

Local Motion

Wharf to Wharf

7-28-03



Women: Fitchen is second local to win

By JULIE JAG
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

CAPITOLA — Quietly, the Wharf to Wharf torch was passed.

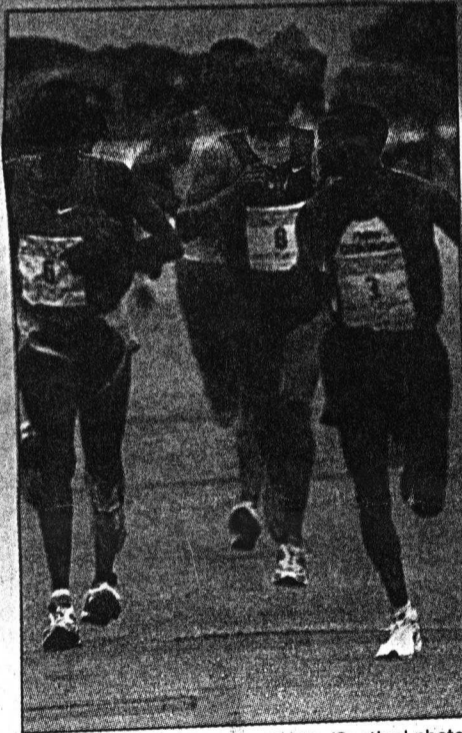
It happened when Kim Fitchen-Young and Barb Acosta met for a jog back to Seabright Beach after Sunday's race. Side by side, Fitchen, the newly crowned winner of the women's race, strode with Acosta, the only other Santa Cruz County woman to have won in the Wharf's 31-year history.

Acosta had won the Wharf to Wharf three previous times, in 1990, '94 and '96, and was happy to leave Fitchen-Young with the responsibility of being the resident contender.

"Every year, about a week before the race, I'd have all kinds of people calling me, asking me if I was going to run this year," said Acosta, 45. "Now I can point to her and say, 'Now you can do this.'"

The 35-year-old Fitchen-Young was eager, and apparently able, to take over the task. After finishing fourth a year ago, she left her competition in the fog Sunday, finishing in 31 minutes, 19 seconds. Her closest competitor, Naomi Wangui of Kenya, finished 1:24 back in 32:43, while Agnes Ngunjiri of Kenya finished in 32:59 for third.

See **WOMEN** on **PAGE B2**



Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos

TOP: Kim Fitchen-Young becomes the first local woman to win since Barb Acosta.
ABOVE: Patrick Nthiwa, left, and John Gwako cruise past Brett Gotcher, center.

Men: Gotcher still can't catch Kenyans

By CHRISTINA TELLER
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

CAPITOLA — Just for fun. That was Brett Gotcher's objective going into the 2003 Wharf to Wharf race.

But once the starting gun sounded and his adrenaline started flowing, the importance of having fun diminished, and his "just for fun" intentions were left in front of the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.

"I say that, but once I get out there in the race, you want to go hard," said Gotcher, who was a standout at Aptos High and will begin his sophomore cross-country season at Stanford this fall.

Gotcher ran with the lead pack for about the first 2 1/2 miles, at which point Kenyans Patrick Nthiwa and John Gwako took off.

Gotcher, who recently won the 10,000-meters at the Pan Am Junior World Games, was the top local finisher, taking third overall in 28 minutes, 46 seconds. Nthiwa of Kenya won the race in 27:35 followed 2 seconds later by Gwako.

Nthiwa was awarded \$3,000 and Gwako earned \$2,000, but because Gotcher is an NCAA athlete, he was unable to accept his \$1,000 prize.

"We've never had this happen before. I talked to

See **MEN** on **PAGE B2**

Plenty of weirdness to be found along course

SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

CAPITOLA — As the last few stragglers crossed the finish line in Sunday's Wharf to Wharf race, one was panting a little more heavily than the rest.

NOTEBOOK

Of course, that makes sense since she's a dog. Khamil Mach and his pooch Luna finished the race in just over an hour and 22 minutes — a solid performance considering Luna was hampered by a

we're a team," he said. "Running with her was really fun."

Amidst the hundreds of sleepy-eyed spectators who lined the streets in their slippers and pajamas, one group of onlookers stood out.

A small gathering of anti-war protesters waved home-made signs as the throngs of runners passed by.

