

Ethiopians dominate in SC race

Wharf to Wharf Race *R 7-28-08*
Brett Gotcher, Lindsay Christman top local finishers in Wharf to Wharf

By TODD GUILD
 OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

For the Cloud family, the Wharf to Wharf race is a tradition that has lasted nearly two decades, and began as a dare among family members.

As she has for the past 17 years, Kimberly Cloud ran the now 6-mile route with her fa-

ther, Larry. Cloud is a consummate runner, and in April completed the Boston Marathon. Last year, she took 34th place among women in the race.

"We've been coming every year," said Shirleen Cloud, Kimberly's mother, as she sat in a lawn chair near the finish line, waiting for her daughter to

pass. She finished in 38 minutes, 42 seconds.

The 36th annual Wharf to Wharf race sold out in April after 15,000 people snatched up the coveted runner's bibs.

Gebo Burka of Ethiopia took top place in the race, finishing the 6-mile course in 27 minutes, 48 seconds, outdistancing Karim

El Mabchour, who won the race last year, by 20 seconds.

Amane Gobena of Ethiopia was the first woman to cross the finish line, at 30 minutes and 46 seconds. She was followed by U.S. Olympic marathon runner Magdalena Lewy-Boulet of

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Wharf to Wharf winner Gebo Burka of Ethiopia hits the final approach to the finish line in Capitola Village Sunday.

Todd Guild
 Register-Pajaronian

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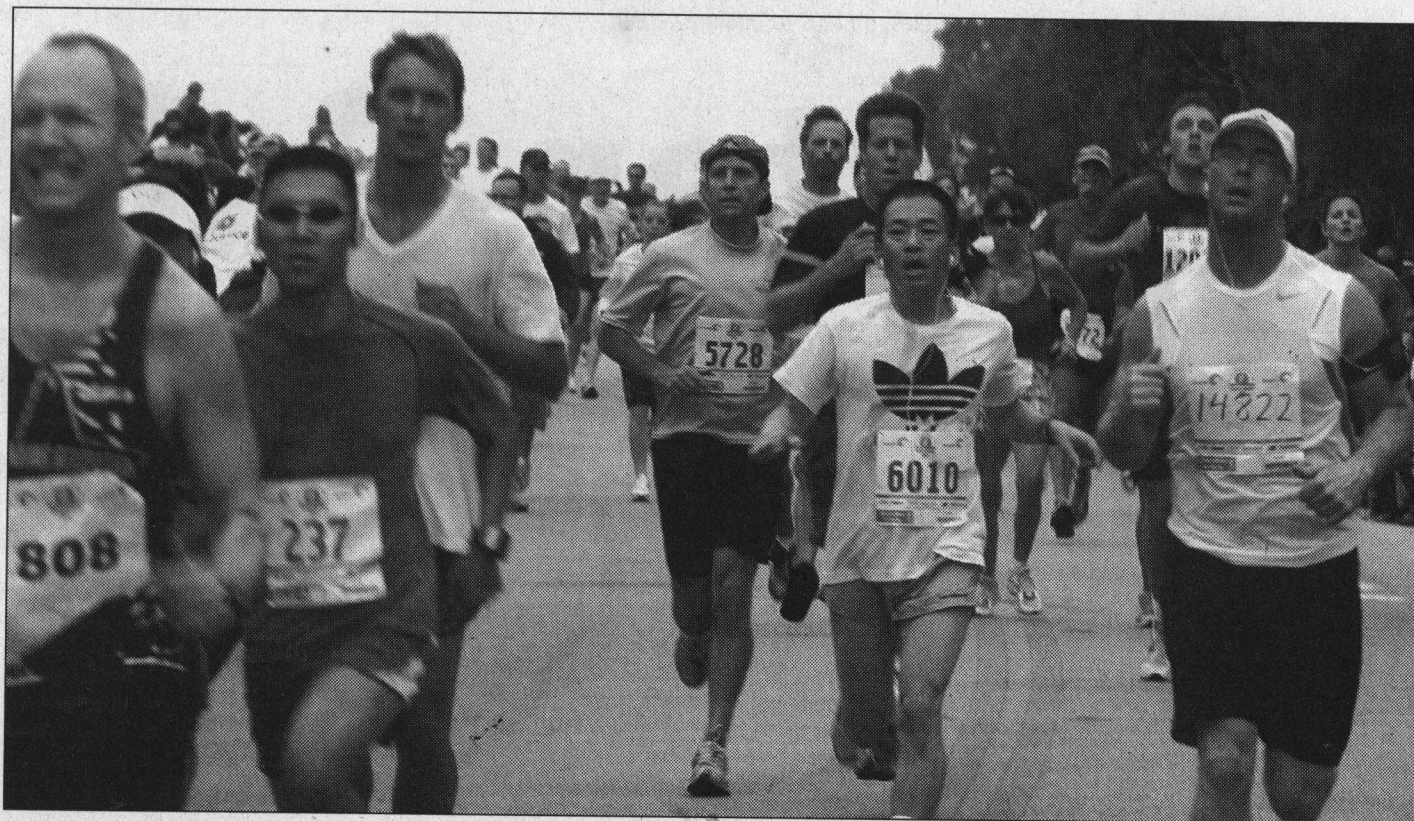
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Oakland, who finished in just a second over 31 minutes.

