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Gorneault and Beckum secure top times in weekend road race

Kevin Sjoberg • April 10, 2017

PRESQUE ISLE, Maine — The first road race of the spring in Aroostook County provided a baseline for the top racers in the area heading into their competitive season.

The annual UMPI Spring Runoff 5K was held Saturday, April 9 and some familiar names were at the top of the standings.

P.J. Gorneault of Caribou led the field with

a time of 16 minutes and 52 seconds. He was followed by Evan Graves of Caribou in 17:16 and Justin Fereshetian of Mars Hill in 18:18.



Marie Beckum of Caribou took the overall women's title in the UMPI Spring Runoff 5K held April 8. She finished in 21 minutes and 35 seconds. (Kevin Sjoberg)



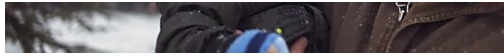
For females, Caribou's Marie Beckum came out on top in 21:35. Sue Fox of Presque Isle was next in 22:27 and Jaylee Fox of Mapleton took third in 22:31.



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The 38-year-old Gorneault said he had an aggressive week of training, logging over 90 miles and mixing in a couple workouts.

“It was a good day to race,” he said. “I was hoping to be a little faster, but being my first race of the year it was a good indicator as to where I am at. All the miles and the workouts may have been a reason for the slower time.”

Gorneault is next planning to run in the Sugarloaf Marathon in May and then “as many County Challenge races as I can” before doing both the Beach-to-Beacon 10K (Aug. 5) and the Caribou Marathon (Sept. 17).

Graves called the race “a great start to the spring and summer running season in Aroostook County” and said even though he was hoping to cross the finish line closer to the 17-minute mark, was happy with the result.

“I haven’t raced since last fall’s Caribou Marathon, but I went out at a smart pace and held on,” said Graves. “My fitness this winter wasn’t great but the month of March went better as my mileage increased and I got some good long runs in.”

Graves, 35, plans on running a 50-kilometer trail race at Pineland Farms during Memorial Day weekend, continue with many local races and like Gorneault run in both the Beach-to-Beacon and Caribou Marathon, but at the half marathon distance. The Maine Marathon in Portland in October and Millinocket Marathon in December are also in Graves’ plans if he can stay healthy.

For Beckum, she was just glad to be out again and her goal is to compete in all the County Challenge races during the calendar year.

“It’s fun to visit the various towns to participate in the series,” the 31-year-old Beckum said. “I have not had the consistent winter training to set me up for fast spring racing, but I am hopeful to devote more time to training in the coming months.”

She said her goal this year is to set a personal record at some distance between 5K and half marathon, but has not yet narrowed in on a particular race to focus on.

Race director Chris Smith said predicted heavy rains held off to make conditions nearly ideal for the 70 runners and five walkers participating.

“Some good times were turned in,” he said. “This race is used by many runners as a gauge as to how their winter preparation has set them up to jump into more consistent and higher-quality training as the weather gets better. They will use their performances to set training paces as they work toward their next high school, collegiate or citizens race.”

The overall top 10 after Gorneault, Graves and Fereshetian included: Dylan Marrero of Caribou in 18:33, Bradley Burlock of Presque Isle in 18:45, Marco Levesque of Edmundston, New Brunswick in 19:01, Evan Desmond of Caribou in 19:08, Brian Korhonen of Carmel in 19:20, Max Bartley of Presque Isle in 19:43 and Trevor Levesque of Presque Isle in 20:04.

Age division winners were: 14-and-under females, Teagan Ewings of Houlton, 23:00; 14-and-under males, George J. Ferland of Stockholm, 23:54; 15-18 females, Madeline Gudde of Caribou, 24:40; 15-18 males, Marrero; 19-29 females, Jaylee Fox; 19-29 males, Fereshetian; 30-39 females, Sue Fox; 30-39 males, Graves; 40-49 females, Angela Ewings of Houlton, 23:28; 40-49 males, Levesque; 50-59 females, Patricia Hebert of Edmundston, New Brunswick, 24:22; 50-59 males, Craig Reese of Presque Isle, 22:54; 60-69 females, Connie McLellan of Cross Lake Township, 28:25; 60-69 males, Bob Davis of Presque Isle, 23:29; and 70-79 males, Erv MacDonald of Houlton, 33:49.

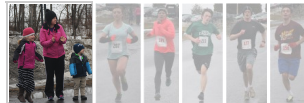
In the three-team relay, Teanne Ewings of Houlton, Sadie Thompson of Cary Plantation and Emmalyne Drake of Houlton combined for a time of 24:03.

For walkers, Malanie Reese of Presque Isle was first in 43:45, followed closely by Mary Potter of Houlton in 43:46. Natalie MacFarlaine of Easton came in at 54:30. For males, Tim MacFarlaine of Presque Isle had a time of 54:33.

The next County Challenge race is the S.W. Collins 5K in Caribou on Sunday, June 25. Graves hopes more strong turnouts continue at that event and the others behind it.

“It was good to see people working hard at something so important for individual wellness and something that is so positive for our communities,” Graves said. “Many people think of running as an individual sport, but so many positive things can come from it that allow people to build relationships, get to know others and have some motivation when it comes to training.

“Running is such a positive outlet,” he added.



Second-place finisher Evan Graves of Caribou had some enthusiastic supporters; his daughter, Emma, wife Erin, & son Easton.

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