

Vergara and Davis dominate at “Costa 47”

Women’s record falls after 24 years

Erin Vergara and Jesse Davis, barely rested from a hot and difficult Olympic Trials Marathon in L.A., ran away to victory at the “47th Sam Costa Half Marathon”. In the process Erin broke the 1992 record of Colette Murphy by 29 seconds with a stunning 1:16:18. Jesse, while not challenging Thom Burleson’s 1983 mark, still led from wire to wire in the men’s race to win comfortably in 1:10:07.

But the story isn’t only about the performance of Erin and Jesse. This was the strongest women’s field in the history of the “Costa”. The top 8 women posted times that in recent years could have won the Half. Kelby Laughner, this year’s Groundhog 7 winner, followed Erin to the tape in 1:19:13, with Elise Sigg from Mahomet, Illinois and Lindsay Cordes of Fort Wayne racing to the finish with 1:21:18 and 1:21:32 respectively. “Costa” icon Lucie Mays-Sulewski, 2015 champ and 5-time winner, was fifth overall and claimed the Masters division in 1:23:35. Allison Steinbeck of Muncie was close on Lucie’s heels in 1:24:04 with Kelsey Gurganus, the 2015 Groundhog victor close behind in 1:25:21. Corinne Innes rounded out the “magnificent 8” with a 1:27:40. Over the last two-plus decades there have been years when any of these women would have won with these times. It was simply an amazing group of female athletes in the Half, and it didn’t stop there.

While Jesse finished with more than a two minute advantage, the next three men battled the entire distance. Ryan Schafbuch of Lafayette, Josh Richardson of Springfield Ohio, and Stephen Boedicker of Whitestown, had themselves a race on the roads of Carmel and Noblesville. With Ryan maintaining a slight lead throughout, Josh and Stephen battled and swapped positions to the end. With three miles to go barely 40 seconds separated the group. Ryan maintained his lead for a 1:12:16. Josh surged over the last uphill mile to beat Stephen to the finish, 1:12:38 to 1:13:21.

Impressive performances continued through the entire field. Four-time champ Mike Smith repeated as the Masters winner in 1:22:13 with Tom Dever of Terre Haute and Jose Gaeta of Lafayette close behind at 1:23:04 and 1:23:23. Julie Wankowski from Savoy Illinois and Gina Naas followed Lucie in the women’s Masters with 1:31:04 and 1:32:40.

On a day which defied predictions of rain or snow, cool temps in the low 40’s and light winds facilitated some terrific Age Group results. Jarrett Walbot of Cicero and Nicholas Nordmann of Bourbon were first and second with the 20-24 crowd in 1:16:13 and 1:20:47. Matt Farkas and Ansel Wachter of Peoria Illinois ran 1:14:01 and 1:17:15 to follow Stephen Boedicker to second and third in the 25-29 cluster. In 35-39 Tim Monaghan from Terre Haute posted a 1:16:55 while our former club president, Chris Galloway, stormed to a 1:19:49, second in his age and 13th overall. Jackie Hartwick knocked more than 3 minutes off last years’ time to repeat in 50-54 with a 1:38:43 while Cheryl Marner and Patty Villars improved as well to win again in 55-59 and 60-64 with respective times of 1:49:55 and 1:57:56. Our race record holder and 3-time winner Thom Burleson captured the 60-64 title this year in 1:40:37.

And then we have those gentlemen who run in the 65-69 troop. I'd suggest this crew could be role models for what you may want to be as a runner when you "grow up". Max Williams from Fishers, Jim Evans of Greenfield, and Monte Hitchcock from Muncie, all 66 years young, finished well within the top 30% of the entire field. Max lead the way in 1:37:59 to win his group again with Jim coming in at 1:39:52 and Monte in 1:42:45. My friends, that is a range of 7:29 to 7:51 pace. Think about that when you are doing your mile repeat speed work later this week. And I don't want to forget Rosie Hughes of Pittsboro. She sliced 4 minutes off her 2015 age group winning performance to be number one in the women's 65-69 again with a 2:12:23; clearly getting faster, not older, at 10:01 pace.