One man with a large aluminum missile strapped to his back ran back and forth along San Lorenzo Boulevard as part of the demonstration, while a woman dressed like the Star



Brian and Peggy Patton bring up the rear in Sunday's race.

WHARF TO WHARF 2003

Top 100 Men

1. Patrick Nthiwa, Kenya	27:35
2. John Gwako, Kenya	27:37
3. Brett Gotcher, Watsonville	28:47
4. Christian Hesch, Morro Bay	28:58
5. Steve Moreno, Oakland	29:07
6. Likhaya Dayille, South Africa	29:17
7. Ryan Hayes, San Luis Obispo	29:25
8. Danny Gonzalez, Mountain View	29:37
9. Justin Patananan, Palmdale	29:46
10. Christopher Ziemann, Felton	30:15
11. Dan Nelson, Walnut Creek	30:21
12. Jason Hodgson, Colorado Spring	30:23
13. John Service, Capitola	30:31
14. Jeff Porto Jr., San Luis Obispo	30:41
15. Ryan Moorcroft, San Luis Obispo	30:42
16. Wayne Hopp III, San Jose	30:43
17. Jake Schmitt, Kentfield	30:46
18. Andy Kelsey, San Mateo	30:59
19. Kendrick Sealy, Campbell	31:01
20. Eddie Alaniz, San Jose	31:06
21. Chris O'Neal, San Jose	31:09
22. Joshua Small, Santa Clara	31:11
23. Jose Aispuro, Watsonville	31:25
24. Nathan Huerta, Salinas	31:26
25. Lawrence Merrifield, Portland, Ore.	31:28
26. Brian Engleton, San Luis Obispo	31:49
27. Rigoberto Ramirez, Aggie T.C.	31:50
28. John Whtol, Carmichael	31:52
29. Nestor Ayala, Parlier	31:54
30. Paul Davis, Santa Clara	32:07
31. Sean Marzolf, Lodi	32:08
32. Bryan Hacker, Cool	32:11
33. Alan Jackson, Los Gatos	32:12
34. Ricky Lucero, Scotts Valley	32:15
35. Ka Shing Lau, San Jose	32:16
36. Christopher Pecot, Pleasanton	32:16
37. Nick Fill, San Jose	32:18
38. Jeff Hongo, Campbell	32:26
39. Jon Gire, San Jose	32:28
40. Kiran Moorthy, Seaside	32:30
41. Christopher Ratliff, Santa Cruz	32:35
42. Jose Anguiano, Rohnert Park	32:45
43. Carmelo Rios, San Mateo	32:47
44. Darren Mattinson, Santa Cruz	32:48
45. Jacob Evans, Watsonville	32:53
46. Nicholas Ohler, El Cerrito	32:54
47. Erich Ackermann, Castro Valley	32:56
48. Joel Buscheck, Orinda	33:00
49. Ngoan Phan, San Jose	33:03
50. Jesse Stevick, Olympia, Wash.	33:05
51. Javier Naranjo, Soquel	33:06
52. Tom Schmitt, Kentfield	33:08
53. Andrew Lief, San Jose	33:09
54. Justin Chaudoin, San Jose	33:09
55. Andy Coe, Salinas	33:13
56. Dan Stefanisko, Big Sur	33:14
57. Santiago T.-Villega, Parlier	33:15
58. Keli Parker, Watsonville	33:16
59. Michael Bloemker, Overland Park, Kan.	33:17
60. Aaron Coe, Salinas	33:19
61. Sean Phillips, Goleta	33:22
62. Chris Butterick, Los Gatos	33:25
63. Steve Brusig, Lincoln	33:26
64. Jean-Luc Fattbert, Dublin	33:27
65. Martin Mumenthaler, Palo Alto	33:29
66. Jimmy Elam, Manteca	33:29
67. Dave Liotta, Santa Cruz	33:30
68. Ken Wilner, Belmont	33:31
69. Ian Blair, Long Beach	33:33
70. Leo Alapont, Los Gatos	33:38
71. Michae Legault, Pleasant Hill	33:41
72. Larry Hibbard, Felton	33:43
73. Patrick Rainey, Rocklin	33:44
74. Martin Brenner, Soquel	33:45
75. Jorn Tofteg Jensen, San Jose	33:50
76. Jim Angelopoulos, San Jose	33:52
77. Greg Hales, Aptos	33:58
78. Danny Tapia, Castroville	34:00
79. Steve Ware, Stockton	34:01
80. Eduardo Avila, Sunnyvale	34:04
81. Jaime Sandoval, Redwood City	34:08
82. Kusewa Kilonzi, San Mateo	34:09
83. Adalberto Corres, Seaside	34:11
84. Nick Clinton, San Jose	34:13
85. Dylan Haas, Napa	34:15
86. Ahmet Gokcek, Cupertino	34:20
87. Rob Nast, Saratoga	34:22
88. Michael Higgins, Santa Monica	34:23
89. Bob Macdonald, Sunnyvale	34:26
90. Parker Kelly, Redwood City	34:28
91. Michael Singleton, Fremont	34:28
92. David Jones, Moraga	34:31
93. Luis Sanchez, San Francisco	34:32
94. Joseph Angelo, Clovis	34:33
95. Javier Alonso, Castro Valley	34:36
96. J.D. Allegrucci, Sunnyvale	34:37
97. John Martin, San Jose	34:40
98. Joe Fabris, Capitola	34:42
99. Gilbert Munoz, Watsonville	34:51
100. Gavin Hoch, Lafayette	34:52



