

Champions overcome adversity to win

7 24 00

Cordell battles back from injury to take women's division

By DAVID KIEFER
SENTINEL SPORTS EDITOR

CAPITOLA — As Kelly Cordell toed the starting line for the 28th annual Wharf to Wharf Race, she did so with one goal: Don't get hurt.

Everything else was secondary to Cordell, whose calf injury was so severe that she was unable to compete in the Olympic Trials 10,000-meter race last week — a race that had been her motivation for returning to running after four years away from the sport.

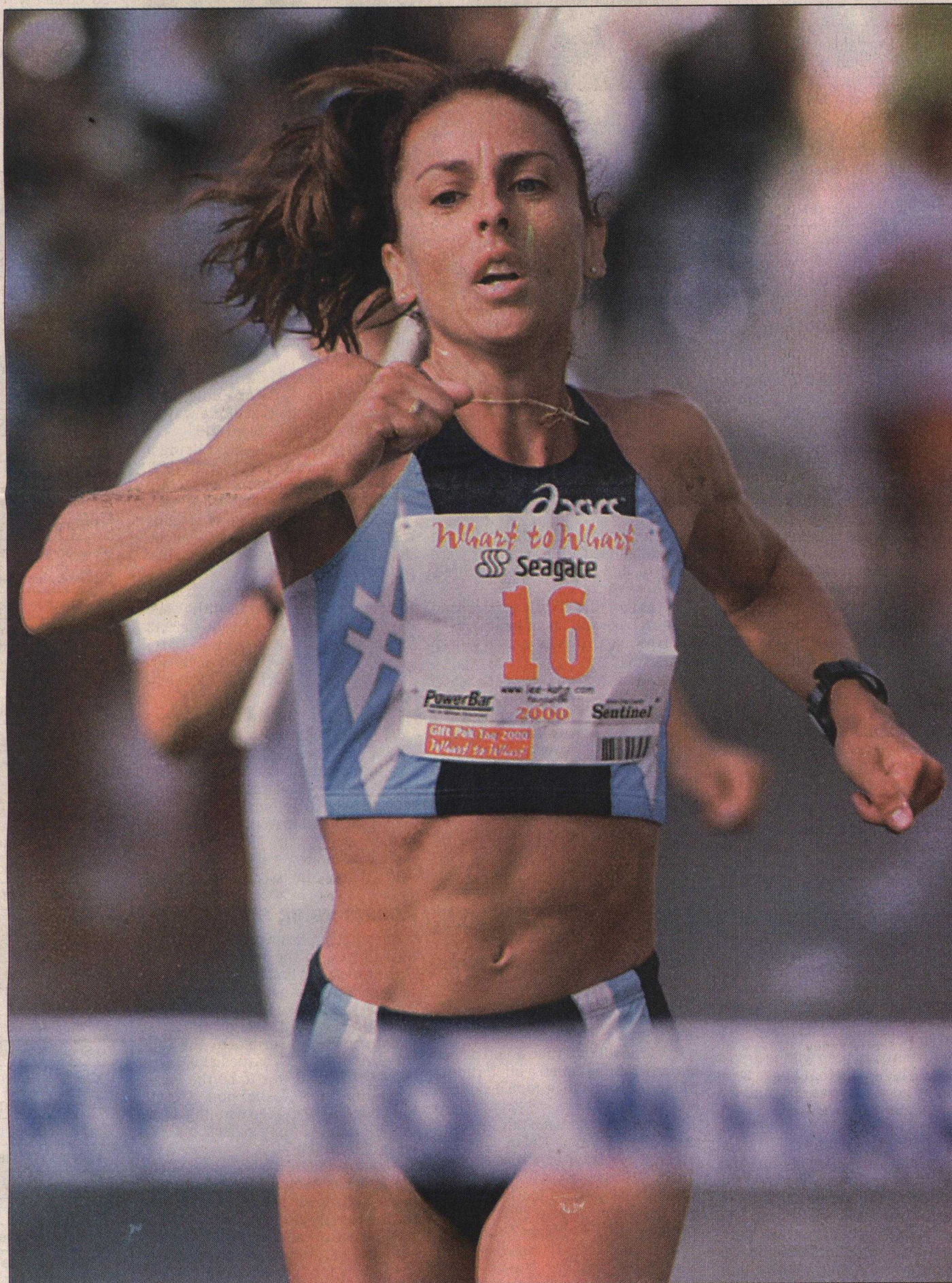
But Cordell got more than she hoped for. Not only did she stay healthy, she won.

