

## "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED"

Every year Cross Timbers seems to have a theme. "Man on a Mission," "The Spaceman Cometh," etc. Check out the web reports in case you missed them. This years theme is simply, "Mission Accomplished." Despite the pre-race frenzy changing the race date and adding two new races to the format. This years races were the best in recent memory.

With the help of many dedicated volunteers with the success of the Cross Timbers Trail Races as the number one priority, many new athletes were introduced to the CTTR experience.

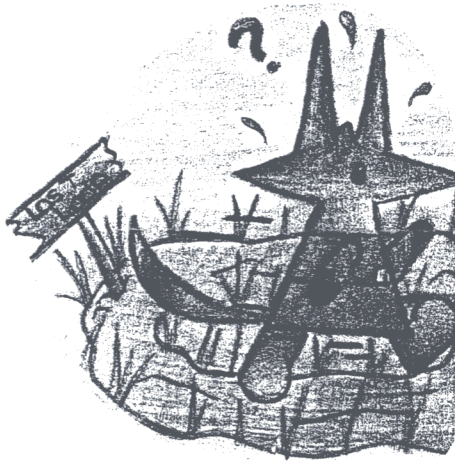
The new 5 mile event was the last to start but it was the one I was the most worried about. I knew I'd have some "speed Demons" who were trail rookies. Thoughts of a 'Wile E.' cliff fall ran through my mind. However all heeded pre-race warnings and returned safely to Cedar Bayou. All post-race comments were positive and I think CTTR has many new trail converts. Dennis Wade started conservative

but cruised the second half faster than the first taking the win and the new course record in the first running of the 5 mile. The ladies did not make it an easy task with Kelly Loughlin setting the female course record of 50:29, only 13 seconds behind Dennis's 50:16. Marshall Peterson was third overall but who knows if he was hindered or helped by his 4-legged companion "Duke."

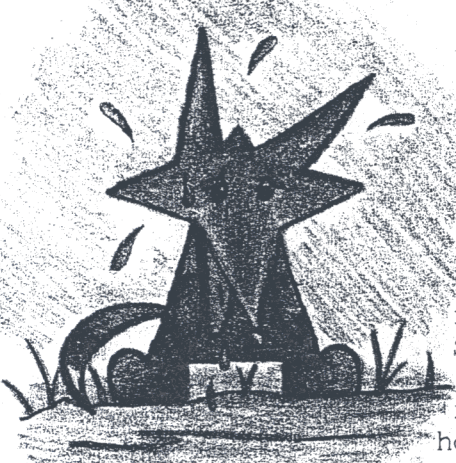
Whatever the case, both seemed to have a great time. Congratulations to all 5 mile competitors who did a great job and I hope to see all of you next year. I wonder how many of you agree that this was truly the "most challenging 5 miles in Texas?"

The half-marathon was joined by many trail rookies as well as a few seasoned veterans. None of the "newbies" were reported out on "LOST LOOP" and all seemed to navigate the trail safely and made it back in good time. Frank Liraudais set the mark for the men in 2:02:58 followed by Mark Bean in 2:09 and Josh Recer in 2:20. Carly Hale, who holds the 25 mile course record set in 2002, now holds the ½ marathon mark of 2:24:12.

Steve Shopoff, who held the 50 mile course record for 12 years (1988-2000) went out with Dale Beeson the first half of the race before his CTTR experience played to his advantage. He quickly opened up a 19 minute lead finishing in 4:09:40. Desiree Nowlin ran unchallenged to win in 5:12:26 followed by Sylvia Gonzalez and Rhonda Levene. The heat began to take its toll on the 25 milers in the early afternoon as it became too warm to stay out on the trail too long.



The big challenge of the day was the 50 mile. The trail once again proved to live up to its reputation as "the toughest trail in Texas." German Collazos and Juan Galvan set the early pace going through 20 miles only 2 minutes apart with Juan having the edge. But their return from Juniper Point told the story of things to come. German opened up an 8 minute lead as Juans' problems were soon to begin. It seems Juan has a reputation for projectile vomiting which he proudly displayed for our volunteers at the Paw Paw Resort aid station. He decided that would be a good time for a break. Meanwhile Mariella Botella was taking on the 50 mile after winning the 25 last year. Sixth overall after 25 miles was not good enough for her so she began picking off the guys one by one to finish second overall in 10:28:12. A nice welcome to the 50 mile.



The heat really began to become a problem as many began to struggle and call it quits. Erik Moortgat was second male in 10:38 and David Jensen third in 11:26. The remaining finishers all left Cedar Bayou to Juniper Point with little time to spare. I was preparing a search party with flashlights to retrieve anyone left out on the cliffs in the dark. Jerry Proctor arrived first while Juan Galvan recovered well to finish 6th overall. Maria Centeno Sara Shannon finished 38 seconds apart as 2nd and 3rd place ladies while Bob Williams became CTTRs first 20 time finisher of the 50 mile. He will be honored as the first inductee to the CTTR 1000 mile trail champions.

For the most part, the runners stayed on course with a few trying to head down to Eagles Roost. The rest of the day was filled with good food and good friends.

Now for all of the all important thank yous. First of all, thanks to the McCoul and Hale families as well as Jeremy Dunn who were all an incredible asset in the last minute changes in the race plans. Also for their gallant efforts on race day. Theresa McCoul was part of the entertainment at Juniper point and her husband John took over the chore of aid station rover which takes a huge relief off of me. Roger Hale and his daughter, Carly along with Jeremy ran the 1/2 marathon then after a short rest, went back to work with Roger helping out at Cedar Bayou and Carly and Jeremy set out to Paw Paw Resort to relieve the crew there. Gene Brock was back again at his PPR post and later finished up at the paw paw point aid station. Robert King after his best finish last year could not run this year so he manned an aid station before pacing Bob Williams to his 20th finish. Larry Flies once again went beyond the call of duty as he cleared the trail of leaves and set up an aid table in the middle of the woods. Thanks to Mariela Botella for her excellent work on the CTTR web site. Check it out at [WWW.geocities.com/cross\\_timbers\\_04](http://WWW.geocities.com/cross_timbers_04). And Thanks to all who have sent in comments good and bad. Let me know how CTTR can be improved. Afterall, this race has always been for the runner and will continue to improve accordingly. And last but not least, I have to thank my wife Mary for being there this year and putting in her exhausting efforts for days. And I thank my daughter Kasey for her artwork on the shirt logo's and for her help at the Cedar Bayou aid station after completing her event.

I've gotten lot's of feedback from runners about next years race date and the overwhelming choice has been to stick with CTTR tradition and go back to the 3rd Saturday in March. Mark your calendars for March 19th, 2005 for the 24th running of the Cross Timbers Trail Run. I hope to see you on the trails.

As for our new mascot, Toby the fox, he is the mastermind behind putting S.O.B. hill back into the race at the Juniper Point turnaround. It seems he enjoys the pain of others. For those new to Cross Timbers, check the web for past reports and the history of CTTRs mascots.

Thanks again to all of the runners who made this years race a most successful one. Good running and see you next year.

