

The Oak Openings Stampede

The third edition of the Oak Openings Stampede 25K Trail Race and 5K Fun Run took place on Sunday, September 16th, a perfect Indian summer morning with blue skies and race start temperature in the low 50's. There were a record number of participants with 187 runners completing the 25K Scout trail course and 56 finishers of the 5K Blue trail run.

The 25K course was in great shape and, combined with the cool temperature, ripe for fast times. Forty runners went under two hours and three course records were broken. Local running legend Matt Folk took the 25K lead early and pulled away from the field to win and set a new overall course record of 1:30:09. Matt was hoping to go under 1:30, but was temporarily disheartened when the UT women's cross country team passed him on their Sunday long run. Still Matt looks to be in great shape for his bid to repeat last year's Columbus marathon victory.

The top female finisher was Alison Crocker who is an astrophysicist at UT and also world-ranked in the sport of orienteering. She put her navigational skills to good use as she finished 5th overall and left most of the male runners behind early in the contest. Alison also set a women's course record of 1:41:25 that will be very hard to beat.

Marco Capelli of Perrysburg was the top Male Masters runner and finished second overall in an outstanding time of 1:36:46. His effort was knocking on the door of Steve Baugh's 2010 Male Masters record of 1:35:48. Michelle Brooks from Sylvania was the Female Masters winner and crushed that group's course record by over eight minutes with an impressive 1:55:49, good for 29th place overall.

For many runners in both races, this was their first time racing or even running on trails and many expressed how much fun they had. However, not all was bliss as some angry bees on the 25K course didn't enjoy having their territory invaded. Several runners took home stings in addition to their finisher medals and dirty feet. After the runs, refreshments were provided in the new Buehner Center next to Mallard Lake. Chocolate chip pancakes were served up by Don Leck and crew to the enjoyment of all.