Cordell, racing for the first time since April, won the women's race by nearly a minute, with a time of 32:41 over the six-mile course from Coconut Grove to Capitola Village on Sunday.

Chris McNamara, the seventh-fastest marathoner in U.S. women's history with a best of 2:28:18, was never in contention. Cordell got off to such a strong start that McNamara never saw her until spotting Cordell in the distance on straight stretches along Opal Cliff Drive late in the race.

Cordell, an Indiana native and former Arizona State standout, earned \$3,000 for the victory, with McNamara earning \$2,000 for finishing second in 33:36. Three-time champion Barb Acosta of Santa Cruz received \$1,000 for

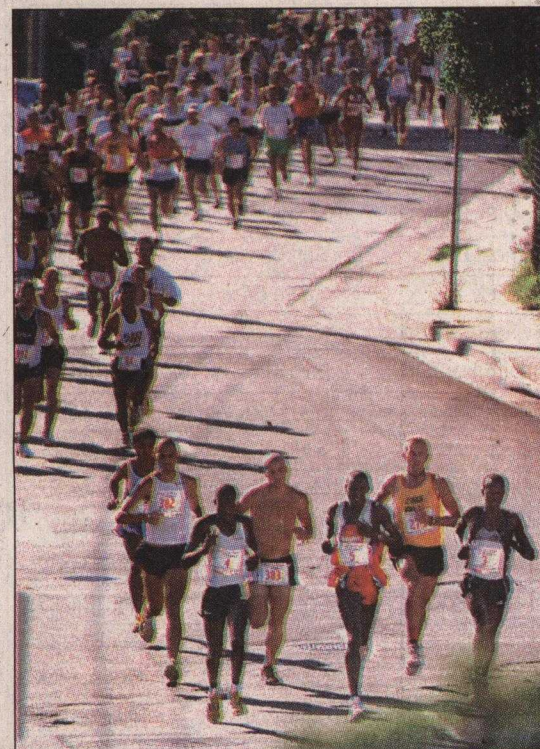
Please see **WOMEN** on Page B2



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

Women's race winner Kelly Cordell eyes the tape as she nears the finish line in Capitola.

