



Contributing writer Alicia Weber and Brazilian athlete Marcus Dasilva took first place in their respective races. (Staff photo)

Runners from around the world took part in Clermont's second annual Death March contest

By Alicia Weber

Clermont's 2nd Annual Summer Death March took place on what was to be one of the hottest and longest days of the year on June 21 at 1:30pm. Race Director, Todd Lytle captured fifth overall in the 10 mile and he was very pleased with the turnout of over 200 racers from all over Florida.

The race started with a 10 minute torrential downpour, then it switched back to a hot trot as runners raced in either the 5k or 10 mile.

Lytle said, "The sun coming out in the race really made the day; making it brutally hot and exactly what we signed up for."

The race was for ages 17 and older and it required mental and physical preparation. Water and cooling stations were along the course to keep runners hydrated and cool in the heat of the day. There was no shade as runners traversed the thick sand of the road.

The 10 mile was a tough fairly flat loop held along Five Mile Road. The 5k along North Bradshaw Road was more challenging with rolling hills that each measured a couple hundred meters in climbing distance.

Marcus Dasilva and myself are self-coached athletes who captured 1st overall in their respective races. With a 3 minute lead, I won first overall out of men and women for the 5k in 20:36. With a 2 minute lead, Dasilva won the 10 mile in 1:03:04.

It was an exciting challenge and I met my goal. This is my 88th career victory on the first day of summer. I am so glad we ran up and down the hills.

Dasilva said, "It was awesome. It got really hot the last four miles. I run six to ten miles normally and it is definitely a test to run this race."

This is only Dasilva's fifth race as a serious competitive runner. He has been running for fitness for 12 years though. His parents flew in from Brazil and watched him win.

They commented, "He just got serious with running and this is our first time to see him win. We are thrilled."

The top five overall received award glasses. The top five in the 5k were Weber, Daniel Cole, Sylvan McElroy, Jonathan Blackburn, and Sergio Villarreal.

The top five in the 10 mile were Marcus Dasilva, Matthew Farrell, Dave Picciano, Michael Farrell, and Todd Lytle.

Athletes into ultra running flocked to this event to prepare for their upcoming 50 or 100 mile race. Sun Coast Striders of Bradenton, Laura Fulk and her husband Ray came to this "concept race" as Ray called it. This was his start to ultra-training as Ray ran the 5k, while his wife ran the 10 mile.

Laura Fulk said, "It's good to run this race to prepare for a 12 hr race. I'm happy and it was a learning experience."

South Florida runner, Sam Wright said, "I did not know what to expect and I exceeded my goal. I enjoy running in the heat. I came all the way from Miami for this challenge."

Jenny McElroy was 2nd place female in the 10 mile with a time of 1:18:32. Two weeks ago, McElroy won first for women and 2nd overall in the Moonlight Boogie 50 Mile Race held in Ellerbe, North Carolina.

Ultra runner Steve Wheeler finished 24th in the 10 mile and he exclaimed, "I love ultras. I heard about this race and I had to run in it."