summer on Bruce Cook Insurance's senior division team, which won the district title. Hale hit .429 and contributed eight home runs, which was "phenomenal," said Coach Tim Novotny.

Hale also "did a real fine job" at catcher, and also pitched. Way to go, Tony!

Enjoy great pizzas & good times at Paola's!

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Travel Tips
by TOM WEST
of Damascus Travel Service

VOYAGES TO ANTARCTICA

"We were among icebergs. The most interesting were those where the center of gravity had shifted and the icebergs had turned over. Their pinnacles and geometric shapes had been carved by waves and currents to form sculptures of unusual beauty. Most wore a white cushion of snow, and a few were giving free rides to the penguins. When we reached the ice pack the floating ice had reduced surface movements caused by wind, and the ship glided smoothly and reassuringly between the ice floes. The only sound in the tranquil Antarctic summer was the sibilant hiss of broken ice against the bow."

"The island was an active volcano. A dense spiral of smoke rose white against the blue sky and yellow sluphr streaked the snowy slopes. . . . The scene was breathtaking, but it was the lower slopes and the rocky shore that held our attention. Tightly massed penguins stood on very spot where they could gain foothold. We heard of an estimate of 18 million made by the research vessel Endurance, but even this incredible statistic had not prepared us . . . the sea around the ship was boiling with the passage of thousands more penguins."

These are extracts from logs of previous Antarctic voyages. They describe scenes you may probably witness, if you take an expedition on the M.S. Lindblad Explorer.

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