Inside

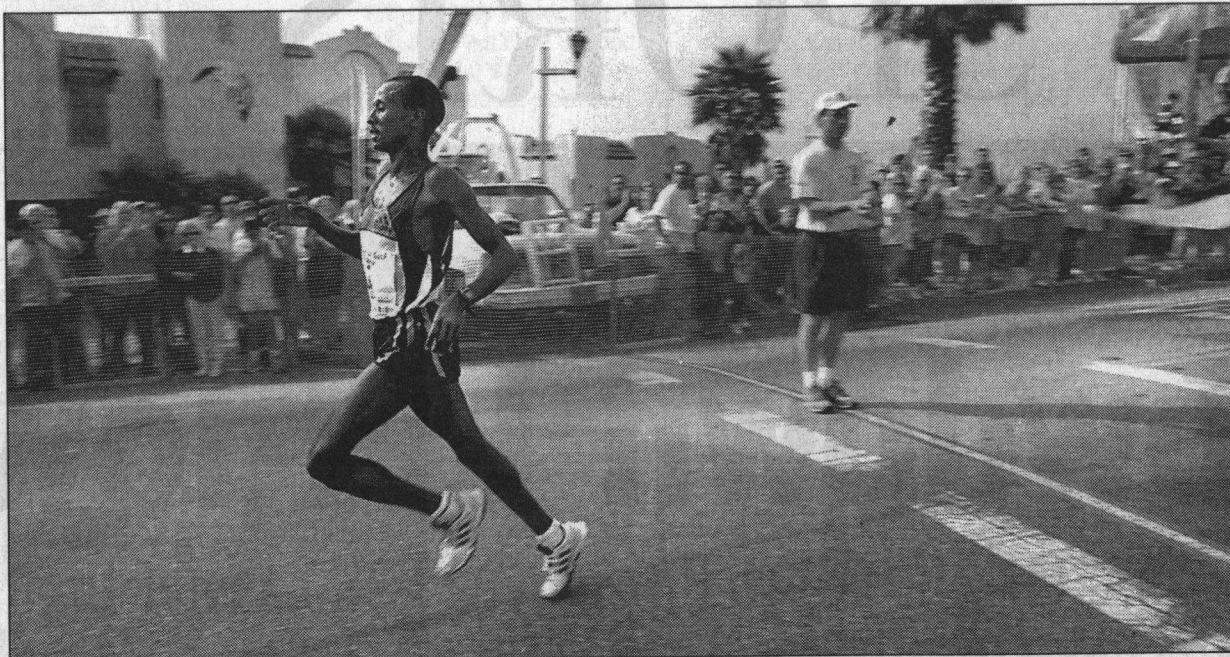


■ John Gwako of Kenya wins the men's division.
■ Liam Jones, Barb Acosta, top local finishers.

PAGE B2

Top 100 Men

PLACE	NAME	TOWN	ST	TIME
1	John Gwako	Kenya		27:55
2	James Bungei	Kenya		28:39
3	Mbarak Hussein	Kenya		28:46
4	David Rodriguez	Fremont	CA	29:13
5	Corey Smith	Fremont	CA	29:24
6	Hector Delgado	Windsor	CA	30:21
7	Adam Boothe	San Luis Obispo	CA	30:40
8	Liam Jones	Santa Cruz	CA	30:40
9	Bobbee Palmer	Sunnyvale	CA	30:41
10	Jose P. Aispuro	Watsonville	CA	30:46
11	Gary Blanco	Chico	CA	30:53
12	Kenny Goodrich	San Luis Obispo	CA	30:59
13	Damian Baldovino	Lakeview	OR	31:14
14	J.T. Service	San Jose	CA	31:17
15	David Jackson	San Luis Obsipo	CA	31:25
16	Brett Gotcher	Watsonville	CA	31:35
17	David Beals	Salinas	CA	31:50
18	Bob Ebert	Santa Cruz	CA	31:53
19	Erin Litsky	Sparks	NV	31:57
20	Ken Brown	Santa Rosa	CA	32:05
21	Stephen Overgaard	Stockton	CA	32:13
22	Lawrence Merrifield	Portland	OR	32:14
23	Bryan Hacker	Cool	CA	32:18
24	Travis Mccarty	Anchorage	AK	32:19
25	Frank Thomas	Roseville	CA	32:21
26	Steven Springhorn	Redding	CA	32:22
27	Bruce Storms	Bonny Doon	CA	32:24
28	Steven Chavez	San Ramon	CA	32:26
29	Steven Moreno	Salinas	CA	32:28
30	Alan Jackson	Los Gatos	CA	32:31
31	Parker Kelly	Belmont	CA	32:42
32	Robert Pickens	Santa Clara	CA	32:45
33	Gordon Holterman	Hillsborough	CA	32:47
34	Wayne Hopp III	San Jose	CA	32:48
35	Grant Guenther	Aptos	CA	32:49
36	Gilbert Munoz	Watsonville	CA	32:49
37	Tim Keenan	Walnut Creek	CA	32:50
38	Javier Naranjo	Soquel	CA	32:53
39	Robert Heugly	Hanford	CA	33:05
40	Patrick Rainey	Rocklin	CA	33:06
41	Jordan Carroll	San Jose	CA	33:08
42	Jim Angelopoulos	San Jose	CA	33:10
43	Clyde Matsumura	Santa Monica	CA	33:10
44	Joseph Angulo	Clovis	CA	33:11
45	Mike Maguire	Livermore	CA	33:16
46	Lynn Mentzer	Sparks	NV	33:18
47	Greg Koniowka	San Francisco	CA	33:21
48	Martin Mumenthaler	Palo Alto	CA	33:22



