

Sports

More than 100 runners took part in Tallahassee's 'Long Way Lady' race

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In recent years, the running/racing scene has transformed those women who were once cheerleaders and spectators into 5,000 meter runners and beyond.

To celebrate this fact more than 100 runners lined up Saturday for the "You've Come A Long Way Lady" race in Tallahassee. There were 93 women and 10 men who took part in the event.

Barbara Balzer, of the Myer's Park Runner's Club, was the overall winner for the women in the 5K (3.1 mile) distance.

Balzer, a lawyer and mother of one son, Cullen, took off with the pack of 5k racers and quickly gained the lead. She was followed closely through the first mile by Donna Miller. Bringing up the third place was Cheryl Jennings.

Going through the first mile at 5:50 was not easy as the start of the race was

uphill for the first 200 yards. Striding out down hill after one mile Balzer made her move, a 1/2 mile burst that left Miller alone at the number two position.

Fighting off the heat and humidity, Balzer maintained her pace and followed the front runner of the men's group, Dave Picariello, to the finish. (Editor's note: Picariello is the author of this story). The final .1 was downhill after a steep climb on most of mile three.

Balzer's winning time of 18:33 was a minute and 10 seconds faster than the second place Miller. She finished in 19:43. Cheryl Jennings was third in 19:49.

"It was great to go along behind somebody else," Balzer said after the race. "Following those feet kind of hypnotizes you into a pace. I don't think I could have done it otherwise. I'm glad someone took the lead. My times have been getting progressively

slower until today."

Balzer was given a bouquet of flowers upon finishing the course.

The weekend race was one of nearly 100 races held throughout the country designed to draw attention to the women's distance races in the 1984 Olympic Games.

Shirley Bull and Dot Skofronik, race directors, took time to thank everyone for participating in the race or helping out on the course at the aid stations.

Most everyone stayed around after the race to enjoy a covered dish brunch by some of the racers and area merchants. Gradually the crowd thinned out after congratulations were handed out all around.

The overall winner in the one-mile run for women was Joyce Lowery in 5:57. Mark Hazleh won the men's mile in 5:54. Picariello was first in the men's 5k in 18:25.