Aptos High graduate Brett Gotcher placed fifth among the men in the race, while Harbor High graduate Lindsay Christman was the top local female.

The Young family of Watsonville had three members all finish in the top 100. Michael Young, who will be a junior at St. Francis Central Coast Catholic High School in the fall, placed 91st in the men's division in 34:17. Little sister Alexandra



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Tired runners near the finish line in Capitola. A total of 15,000 signed up for the Wharf to Wharf.

Young, who will be a freshman at St. Francis, was 99th in the women's division in 42:15, and mom Ramona Young, who coaches track at St. Francis, was 69th in 40:55.

Gotcher, 23, who now races professionally, said running in the Santa Cruz Wharf to Wharf means more to him than the cash reward.

"It's hard to pass up when you hear people calling your name the whole time," he said.

Nohe Lema who came from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to compete, said he sprained his ankle during practice last week. His first Wharf to Wharf race will likely not be his fastest.

"My coach told me to chill

out today," said the 17-year-old.

"Chilling out" by Lema's standards meant finishing the race in a blistering 32 minutes, 32 seconds.

"I was expecting it to be more difficult," he said of the route that winds along the coast between Santa Cruz and Capitola. "I love hills."

Kristen Lenz, a first-grade teacher from Westlake Elementary School in Santa Cruz, was one of 100 medical staff who ran the race, ready to provide basic first aid to runners, perform CPR if needed, and to call paramedics in case of a real emergency.

"Most of the time we just give out Band-Aids," she said.

After the elite runners crossed the finish line, the remaining thousands followed, many of them serious runners in their own right. Drenched in sweat and faces straining, they sprinted the final 100 yards down Cliff Drive into Capitola Village, to the cheering of several hundred spectators.

Many others participated in the race at their own pace, some at a slow jog and some even pushing baby strollers.

"I'm tired," said 7-year-old Solomon Doherty, who had just completed the race with friend Chad Benson. "I loved getting squirted by the hoses."

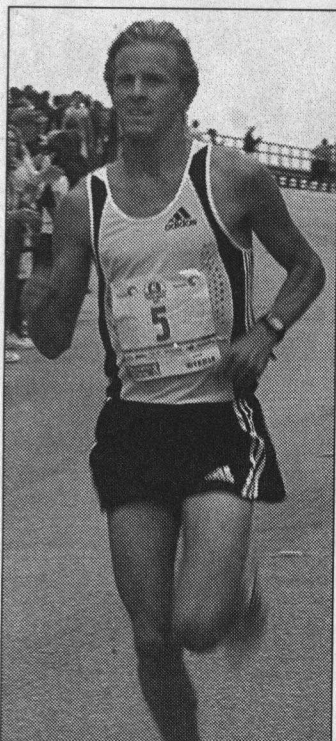
Doherty, a beginning runner, said he plans to be on his

school's track team.

At the opposite end of the spectrum were the walkers, and those who came simply to enjoy the show along the way — about 50 musical bands lined the route, several people wore costumes, and spectators hosed down the crowd and offered free orange slices and water in paper cups, all of which have become Wharf to Wharf traditions.

Kayla Caravelli, 12, and her mother Laura Rudeen, both from San Jose, ran the race together for the second year in a row. They finished in about an hour and a half.

"We did it for the fun factor," said Rudeen. "It's as simple as that."



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Brett Gotcher of Watsonville nears the finish line to place fifth Sunday in the Wharf to Wharf. He's been participating in the race since 1999.