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

John Gwako streaks into Capitola to claim his second Wharf to Wharf men's title.

Gwako puts on burners at end

Kenyan claims second title

By **DAVID KIEFER**
SENTINEL SPORTS EDITOR

CAPITOLA — Sometime, just for fun, try to run like John Gwako did Sunday.

He ran the first mile of the six-mile Wharf to Wharf Race in 4:51 — tough, but not impossible for good runners.

Now the hard part, finishing with a 4:20 mile.

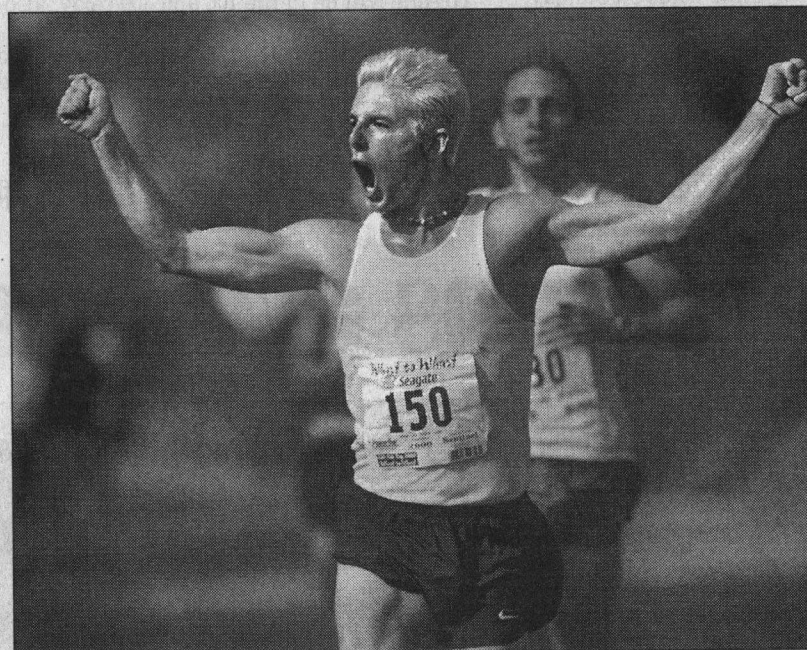
Gwako broke from two Kenyan countrymen midway through the race to capture his second Wharf to Wharf title, completing the 28th annual event from Coconut Grove to Capitola Village in 28 minutes, 55 seconds to out-run a sold-out field of 14,000 Sunday.

The victory extended Kenya's winning streak in the race to four consecutive years and was the fifth straight by a foreigner.

But for Gwako, the significance was in regaining his fitness and his confidence. Still a young and promising runner, Gwako, 21, has been unable to duplicate his teen-age achievements, but this race may have been a major step toward regaining top form.

Gwako was only 18 when he left his home in Kenya's Kisii Highlands to train in Japan and it led to a monster 1997 season in which he unleashed a 1:01:00 for the half-marathon.

In the 1998 Wharf to Wharf, he out-sprinted Kenya's William Kiptum to win a thriller in a fast 27:08. But Gwako wasn't the same when he returned last



Adam Boothe celebrates his seventh-place finish.

out of action for six months.

This year's Wharf to Wharf marked only the second race of his comeback and he began with some trepidation.

The three Kenyans in the field — Gwako, 1997 champion James Bungei and Mbarak Hussein — took the early lead, but not with their usual aggressiveness.