The "11th Costa Quarter" rivaled the Half in competitiveness and pedigree. The women's field was as deep as the Half with the top 7 women posting times capable of winning in recent years. The men had three former winners in front the entire way. The "Costa Quarter" has become as much of a "runners race" as the Half.

Mike Cole led nearly from the start to repeat his 2014 victory in 35:20. He was trailed by Brandon Russell, our 2014 Half Marathon champion, in 36:21. Andy Cowen, a back-to-back Quarter Marathon winner in 2012 and 2013, finished third, two minutes shy of Brandon in 38:21.

The women, however, nearly stole the "Quarter" show. Kyla Thoman challenged the race record and finished in 40:48, only 11 seconds short of Amanda Weaver's mark set last year. Amy Corrigan of Greenfield and Tasha Hartman battled side by side for second and third until Amy pulled away near the end in 43:47 to Tasha's 43:59. Amanda made special arrangements with a challenging schedule to return from Ann Arbor Michigan to finish 4th overall in 44:17. Those following Amanda to complete the "Top 7" were Samantha Dauby in 45:29, Christel Richard at 46:41, and Sydney Hartwick in 47:11. All of these times for these women would have led the field a few short years ago.

The Masters crew in the Quarter, both men and women, were excellent. Ryan Loiselle, Tim Neff, and Mark Doctor – current Cathedral coach and longtime "Costa" registrar, timer, and scoring guru, were 1-2-3 with Ryan's 39:41 also placing him 5th overall. Leslie Muse from Fishers, Robyn Roemer, and CareyLynn Christjansen from Terre Haute rounded out the Masters women. Led by Leslie's 47:47, they were 8th, 9th, and 12th overall.

There were some very notable efforts in the Age Groups. Michael Shirrell in 30-34 ran 38:28 to win and place 4th overall; Kate Kobza had a pitched battle with her Masters and highly competitive 45-49 cohorts to come home 1st in 50:45 while Steffany Moen, Megan Kaul, Penny Yates, Mary Weerts, Donna Sledge-Brown, and Deanna Baumer from Lebanon were repeat age group champions. For the men it was Todd Anzeveno who matched last year's victory along with Ronnie Greene from Kokomo who shaved 3 full minutes from his 2015 result to win again at 65-69 with a 51:46, 7:55 pace, and 42nd overall result.

Winning back-to-back is really, really difficult and I applaud all at the "Costa" capable of maintaining their health, focus, and determination in order to create that outcome. But as in the

Half, let us show profound respect for those whose competitive fire burns far longer than normal humans might expect; Steve Gilbert from Fishers at 70 with an 8:36 pace and 56:15, John Peters from Peru, 75, who not only repeated with a win in a new age group but ran 9:45 and 1:03:47, and the incredible June Brumley from Brownsburg who, at 81, turned a 12:53 pace into a 1:24:20 finish. Major kudos to one and all!

And kudos to everyone who participated and everyone who volunteered at “Costa 47”. It takes over 150 people to make the “Costa” happen. Our venue, Northview Church is as good as it gets and they continue to be the absolute best partners you could ever wish to have. With this year’s race being a week earlier than normal due to Easter, and while sharing the weekend with numerous other events in central Indiana, we still experienced the 2nd largest turnout in the last 25 years. Astounding! It is a tribute to all of you who love this race, believe in its legacy, and continue to support it through participation, volunteering, and word of mouth marketing.

Work is already well underway for “Costa 48” in 2017. Put March 25th on your calendar. We will be back to make it incredibly joyful, superbly organized, and the most user friendly encounter you will have at a race all year!

The best of success to everyone in your training and racing for the rest of the year. We will see you at the starting line when spring once again brings the “48th Sam Costa” to Carmel Indiana.

Terry Townsend
Sam Costa Race Director