

PINEY WOODS 10 MILE AND 5K TRAIL RUNS 2010 REPORT

The first annual Piney Woods 10 Mile and 5k Trail Runs will probably never be topped by any future years in terms of wet trails and Friday before the race, I was not really sure if that is a good thing or a bad thing. Marking the trails on the Friday before the race I thought it would be a bad thing, a very bad thing. Especially since, for a trail run in good conditions, Piney woods should be more or less a race geared toward novices or someone who wants a fast trail run. Lake Houston Park in New Caney, Texas has nice flat trails with minimal objects to trip over.

Well, the rain we got Friday night changed all that and made conditions soft and spongy at best, to ankle deep, unavoidable swamp at worst. We had to reroute the course from the original plan due to deep standing water, deeper water than what the runners experienced on race day. Oh, and did I mention that the temps were in the upper 30's with a nice steady breeze?

Despite these challenges, everyone had a blast! I really thought I would get at least a handful thinking I was insane for putting the race on in those conditions but everyone had a great time. Maybe it was finishing to a warm fire, bbq, beer and music that set them free, or just the fact that everyone else was out there in the same conditions but everyone that crossed the finish line had a smile on their face....well almost everyone, and if they didn't they eventually had one once they were by the fire eating bbq and sipping a beverage.

The 10 Miler male and female over all was won by a husband and wife duo. They are actually friends of mine from when they were stationed in the army in San Antonio. I didn't even know they were registered until race day. Andrew Thompson took the 10 mile overall prize with a time of 1:10:32. The top female was his lovely bride Analise Thompson, with a time of 1:13:54.

The top male master was won by Pablo Matta with an impressive time of 1:14:21. The overall master female award caused me to break out in a severe brain cramp. We had so many in the 10 miler switching to the 5k that when I saw a woman 60 yrs of age winning the women's masters with a time of 1:14, I immediately thought "no way." She had to be a 10 miler who dropped to the 5k. No 60-year-old

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runs that fast, I thought. I was wrong. Turns out Sabra Harvey holds a few world records for her age group and actually posted a legit 1:14:26, winning the masters division. After a brief time out to fix things, we were able to move forward in with the 10 mile award ceremony.

The 5k was won by Carlos Arial who navigated the course in an impressive 19:54. Sub six minute miles in the wet conditions Carlos ran in is extremely quick. The first female to cross the line was Jordan Warmath in 28:30. The masters was won by Josh Rubin with a time of 23:10 and the women's master crown went to Renee Ardoin with a time of 34:40.

I want to start the thanking portion of this race report by thanking my friends Jacqueline Amaya, Brenda Bryson, Rick Clarke, Anne-Marie Parramore, Marissa Toland, Mark Vreeke, brother Stephen Vreeke, and Carl Winkler. All of these folks made the trip to Houston from San Antonio and some points further west. They helped with all aspects of the race and stuck around till the final piece of marking tape was pulled from the last tree. They also made the trip very fun.

I would also like to thank HEB for their Quench and Spring Water to help keep us all hydrated and moving, and Michelob Ultra for the cerveza, great signage and mile markers that reminded runners how far they have gone and how much they have left. Also Houston Trail Runners Extreme with Mariella Botella, Jay Alvarez, Kim Pilcher, Denise Wenner, R. Spaulding, Devon Brown and Tim Hale. Volunteer extraordinaire Suzanne Ballard was also a tremendous help. IAAP was a major contributor with timing and help with packet stuffing and finish. Houston Parks and Rec who gave us this beautiful park to work with and its park manager Paul Hendrix who was a pleasure to deal with and made us feel right at home. We look forward to doing this again next year.

Until then, visit us at www.RunInTexas.com to see the other events we're planning. Hope to see you again soon!