"This is too slow," Gwako later said. "Making a run with this time was very bad."

All three are familiar with each other, training together in Albuquerque, N.M., during the road racing season.

back and Gwako started to lay down the hammer on Bungei.

"I decided to go," Gwako said. "It's better to run a good time."

As they hit three miles at East Cliff and 13th Avenue, Gwako made a decisive surge, dropping Bungei 20 meters back in seconds.

Feeling good and now running with a rhythmic pace, Gwako unleashed negative splits the rest of the way — with miles of 4:37, 4:32 and 4:19.

Gwako prides himself on being a strong finisher. He proved it in 1998, and emphasized it again Sunday to win

Top 100 Women

PLACE	NAME	TOWN	ST	TIME
1	Kelly Cordell	San Luis Obispo	CA	32:41
2	Chris Mcnamara	Boulder	CO	33:36
3	Barb Acosta	Santa Cruz	CA	34:27
4	Nicole Kulikov	Fresno	CA	34:36
5	Maria Giordano	Lafayette	CA	34:52
6	Rebecca Kopchik	Oakland	CA	35:04
7	Diana Harlick	Davis	CA	35:09
8	Cathy Dubay	Santa Rosa	CA	35:20
9	Ceci St. Geme	Atherton	CA	35:25
10	Rosemarie Lagunas	San Jose	CA	35:33
11	Miriam Schmidt	Soquel	CA	36:24
12	Yvonne Lund	Sunnyvale	CA	36:37
13	Julie Rohloff	Los Gatos	CA	36:45
14	Ramona Young	Watsonville	CA	36:55
15	Kirsten Kempe	Mountain View	CA	37:47
16	Erika Watson	Santa Cruz	CA	37:52
17	Jeanene Harlick	Burlingame	CA	38:08
18	Karen Seniff	Sunnyvale	CA	38:24
19	Kimberly Cloud	Turlock	CA	38:44
20	Laura Meadors	Redwood City	CA	38:51
21	Eva Mendez	Oakland	CA	38:55
22	Kristin Vilopoto	Durham	NC	39:00
23	Angela Tanghetti	Sacramento	CA	39:04
24	Anne Chippendale	Tahoe City	CA	39:04
25	Roxanne Lara	Chico	CA	39:10
26	Angela Matthews	Sacramento	CA	39:12
27	Kimberly Hammett	San Jose	CA	39:15
28	Teresa Gaims	Santa Cruz	CA	39:19
29	Lea Nibur	Clovis	CA	39:22
30	Mo Bartley	Cool	CA	39:32
31	Barbara Miller	Modesto	CA	39:33
32	Tami Rodriguez	Carmichael	CA	39:34
33	Tara Carreira	Brentwood	CA	39:37
34	Sheri Mcquaide	Santa Cruz	CA	39:38
35	Barbara Leinweber	Reno	NV	39:40
36	Janet Smith	San Jose	CA	39:41
37	Carol Mendoza	Fremont	CA	39:59
38	Elizabeth R Mayeda	Aptos	CA	40:03
39	Laura Quirke	Los Gatos	CA	40:09
40	Michelle R. Shen	Mountain View	CA	40:10
41	Jackie Prange	Santa Rosa	CA	40:13
42	Chris Determan	Monterey	CA	40:16
43	Stacy Mcgihon	Piedmont	CA	40:19
44	Mary Vidovich	Los Gatos	CA	40:20
45	Debbie Leale	San Jose	CA	40:21
46	Mary Kay Benz	Olympic Valley	CA	40:21
47	Laurey Davis	Danville	CA	40:23
48	Emily Trexel	San Jose	CA	40:25

