

Nearly 500 runners turn out for Route 66 Festival 10K race

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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The conditions weren't the best – temperatures in the 70s and muggy conditions – but it didn't deter the spirits of the 488 runners who took part in the ninth Route 66 Festival 10K (6.2-mile) Run through downtown Edwardsville Saturday morning.

The race, held as part of the annual celebration of the legendary highway that runs through Edwardsville, was sponsored by the Metro Milers road racing club of Edwardsville and attracted runners of all abilities and ages to the event.

“Our run is the biggest 10K run in the area and the third-biggest in the St. Louis area,” said race director Chris Luers. “We've had some pretty competitive runners take part in the race previously and that's always good.”

"This year's race was run at the same time as the Susan G. Koman Foundation Race for the Cure in downtown St. Louis, and while many runners are taking part in the event, it doesn't hurt the Route 66 race either, Luers believes. “We've run the race at the same time as the Koman race before,” Luers said, “and while some runners do the Koman event, it doesn't hurt us as far as turnout goes either.”

The race offers participants a total of five water stations around the course as well as organized cheering sections throughout the course as well; participants are invited to vote on their favorite cheering sections after the race, with the winner being recognized with a donation to charity.

“We'll have a band playing right when the first runners get to the finish line and we try to have a fun atmosphere for everyone,” Luers said.

Overall race winner Justin Wieduwilt of Collinsville, who completed the course in 36:19.7, felt the conditions, while not ideal, were all right. “The last three miles were a bit difficult,” Wieduwilt said. “Everyone was slowed down by the conditions; we were hoping for some light rain today, but that didn't happen. But we're used to it, considering what time of the year it is.”

The course itself was gentle, Wieduwilt said. “There were some pretty gentle hills and the part of the course that's a bike trail was shaded,” Wieduwilt said. “Some of it was a gradual uphill run, so gradual you wouldn't know it generally.

“This was a very well-organized race and I'm really happy with the way I ran today.”

The top three spots in the men's competition were swept by Collinsville runners; finishing behind Wieduwilt were Jonathan Yoch in 36:48.1 and Colby Garman in 37:43.1. Fourth place was taken by Glen Carbon's Matthew Shearer in 38:35.8 and fifth was claimed by Moro's Jake Peal in 39:35.2

The women's division was won by Edwardsville's Liz Speicher in 39:05.5, with Springfield, Ill.'s Bethany Erwin second in 41:29.9, Mascoutah's Jennifer Trussell third in 44:03.2, Granite City's Christen Rikcker fourth in 44:11 and Edwardsville's Rebecca Bradley fifth in 45:59.1.

Male age-group winners included Edwardsville's Jonah Durbin (14 and under), Brighton's Grant Seniker (15-19), Peal (20-24), Edwardsville's Harry Senaldi (25-29), Shearer (30-34), Edwardsville's Mike Nativi (35-39), St. Louis' Tom Collier (40-44), O'Fallon's Christopher Shriver (45-49), O'Fallon's Ryan Yoch (50-54), Carlinville's Mark Hopping (55-59), Glen Carbon's Bill Doerr (60-64) and Edwardsville's Mike Reinhardt (65-69). Dow's John Roth won the Master's division.

Female age-group winners included Troy's Ana Keller (14 and under), Troy's Maddie Keller (15-19), Edwardsville's Sarah Smith (20-24), Rincker (25-29), Belleville's Amy Geisser (30-34), Edwardsville's Janelle Nativi (35-39), O'Fallon's Kathy Duprey (40-44), Edwardsville's Gina Dingman (45-49), O'Fallon's Lisa Brandt (50-54), Chesterfield,

Mo.'s Cindy Gaudet (55-59), Edwardsville's Janet Hupp (60-64) and Fairview Heights' Linda Hearn (65-69). Bradley won the women's Masters division.









