

Race walking gains Judy Dohm's support Series: Running

[CITY Edition]

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To run or not to run was an easy question for Judy Dohm. The St. Petersburg woman was running nearly two miles a day when she decided to quit.

With no motivation to run, Dohm, a guidance counselor at North Shore Elementary, didn't exercise at all for the next six years except for some recreational walking. But she wasn't content with that, so she looked around for a sport that would interest her and help her get a better workout.

She found what she was looking for on a hot June morning in Lake Seminole Park.

"I knew that I had not been doing any exercise for a long time, and I felt that I had to start something," she said. "Race walking seemed to be a good sport for me and, when I tried it the first time, I felt great."

Dohm's first competition came in a two-mile race sponsored by the Florida Suncoast Race Walkers, a new club dedicated to promoting the sport locally by sponsoring monthly clinics and races.

The thrill of winning a third-place ribbon in her first race, combined with the enthusiasm of club director Gordon Hill, made Dohm a quick convert to the sport. She joined the club after the race.

Now the 46-year-old woman walks every morning near her home in northeast St. Petersburg. She has converted two friends, Sigrid Lovfald and Eve Brieske, into race walkers and has another, Nancy Bickner, ready to start.

"I consider myself to be a walking enthusiast," she said. "I haven't bought any special shoes yet. I haven't read any books about walking yet. But I am actively trying to recruit as many people as I can to the sport."

With a 24:36 effort in a rainstorm Sunday, Dohm won a third-place ribbon for the third time this summer. In just two months, she has lowered her time for that distance by almost five minutes. She already is planning to compete in the 5K (3.1-mile) event in the Gasparilla Distance Classic in February.

"I really enjoy the competitive part of race walking," she said. "It's a thrill for me to see someone ahead of me late in a race, and then to take off and really go fast and try to catch them. I can't wait for Gasparilla."

For the first time, a 5K distance race has been scheduled for a beach route in Pinellas County. Race director Nick Vitsaras says that proceeds from the Run for Straight will go to Straight Inc., a drug rehabilitation program.

The 5K race starts at 7:30 a.m. and a one-mile fun run/walk starts at 8 a.m. on Aug. 30. The starting line is near the refreshment stand on Pass-a-Grille Beach near Ninth Avenue. Entry fees are \$4 for no T-shirt or \$6 with a shirt, before Aug. 28; \$5 and \$7 on race day. There will be a \$1 discount for members of the Suncoast Runners Club and the Forerunners. For more information, call Dan Lyle at 392-4824 after 6 p.m., or call Nick Vitsaras at 525-5017 after 6 p.m. Other races

Aug. 31. Labor Day Classic. 10K (6.2-mile) and 3K (1.8-mile) road races at 7:30 a.m. at Countryside High School, near the intersection of State Road 580 and McMullen-Booth Road in Clearwater. For more information, call the Jogging Center at 536-8585.

Sept. 1. Brandon Balloon Chase. 5-mile and 1-mile road races and a 2-mile walk at 7:45 a.m. at Dover District Park, at the intersection of Gallagher Road and State Road 574 in Brandon. Entry fee: \$7 before Aug. 25; \$9 thereafter. For more information, call Jim Moohan at 1-685-8635.

Sept. 7. MacDill Fall Classic. 10K and 5K road races at 7:30 a.m. at MacDill Air Force Base, located at the south end of

Dale Mabry Highway in Tampa. For more information, call Millard Shumate at 1-831-9381.

Sept. 13. Florida Suncoast Race Walkers Club Races. Race times and location available at the end of August. For a race-walking information recording, call 576-0604.

Sept. 20. Warwhoop Sprint. 5K and 1-mile cross-country races at 8:30 a.m. and 8 a.m. respectively at shelters 12 and 13, near the boat ramp in Lake Seminole Park, which is on Park Boulevard, one mile west of Starkey Road in Seminole. Races feature two water jumps and a hill finish. Sponsored by the West Florida 'Y' Runners Club; food provided by University General Hospital. Both races are free, but donations will be appreciated. For more information, call Larry Nordquist during the day at 585-7990 or in the evening at 531-0237.