49 Joshua Small	Fresno	CA	33:24
50 William Rice	San Jose	CA	33:26
51 Brian Smith	Weaverville	CA	33:29
52 Michael White	Campbell	CA	33:36
53 Antonio Arreola	San Jose	CA	33:43
54 Andy Zoldak	San Jose	CA	33:46
55 Matthew Radtke	El Cerrito	CA	33:51
56 Daniel Rodriguez	Fremont	CA	33:55
57 Tim Nash	Santa Cruz	CA	33:56
58 Elijah Bilotta	Santa Cruz	CA	34:00
59 Bill Joseph	Shasta	CA	34:01
60 Scott Mcconville	Watsonville	CA	34:08
61 Jim Sr. Elam	Manteca	CA	34:08
62 Kenneth Wilner	Belmont	CA	34:09
63 Terry Richardson	Merced	CA	34:10
64 Michael Butler	San Carlos	CA	34:17
65 Jeff Kirk	Santa Cruz	CA	34:22
66 Michael Johnson	Monterey	CA	34:23
67 Amol Saxena	Palo Alto	CA	34:24
68 Shawn Ayers	San Francisco	CA	34:25
69 Rick Baca	Salinas	CA	34:27
70 Fred Villegas	Merced	CA	34:27
71 Timothy Layden	Oakley	CA	34:30
72 Victor Santamaria	San Jose	CA	34:32
73 Javier Alonso	Corralitos	CA	34:33
74 Christopher Ratliff	Felton	CA	34:34
75 Sean O'Brien	Fremont	CA	34:36
76 Michael Kappler	Santa Fe	NM	34:37
77 Michael Hurlston	San Jose	CA	34:42
78 Martin Brenner	Soquel	CA	34:44
79 Troy Soares	San Jose	CA	34:47
80 Kevin Brodie	Menlo Park	CA	34:49
81 Steve Butler	Seaside	CA	34:49
82 Marshall Boyd	Los Altos Hills	CA	34:50
83 Ron Cross	Reno	NV	34:52
84 Russ Smith	San Jose	CA	34:55
85 Michael Higgins	Santa Monica	CA	34:56
86 Dave Fronckowiak	Gilroy	CA	34:58
87 Gordon Smith	Alexandria	VA	34:58
88 Sean Seeley	San Francisco	CA	34:59
89 Timothy Naylor	Davis	CA	35:00
90 David Altreuter	Albany	CA	35:01
91 Francisco Avila	Santa Cruz	CA	35:01
92 Jean-Luc Fattbert	Pleasanton	CA	35:09
93 Jonathan Kimura	Cupertino	CA	35:14
94 Randy Brummer	Weaverville	CA	35:15
95 Lawrence Berg	Santa Cruz	CA	35:16
96 Andrew Creely	Carmel	CA	35:18
97 J-D Allegrucci	Sunnyvale	CA	35:19
98 Mikal Peveto	Santa Cruz	CA	35:23
99 Jim Duffy	San Francisco	CA	35:23
100 Eric Krawitt	San Francisco	CA	35:25

wasn't the same when he returned last year. He finished fourth in 27:59, but rounded into form in the fall with half-marathon victories in the Netherlands and in Nagoya, Japan — the latter in 1:01:29 for the world's 40th-fastest time of the year on November 23.

But Gwako's relentless globetrotting schedule seemed to take its toll, resulting in a knee injury that knocked him

and the race took on a tactical nature early.

But with each succeeding mile, the pace quickened, other runners were dropped, and it soon became a three-man Kenyan race.

But as East Cliff Drive wound around Schwan Lake and up an incline away from the coast, Hussein started to drop

the \$3,000 winner's share.

Meanwhile, Bungei was 44 seconds back in 28:39, but earned \$2,000 by holding off Hussein by seven seconds. Hussein earned \$1,000.

Georgetown teammates David Rodriguez and Corey Smith were fourth and fifth, respectively, in 29:13 and 29:24.

Aispuro passes local torch to Jones

By DAVID KIEFER
SENTINEL SPORTS EDITOR

CAPITOLA — As Jose Aispuro passed Liam Jones four miles into the six-mile Wharf to Wharf Race, he grabbed Jones' shirt.