Hurrying to the finish line Sunday are assorted costumed characters, including a rather scary-looking Superman in running shoes.

Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Top 100 Women

1. Kim Fitchen-Young, Santa Cruz	31:19
2. Naomi Wangui, Kenya	32:43
3. Agnes Ngunjiri, Kenya	32:59
4. Christine Lundy, Palo Alto	33:16
5. Jennifer Derego, Arroyo Grande	34:10
6. Kari Anne Bertrand, Gilroy	34:20
7. Yvonne Lund, Campbell	35:09
8. Dana Jones, Moraga	35:20
9. Maria Trujillo, Los Gatos	35:45
10. Rachel Collins, Granbury, Tex.	35:50
11. Missy Lendl, Redding	35:53
12. Cathy Dubay, Santa Rosa	36:08
13. Suzanne Beste, Mountain View	36:10
14. Mary Vidovich, Los Gatos	36:14
15. Suzanne Segesta, Redwood City	36:34
16. Ramona T. Young, Watsonville	36:37
17. Brooke Murphy, San Francisco	36:40
18. Jeanene Harlick, Santa Cruz	36:43
19. Mary Powell, Boulder, Colo.	37:00
20. Chloe Glare, Menlo Park	37:07
21. Diana Harlick, Redwood City	37:25
22. Kimberly Cloud, Turlock	37:27
23. Ana Martinez, San Jose	37:45
24. Keri Nelson, Napa	37:46
25. Alison Pearson, Denair	37:47
26. Annie Adams, La Selva Beach	37:48
27. Trina Cox, Santa Rosa	37:53
28. Kazumi Nigro, Shasta Lake	37:55
29. Tina Lount-Pretre, Woodside	38:05
30. Denise Ripley, San Lorenzo	38:08
31. Mo Bartley, Cool	38:10
32. Angela Hernandez, Watsonville	38:18
33. Kirsten Kempe, Mountain View	38:23
34. Kathy Hess, Reno, Nev.	38:25
35. Angela Matthews, Sacramento	38:26
36. Katrin Tobin, Santa Cruz	38:36
37. Michelle Ruiz, Los Altos	38:39
38. Ryan Layhee, Sonora	38:49
39. Karin Van Rooyen, Dallas	38:49
40. Rachel Barber, Tulsa, Okla.	38:50
41. Laura Schmitt, Kentfield	38:57
42. Dina Farage, San Jose	38:59
43. Anna Slattery, San Francisco	39:02
44. Meghan Kelly, Redwood City	39:03
45. Kimberly Hammett, San Jose	39:06
46. Teresa Clark, Portola Valley	39:07
47. Sarna Becker, Menlo Park	39:08
48. Caitlin Morgan, El Dorado	39:10
49. Danielle Zelinski, San Jose	39:12
50. Meredith Mills, Redwood City	39:17
51. Janet Yiu, San Jose	39:19
52. Mary Kay Benz, Mukilteo, Wash.	39:20
53. Megumi Masuda, Cupertino	39:23
54. Helena Walden, Los Gatos	39:31
55. Roxanne Towne, Chico	39:32
56. Karen Ribble, San Francisco	39:32
57. Angela Tanghetti, Sacramento	39:41
58. Honor Fetherston, Los Gatos	39:44
59. Stacy Mcgihon, Piedmont	39:48
60. Tina Anderson, Fresno	39:49
61. Mari Hood, Santa Cruz	39:50
62. Patty Campbell, Concord	39:54
63. Marina Jones, Palm Desert	39:55
64. Emily Clark, Los Altos	39:56
65. Mary Maleta, Soquel	39:57
66. Brooke Determan, Santa Cruz	39:58
67. Theresa Brown, Orangevale	40:01
68. Karlyn Nieland, Lodi	40:02
69. Kelly Ramirez, Gilroy	40:13
70. Tricia Johnson, Boulder Creek	40:14
71. Jamie Basso, Livermore	40:18
72. Jennifer Kerwin, Los Gatos	40:20
73. Vanessa Hanley-Lord, Palo Alto	40:23
74. Luisa Gomes, Santa Clara	40:40
75. Jen James, Redding	40:42
76. Shelley Olds, Gilroy	40:52
77. Marianne Zerebko, Tahoe City	40:53
78. Lia Martinez, San Jose	40:56
79. Sherri McQuaide, Santa Cruz	40:58
80. Darci Cassinelli, Santa Clara	41:01
81. Gina Kidder, San Jose	41:08
82. Connie Rowden, Folsom	41:11
83. Missy Sandeman, Homewood	41:12
84. Theresa O'Brien, Fremont	41:14
85. Adair Paterno, Santa Cruz	41:15
86. Carrie Mangiapane, Modesto	41:19
87. Kristen Ball, Roseburg, Ore.	41:21
88. Clara Aarup, Dublin	41:22
89. Julie Rohloff, Los Gatos	41:25
90. Lesley Kothe, San Francisco	41:26
91. Aisha Kamala, Soquel	41:29
92. Liz Nast, Saratoga	41:30
93. Ali Springbett, Santa Cruz	41:31
94. Kelly Emo, Campbell	41:32
95. Michelle Cline, San Jose	41:33
96. Leanorra Sanchez, Aptos	41:34
97. Stephanie Doan, Soquel	41:38
98. Lisa Langlitz, San Jose	41:43
99. Rachel Lackey, Soquel	41:44
100. Kai Parker, Watsonville	41:45

