

Navy SEAL Extreme Off-road Challenge a success



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Cocke County High School's Leo Woods was tops at the Navy Seal Extreme Off-Road Challenge in Cosby.

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COSBY-The rain and soggy ground did not get in the way of this past Sunday's Navy SEAL Extreme Off-Road run in Cosby, touted as "the most unique running and fitness event in Tennessee". Race creator/director, and retired Navy SEAL, Dan Schreder of Smoky Mountain Endeavors, Inc. actually thinks it added to the venue's already incredibly strenuous race course.

"These runners knew what they were getting into when they signed up, some as far back as early August, so a bit more mud and sloppy conditions didn't scare them off," said

Schreder. "Our 5.6Km (3.5mile) trail running experience that includes long steep climbs, an obstacle course, a pond to run through, a creek bed to navigate, a near vertical hill-side rope climb to complete is such a departure from the traditional road or trail running race that our competitors get super excited for this event."

Even though this was just the second such event (the first was held in April 2009) the 133 participants came from near and far. Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee were all well represented. Spectators and runner's family members put the total crowd on hand to an estimated 200 strong.

The race kicked off after a few short words from distinguished guests comprised of State Representative Eddie Yokley, Field Representative John Abe Teague (for Congressman Phil Roe), and Cocke County Mayor Iliff McMahan Jr.

"This is a great event for the area," said Mayor McMahan. "This is yet another example of great people with great purpose here in Cocke County, and we are excited to show visitors this beautiful area we have to offer."

Cocke County Tourism Director Linda Lewanski and Cocke County Chamber of Commerce Director Kandee Veridal were in attendance as well, providing apples to participants from Carver's apple orchard courtesy of the Cocke County Partnership.

It was a quick start for Newport's own Leo Woods, a junior from Cocke County High School, fresh off a noteworthy cross-country season with the Fighting Cocks. He led start to finish and completed the course in 40:17. Last April's defending champ, Taylor Haney of Knoxville, won his 20-29 year old age group, but came up second to the younger Woods overall. In a surprise thrill for the race director, his son, Drew Schreder, a freshman at Cosby High School, was the third overall finisher.

Women came to be challenged as well, and the race saw Elise Bahr of Homewood, Alabama take home top honors with a time of 57:32. Second overall female finisher was Karen Seiferth of Johnson City. Another nice surprise for the race creator was seeing his daughter, Brooke Schreder, a 7th grader at Cosby Elementary, take home third place overall female finisher.

Eleven four-person teams made up of young and old, co-ed, serious or novice runners, or those just doing it for the experience, dotted the race course. Their task was to start, compete, and finish together, as a team. The winning team was a group called "Team Kill" from Ooltewah with a time of 55:25.

Proceeds from the race will benefit the Boys & Girls Club of Newport/Cocke County. Unit Director Shane Borie, Board President Derrick Woods and fellow board member Dan Dickens were on hand assisting with the event.

A huge presence was the Lady Red basketball program of Cocke County with head coach Wade Wester. A work force of 19 girls came to help direct runners from one trail to another, one obstacle to another and so on.

"I could not have done the race without them," said Schreder. "They wanted to contribute to something bigger than themselves. Our race was a good fit for the girls to assist with, letting them see first hand their contribution to showcasing Cocke County in a positive light to our race competitors and guests. They did an outstanding job. Some girls have now commented they want to compete in the next race and I look forward to seeing them."

Schreder is already making plans to host the next race on April 10, 2010, but that is not totally firm yet. Additional information about the race can be found at www.smokymountainendeavors.com. Photos from the event are linked from the race site, or found directly at www.cockecountysports.com.

Men's First Place: Leo Woods.

Women's First Place: Elise Bahr.

Men's 19-and-Under: 1. Leo Woods, 2. Drew Schreder, 3. Brian Conner.

Men's 20-29: 1. Taylor Haney, 2. Steve Husky, 3. Mitch Thomas.

Men's 30-39: 1. Daniel Lucas, 2. Zach Miller, 3. John Parker.

Men's 40-49: 1. David Haas, 2. Greg Sikes, 3. Rommel Sia.

Men's 50-and-Up: 1. Gary Carver, 2. William Owen, 3. Harry Zain.

Women's 19-and-Under: 1. Brooke Schreder.

Women's 20-29: 1. Elise Bahr, 2. Andrea Kimbrough, 3. Shawna McKinney.

Women's 30-39: 1. Danielle Bahr, 2. Nicole Owen, 3. Karen Frank.

Women's 40-49: 1. Patty Christopher, 2. Christina Werner, 3. Pam McAmis.

Women's 50-and-UP: 1. Karen Seiferth, 2. Suzanne Vreeland.