Pulling him forward, Aispuro said, "You come with me."

Jones was struggling, but at his rival's command, he relaxed and refocused.

Aispuro, a Watsonville grocery clerk, knew that Jones was the one individual that could jeopardize his 11-year hold as the top local finisher in the Wharf to Wharf Race.

But Aispuro has been willing to pass the torch, believing that at age 38, it would be good for area running if a young runner took over.

In that vein, Aispuro wouldn't let Jones go without a fight, even if he had to physically force it out of him. And, in the end, it was Jones who passed Aispuro to break the streak for good.

Jones, 24, a former Soquel High and UC Santa Barbara standout now working as an acoustic guitar builder in Santa Cruz, passed Aispuro with a half-mile to go to finish eighth overall in the six-mile race in 30 minutes, 40 seconds, six seconds and two places ahead of Aispuro.

"I've been chasing him since high school," Jones said. "It's been hard to get it out of my mind."

After they crossed the finish line, Aispuro was announced as the top

'I've been chasing him since high school.'

LIAM JONES, MEN'S LOCAL
CHAMPION

local, but he was quick to tell reporters that Jones was the real winner this day.

It didn't look like that would be possible judging from Jones' fatigue midway through the race.

"I was hurting pretty bad," Jones said. "I was kind of cramping up."

It was about that time, Liam passed his father, Mike Jones, a blind runner who was given a 10-minute head start on the field.

"My partner was watching for him," said Mike of Wayne Nolan, who was tethered by a two-feet of rope to Jones waist. "When Liam went by he was about five seconds behind Jose. I could tell it was going to be real tight."

Mike yelled, "Go, Liam."

Liam didn't hear. He was also trying to say something.

"I just came out as mumble," Liam said.

Mike ran at Cal State Los Angeles, before a retinal disease robbed him of his sight, and was instrumental in kindling Liam's interest in running.

The race was also special for Mike in two ways: He's competed in every Wharf to Wharf except for the year he

ran into a parked car and broke his ribs. And, two, Liam was aided through college as a recipient of a Wharf to Wharf scholarship from money raised at the race.

"It was money well spent," Mike said. "It kept him in running."

Acosta going strong

Barb Acosta has won the women's overall title in the Wharf to Wharf three times, but had never won prize money. That changed Sunday when Acosta won her eighth consecutive local title and third place overall.

With money awarded to the top three, Acosta (34:27) earned \$1,000.

"My first goal was to be the local champion at 40," she said. "Now, maybe it will be to keep winning until I'm 50. I'm sure I won't make it, but it's wishful thinking."

Acosta, wearing bib No. 42 to match her age, has been rejuvenated after being worn down by stress and illness for the past three years. Now, with a new job with a company that provides equipment to produce 360-degree internet videos for sports and entertainment. Beside being fascinated with her work, she has more flexibility to train.

"I'm healthier than ever," she said.

Three months ago, Acosta won a small cross-country race at Forest of Nisene Marks, which renewed her enthusiasm for running.

"I guarantee I'll be faster next year," she said.

Women

Continued from Page B1

her third-place finish in 34:27.

Four years ago, Cordell was working full-time with at-risk youth when she turned the TV to the Atlanta Olympics. The competition inspired her, creating what became a life-changing experience. Within a year, Cordell re-committed herself to running, with the intention of reaching her first Olympic Trials and, perhaps, the Olympic Games themselves.

"I didn't want to look back and have any regrets," she said. "I realized there's no failure in trying."

For the past three years, Cordell, now 30 and living in San Luis Obispo, has worked her way among the best in the

country. Her 32:46.55 at the Mt. SAC Relays last year made her the 50th-fastest in U.S. history over 10,000 meters and helped allow her to end 1999 ranked No. 9 in the nation.

All was well until Cordell began to have problems with her calf. She thought that easing off on her racing schedule would help. But it didn't matter.

"Spring was very heartbreaking," she said. "I'd be healthy for a couple of weeks, have a great workout, and then the calf would drop me."