Women

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Fitchen-Young started the race front and center of the pack, standing out with her high blond ponytail and fire-engine red running attire. She led the women up to the second mile, near the Smallcraft Harbor, when the 25-year-old Wangui shot past her.

But Fitchen-Young kept her eyes on a male who runs in the same training group, and used her long legs to retake the lead on the downhill near Twin Lakes Beach.

"I passed her on the downhill and just floored it," she said.

Though she was never sure how much of a gap she had on Wangui and Ngunjiri, Fitchen-Young never looked back. She never relaxed, either, until her husband, Paul Young, gave her the thumbs up as she thundered down Opal Cliffs Drive.

Fitchen-Young finished 12 seconds faster than she had in 2002, recording the fastest time ever for a county woman. Ngunjiri, 29, said she noticed the difference in the pace.

"It was too high for me," said Ngunjiri, who finished second in 2002. "Last year I was in good shape, but this year I wasn't training well."

Fitchen-Young will next run the 10,000 meters (6.2 miles) in the Pan American Games in August and is

gunning for a spot on the U.S. marathon team for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Still, she said she wasn't confident a win Sunday was within reach.

"I thought I could finish in the top three," she said. "But winning it is a real treat."

While her family goes back four generations in the county, Fitchen-Young barely qualified as a resident as she and Paul moved into their Seabright neighborhood house just a few weeks ago. She said they would use her \$3,000 prize money to help pay off moving expenses, as well as cover one of her recent shopping sprees.

Acosta, who made the Olympic trials three times — twice in the marathon and once in the 10K — said she had a feeling Fitchen-Young would soon inherit her crown as the race's hometown heroine.

"When I read the entrants and saw some of their most recent running times, I thought 'She can do this,'" said Acosta, who provided radio commentary for the race.

But before the changeover could become official, the duo had to take part in one more ritual — sharing a sip of champagne and orange juice from Fitchen-Young's silver winner's cup.

