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Monday, November 22, 2004

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Running for a cause in MH

SONNY ELLIOTT
Bulletin Sports Editor

It's only fitting that the first winner of the Mountain Home Marathon for Kenya is a Kenyan.

Moses Waweru covered the 26.2-mile distance in just 2 hours, 30 minutes, 47 seconds Saturday morning to take first place overall in the inaugural event.

"I liked the course because it was very hilly and up and down," said Waweru, 26, of the race. "I think it's good for someone to run a marathon like this one, because it can be easier at some points to run a mile. This is kind of a special course. I'm feeling good, but I might be sore later."

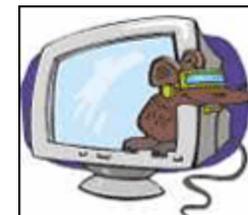
Other top winners in Saturday's marathon were: Stan Ferguson of Conway followed in second place with a time of 3:04:13, while World Vision Vice President Steve Haas of Sumner, Washington, was third at 3:26:22. Haas said he hadn't run a marathon in six years and realized a few months ago, he had better start training since he was only running about nine miles a week.

The event drew runners from Arkansas, Utah, California, Arizona, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Texas, Iowa, Michigan, and Washington as well as seven runners and walkers



Bulletin Photo by Kevin Pieper

Runners and their shoes wait for the start of the first Mountain Home Marathon Saturday morning at Mountain Home High School.



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from Kenya, Africa.

Organizers were still counting funds coming in from the benefit race, but preliminary results were in the \$14,000 to \$15,000 range. Half of the proceeds will go to an orphanage in Watoto, Kenya, and the other half will go to World Vision to help refurbish and dig water wells in Katito, Kenya, said Laurie Kasinger, organizer of the event.

Saturday's winner said his specialty is middle-distance running, but he will run some 5k races in December and travel to Texas for a half-marathon in February. It will be a while before he attempts another full marathon.

"I'm thinking I'll do another marathon next year in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.)," Waweru said. "I don't like to do a lot of marathon running right now because I'm still young. I'm still young, so I need to have more experience, more endurance and good mentality for marathons."

Chrissy Ferguson of Conway was the women's overall winner at 3:45:06, Megan Gill of Point Lookout, Mo., was second in her first marathon with a time of 3:51:26 and Gina Moore of Dallas finished third at 4:16:25.

For the 53-year-old Moore, this was her 92nd marathon and the local race received high marks from the veteran runner.

"I think it was the fourth-prettiest course I've ever run in 92 marathons and I don't think I would change a thing about it," she explained. "It was beautiful, and I loved the little hills. The last 10 miles were an optical illusion because you felt like you were running downhill. My running partner and I said we dread coming back this six or so miles. But you felt like it was still running downhill."

Moore plans to promote the Mountain Home Marathon for Kenya through the 50 States Running Club. She and her running partner Lori Pratt-Smith of Park City, Utah, will promote the event for next year at the Park City Marathon.

Even though she has participated in 92 marathons, Moore — a one-time smoker — only started running marathons in 1998.

"I smoked and gave that up 20 years ago. I started a little bit of running in 1989, but didn't start marathon running until 1998," she



Bulletin Photo by Kevin Pieper

Barefoot marathon runner Rick Roeber, 48, of Lee's Summit, Mo., runs on West Road Saturday while competing in the Mountain Home Marathon.



Bulletin Photo by Kevin Pieper

Moses Waweru of Kenya crosses the finish line first in the Mountain Home Marathon Saturday. For more on Waweru, go to Page 8A.

explained. "I was pretty healthy before I started, because I had quit smoking and taken up running. But now, I don't have any weight issues, and I can relax when I'm eating or whatever. My conscience doesn't bother me because I know I've earned the right to relax."

As she nears the 100-marathon mark, the race never gets any easier.

"At mile 18, I cuss myself for doing this, but by the time I cross the finish line, I'm ready to prepare for the next one," she said. "The people, the exercise itself and the ability to see parts of this country and the world that other people don't get to see is the reason I do this. I'm afraid if I stand still, I will rust. It's a great sport to grow up in and grow old in."

Awards also were given to the top three finishers in age groups for both male and female runners.

The top finishers in the male age-division categories were: Blake Johnson of Jonesboro, first place, men's 13-to-19 division, 3:36:34; Matthew Wise, first place, men's 20-to-29 division, 3:36:33; Mike Bennett of Mountain Home, first place, men's 30-to-39 division, 3:37:39; David Drake of Yellville, second place, men's 30-to-39 division, 3:41:48; Tom Terrill, third place, men's 30-to-39 division, 3:33:42; John Dietrich of Shawnee, Kans., first place, men's 40-to-49 division, 3:52:41; Paul Barron of Harrison, second place, men's 40-to-49 division, 3:58:36; Patrick Shea, third place, men's 40-to-49 division, 4:04:11.

Tom Defore of Unadilla, Neb., first place, men's 50-to-59 division, 3:31:36; Robert DeWar, second place, men's 50-to-59 division, 3:57:12; Steven Sawyer of Arlington Heights, Ill., third place, men's 50-to-59 division, 4:33:04; Tom Mayfield of Marshall, first place, men's 60-to-69 division, 3:27:13; Robert Bunker of Norfolk, second place, men's 60-to-69 division, 3:58:34; Glen Hendrix of Pine Bluff, third place, men's 60-to-69 division, 4:47:56; Milton Taylor, first place, men's 70-and-up division, 4:48:09; Harold Plaiser of Jenson, Mich., second place, men's 70-and-up division, 5:05:25; and Donald Lang, Glendale, Calif., third place, men's 70-and-up division, 6:29:10.

The top finishers in the female age-division categories were: Laura Curry of Mountain Home, first place, women's 30-to-39 division, 4:34:59; Kim Johnson of Harrison, second place, women's 30-to-39 division, 4:41:42; Cathy Myers of Irving, Texas, first place, women's 40-to-49 division, 4:38:41; Tina Newton, second place, women's 40-to-49 division, 4:38:45; Valerie Shipman of Bruno, third place, women's 40-to-49 division, 4:58:32.

Lori Pratt-Smith, Park City, Utah, first place, women's 50-to-59 division, 4:16:25.5; Gayle Hoffman, Little Rock, second place, women's 50-to-59 division, 5:04:10.2; and Kathy Grace, Mountain Home, first place, women's 60-to-69 division, 8:37:15.



Bulletin Photo by Kevin Pieper

Mountain Home Marathon race director Clint Pevril gives runners instructions before the start of the first Mountain Home Marathon Saturday morning at Mountain Home High School.

For more on the Mountain Home Marathon, Please see Page 8A.

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