During one interval workout, Cordell was running 600s when she "felt the whole thing was going to explode."

The calf tightened so suddenly and painfully that she tumbled to the rough surface. It took moments like this to

finally convince her, with five weeks left, that a risky attempt to run the trials was a bad idea.

"I didn't want to do permanent damage," she said. "I want to be running in 2004 and 2008. It's just one meet with a lot of hype."

Without the pressure and stress of trying to compete in a race she wasn't prepared for, Cordell could take things at her own pace. And, finally, she felt ready to test herself at Wharf to Wharf.

"The injury has made me appreciate just being able to run again," she said. "I loved just walking to the starting line. I missed the jitters. I was just so happy to be able to compete."

And to win?

"It exceeded my expectations," she said.

49 Dina Panicci	San Mateo	CA	40:26
50 Wendy Bowers-Gaches	Watsonville	CA	40:28
51 Deborah Haffey	Reno	NV	40:32
52 Nancy Mcdowell	Meadow Vista	CA	40:35
53 Marianne Zerebko	Tahoe City	CA	40:40
54 Missy Sandeman	Homewood	CA	40:41
55 Karen Hamill	Palo Alto	CA	40:47
56 Denise Henry	Menlo Park	CA	40:51
57 Gretchen Schmitt	Scotts Valley	CA	40:56
58 Evelyn Reed	Capitola	CA	40:56
59 Kristen Staiger	Palo Alto	CA	40:58
60 Cindy Sharpe	Walnut Creek	CA	41:00
61 Karen Ribble	San Francisco	CA	41:01
62 Rebecca Cilenti	Loomis	CA	41:05
63 Melissa Wedlock	Santa Cruz	CA	41:09
64 Michelle Leinfelder	Stockton	CA	41:18
65 Lynn Sestak	Santa Cruz	CA	41:25
66 Sandy Pelkey	San Francisco	CA	41:28
67 Carrie Joseph	Santa Rosa	CA	41:28
68 Kelly Allen	Chico	CA	41:32
69 Patricia Shapiro	Chatsworth	CA	41:32
70 Sherie Schmidt	Tahoma	CA	41:36
71 Jennifer Cullen	Menlo Park	CA	41:39
72 Heather Eastman	Aptos	CA	41:41
73 Karina Lubell	Berkeley	CA	41:43
74 Theresa O'Brien	Fremont	CA	41:49
75 Cathy Crowley	Sacramento	CA	41:51
76 Ann Elam	Manteca	CA	41:52
77 Kirsten Sherve	Reno	NV	41:58
78 Monique Silva	Aptos	CA	42:03
79 Susan Gook	San Jose	CA	42:04
80 Zoey North	San Jose	CA	42:05
81 Meredith Mills	Redwood City	CA	42:06
82 Janel Carrasco	Burbank	CA	42:13
83 Luisa Gomes	Santa Clara	CA	42:17
84 April Walewski	Los Gatos	CA	42:17
85 Catherine Lazaro	Pleasanton	CA	42:18
86 Lisa Kelly	Cupertino	CA	42:20
87 Lisa Rutkowski	Los Gatos	CA	42:23
88 Laurette Lambregts	Seattle	WA	42:24
89 Kirsten Bowen	Sausalito	CA	42:25
90 Kristin Conway	San Francisco	CA	42:25
91 Ellen Wallace	Sunnyvale	CA	42:26
92 Krista Anderson	Santa Cruz	CA	42:27
93 Gina Stine	Monterey	CA	42:33
94 Dina Farage	San Jose	CA	42:39
95 Brooke Bartholomew	Cupertino	CA	42:48
96 Jennifer Kerwin	Los Gatos	CA	42:49
97 Kathy Frank	Capitola	CA	42:51
98 Candace Joseph	Shasta	CA	42:53
99 Ashley Watkins	Santa Cruz	CA	42:54
100 Caroline Peck	Santa Cruz	CA	42:57