The champagne in the cup is a tradition Acosta began after her first win in 1991. The orange juice is just part of Fitchen-Young's burgeoning legacy.

Contact Julie Jag at jjag@santa-cruz.com.

Men

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(Brett) and said technically you own it and so maybe we can donate it to someone in your name or maybe we should give it to the next place finisher," said race director Kirby Nicol, who will discuss it at the board of directors meeting today.

Nthiwa, who celebrated his 20th birthday on June 30, finished third last year and seventh in 2001. Gwako, who won the race in 1998 and 2000, has finished second for three consecutive years.

Nthiwa's win continued the Kenyans' dominance of the event. A Kenyan has won the past seven Wharf to Wharf titles.

Nicol believes Gotcher's third-place finish this year is the highest by a local since Watsonville's Armando Siqueiros won in 1984.

Gotcher, who was the top local finisher for the third straight year, ran with the lead pack until just before the third-mile mark. As the lead runners rounded the bend up East Cliff Drive past Twin Lakes Beach, Nthiwa and Gwako started to pull away.

"I tried to hang with the Kenyans. They're just playing with you, though," said Gotcher, who finished eighth in 2002 and 11th in 2001. "They make you think you can keep up with them, but they def-

initely pulled away. I looked at my watch and could see my splits. I knew I was getting toward my limit. I was running as fast as I can."

After Nthiwa and Gwako took off, it was a two-man race. The two ran shoulder-to-shoulder until just past the four-mile mark at East Cliff and 30th Avenue, when Nthiwa started to make his move.

By the time he passed 36th Avenue, Nthiwa was leading by about 40 yards.

Gwako, known for having a strong kick, picked up his pace at the 5-mile mark, but Nthiwa was able to hold him off.

"I didn't know if I could win this year, with the competition," said Nthiwa, who plans to use his prize money to help start a program for children in his hometown in Kenya. "(John has) been beating me for many years. I decided to pick it up at the fourth mile, and he dropped off."

As for next year, Nthiwa and Gotcher both plan to be back.

But can Gotcher be the next local to win? "Brett is obviously an incredibly talented runner," said Mark McConnell, who is the head track coach at Soquel High and assistant race director for the Wharf to Wharf. "He doesn't have as much experience, but it wouldn't surprise me at all if he is right with (the leaders)."

Contact Christina Teller at cteller@santa-cruz.com.

Notebook

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this year.

Despite the setback, Biale finished the race with her getup intact and urged her fellow competitors to run in costume in the future.

"We really need more costumes out here next year," she said. "It just makes the atmosphere so much more fun."

■ Biale was not the only runner to arrive at Wharf to Wharf in full costume.

Among the thousands of competitors clad in T-shirts and running shorts, a few brave souls donned slightly wackier outfits.

One man ran in a patriotic suit made entirely of the American flag, while a newly engaged couple from Los Angeles braved the 6-mile course clad in matching hula skirts and leis.

Two teenage girls wore yellow tank tops bearing the message: "We're the fast girls your mama always warned you about." True to their word, they were among the first women to finish the race.

■ One of the more creative signs held up along the course in encouragement of the late stragglers rested in the hands of a young fan along Opal Cliffs Drive. It read: "My mama just passed you."

■ There was at least one certifiable keg sighting along the 6-mile course. Three guys in hula shirts and shades pushed their motherlode of beer along in a shopping cart, sharing the wealth on occasion and trying not to tip it over — which

did happen more than once.

"We need a doctor here," one said as he lifted the keg off the pavement and back into the cart along East Cliff Drive.

■ The Dig Beats were the first rock band to play along the race course. Twenty-three years ago, the five members — Phil Welty, Sam Nigh, Kevin Scott, Ron Hughes and Shorty Syres — started playing at 26th Avenue.

For the past four years, the Dig Beats have been playing at the awards stage near the Capitola Theater.

"Now there's bands everywhere," Nigh said. "(The race) has really gotten advanced and ballooned. It's so well organized, but it's just as good."

■ Mark Piccillo's time may have been slower than he wanted, but that didn't seem to matter much after the race. Piccillo, who lives in Berkeley, won a trip for two to Hawaii when his race number was drawn at the awards ceremony.

"I've only been (to Hawaii) once, on my honeymoon," said Piccillo.