[Illustration]

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO.; Caption: Judy Dohm

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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At last, a summer race that's shorter Series: Running

[CITY Edition]

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Author: Merritt Ashmore

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A trend for summer racing could start Saturday morning when the five-kilometer Run for Straight is held. The relatively short 3.1-mile distance may appeal to summer runners who are worn out from hot, humid and much longer races.

The 5K event starts at 7:30 a.m., followed by a one-mile run/walk at 8 a.m. Both races start and finish near the refreshment stand at Pass-a-Grille Beach and Ninth Avenue. Race-day entry fees are \$5 for no T-shirt or \$7 with a shirt. Race proceeds go to Straight Inc., a drug rehabilitation program.

Despite the fact that dehydration can be a major problem for runners during summer months, many area races are longer than five miles. The biggest race in the Sunshine State Games, for example, was a 6.2-mile event, which started on a humid July evening while temperatures hovered around 85 degrees. Each of the five beach races in the Suncoast Runners Club's Summer Sunset Series were at least five miles long.

Race director Nick Vitsaras hopes the first Run for Straight will be the kind of race that runners want to see more of in the future.

"After three of the five summer beach races I was so tired the next day that I didn't feel like moving around," said Vitsaras, who has directed more than 50 road races in the past six years. "I hope that shorter summer distance races like the 5K will become a trend, replacing some of the 10K races. Run for Straight will be held early enough in the morning for the sun to still be low. That will keep the temperature down, and we know the tide will be low during the race."

Vitsaras estimates that more than 200 runners will participate in the races.

Many local runners have to change running plans because of the cancellation of the Tampa/St. Petersburg Marathon, which was scheduled for Dec. 14. The best 26.2-mile replacement race may be the Brandon Marathon, scheduled for the same date. Also, entry is still open in these marathons:

- Oct. 26. America's Marathon. Deadline for registration is Sept. 1, with forms for the Chicago race available at the Jogging Center in Largo.
- Nov. 1. Marine Corps Marathon in Washington D.C.
- Jan. 3. Orange Bowl Marathon in Miami.
- Jan. 17. Jacksonville Marathon. Other races

Sept. 1. Brandon Balloon Chase. 5-mile and 1-mile road races and a 2-mile walk at 7:45 a.m. at Dover District Park, at the intersection of Gallagher Road and State Road 574 (Buffalo Avenue) in Brandon. Entry fee: \$9. Sponsored by the Brandon Running Association. For more information, call Jim Moohan at 1-685-8635.

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Sept. 12. Suncoast Runners Cross-Country Series. First in a series of four 5K cross-country races at 6:30 p.m. at Taylor Park, located west of the intersection of Clearwater-Largo Road and 8th Avenue SW in Largo. Entry fee: \$4; free to club members. For more information, call Pete Farnum at 392-0109 or Dan Thetard at 584-5479.

Sept. 13. Florida Suncoast Race Walkers Club races. Race times and location available on Sept. 1. For a race-walking information recording, call 576-0604.

Sept. 13. Chili's Chase. 8K (4.8-mile) road race and one-mile fun run at 7 p.m. at Cascades Shopping Center, Fletcher Avenue and North Dale Mabry Highway in Tampa. For more information, call 1-961-1040 or 1-963-7143.

Sept. 20. Warwhoop Sprint. 5K and one-mile cross-country races at 8:30 a.m. and 8 a.m. respectively at shelters 12 and 13, near the boat ramp in Lake Seminole Park, which is on Park Boulevard, one mile west of Starkey Road in Seminole. Includes two water jumps and a hill finish. Sponsored by West Florida 'Y' Runners Club; food provided by University General Hospital. Races free, but donations appreciated. Call Larry Nordquist at 585-7990 days, 531-0237 evenings.

Oct. 25. Lansbrook Fall Classic. 10K and 5K road races at 8 a.m. at Lansbrook, by Lake Tarpon in Palm Harbor. Entry fees for both: \$7; or \$9 on race day. Registration packets available at Athletes Foot, Tyrone Mall, and at Jogging Center, Largo. Sponsored by Suncoast Runners. For information, call Scott Gillespie, 736-1519, or Kevin Doel, 785-5868.

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