Piccillo, who has been running the Wharf to Wharf since 1984, plans to bring his two children, Isis, 8, and Carter, 5, on the trip.

■ Aptos High standout Jacob Evans is happy with his steady improvement in the Wharf to Wharf. In 2000, Evans, who competed in the 1,600-meters at the state track meet in June, finished around 40:00. In 2001, he took 88th in 34:15, and this year he accomplished his goal of placing in the top 50, finishing 45th in 32:52.

"Next year I wouldn't mind going for low 31s," he said.

■ Like it or not, the hoards of runners

and spectators waiting to board shuttle buses back to the race's start got to hear their Sunday sermon.

As runners and spectators jammed into yellow Pajaro Valley Unified School District buses, the Christian band Celebrate Recovery entertained the crowds at the shuttle pickup spot.

■ The gap between the women's winner, Kim Fitchen-Young, and the men's winner Patrick Nthiwa, was 4:24. The gap had reached an all-time low last year at 3:04 when women's winner Esther Kiplagat won in record time.

■ As the last spectators milled about the finish line and race volunteers brought down the official race clock, one final couple paced down Cliff Drive toward the Wharf to Wharf finish line.

Brian and Peggy Patton of San Jose — both first time Wharf-to-Wharf-ers — ducked under the fallen finish line 2 hours, 7 minutes after the race's official starting gun fired at 8:30 a.m., making them this year's last participants to finish.

"How lucky of us, and how sad," said Peggy Patton, who works as a sign language interpreter. "We had hoped to break two hours, but we were pretty much just enjoying the walk. I didn't think they'd be popping balloons and taking things down by now though."

Brian Patton, a carpenter for Santa Clara County, held a more positive outlook on the couple's finish.

"No, it's great, we made it," he said. "We have a goal for next time now. Next time we'll break two hours for sure."

The Wharf to Wharf — the Patton's first

road race — was part of their 30th wedding anniversary weekend celebration.

■ Two Santa Cruz men who wished only to be known as the "Microsoft butterfly" and "Aztec showgirl" wowed the crowd with the most eccentric costumes of the day.

"What we're trying to do is promote love," said the Microsoft butterfly, whose blue googly-eyed hologram glasses matched his blue unitard, wings, and sandals.

The Aztec showgirl, who said he actually had difficulty coordinating his costume, sported golden wristcuffs, a gold-pointed bra and a golden breastplate. Bright red feathers sprung from his tall, golden headdress.

"I think an Aztec showgirl would have no trouble fitting in a town like Santa Cruz," he said.

■ 2003 Wharf to Wharf Howard Marcus scholarship winners Mary Maleta and Victor Camacho both crossed the finish line just ahead of the 40-minute mark.

Camacho, who will attend Harvey Mudd College in Claremont this fall, said his primary goal was to provide motivation for Damon Jerdine, a friend's 11-year-old cousin.

"We held a pretty normal pace for the first five miles but kicked it up the last mile," Camacho said. "His goal was 40 minutes, and he made it in at 40:11."

Maleta, who is heading to UCLA in the fall, also went into the race with a goal of breaking the 40-minute mark.

"It was a quick race. Lots of people with differing abilities," Maleta said. "But it's always great to come out, see lots of peo-

ple you know, and be with your friends."

■ A Wharf to Barf hasher, known only as "Brother Pain," crossed the finish line just past the one-hour mark, looking just that — in pain.

A helium-inflated condom tied to his wrist dangled just above his pail, sweaty face. "We encourage safe running," he said, motioning toward the ballooned contraceptive.

His pre-race ritual included "the usual stuff."

"Slamming some Bloody Marys, inflating some condoms, you know, nothing too weird," said Brother Pain, a member of the Big Dog Church of Pain hasher group from Tampa, Fla.

■ Roughly 70 medical workers, most from Dominican Hospital, showed up to run and volunteer at this year's race.

Eric Johnson, a Santa Cruz paramedic, ran the race with his brother and son.

"We have EMTs, paramedics, doctors, nurses — medical people from all over running today," he said.

Allison Bowlin, a nurse at Dominican, helped oversee one of the race's medical tents.

According to Bowlin, most cases involved "running-related injuries."

"Mostly just blisters and scrapes," she said. "Lots of blisters."

Jeff Eisenberg, Fred Dreier, Julie Jag, Christina Teller and Mark Conley contributed to this report.