

SPORTSDAY

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For half marathon runners, 13 isn't so scary

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The Dallas-Fort Worth area will host nine half marathons this year, including Saturday's Lake Benbrook Half Marathon and 5K. Race director Michael Polansky scheduled it for four weeks before the Fort Worth Cowtown Marathon.

"I wanted it to be a tuneup for Cowtown," said race director Michael Polansky. "That's why I put it on this date."

More half marathons are popping up locally and nationwide because people enjoy running 13.1 miles, said Paula Robertson, who founded the state and national "Love the Half" challenges.

"The half marathon is such an easy, doable distance," said Robertson, whose inaugural Heels and Hills Half Marathon is May 6 in Las Colinas. "It's user friendly. You can run half marathons all the time. A marathon is such a long distance to train for. People who have done a 10K don't think 13 miles is so threatening. They do think a marathon is."

A run at Lake Benbrook isn't new. It began in the 1980s as the Fort Worth Runners Club's Fort Worth Fall Classic 20K. When the club became inactive for a few years, the race wasn't held.

In 1990, Polansky said he and others resurrected a run around Lake Benbrook. They moved the event to late January, a month before Cowtown, and adjusted the distance to 13.1 miles.

For a few years, the race was known as the "Better Half," to differentiate it from Dallas' The Half, a 13.1-mile run held four weeks before Wellstone's Dallas White Rock Marathon. Polansky renamed it the Lake Benbrook Half in 1993, he said.

The Lake Benbrook venue helps prepare Cowtown marathon trainees for the 26.2-mile event.

"If you can run this, you can run any marathon in Texas," Polansky said. "It's a good tuneup for Cowtown because

Cowtown is hilly, too. If you can run this race and say it was easy, you're ready."

Polansky said unpredictable weather also makes his event challenging. It often is cold, wet and windy.

"You feel like you're running into the wind no matter which direction you're going," Polansky said. "Sometimes I have 500 preregistered and only 300 show up."

For information about the Lake Benbrook Half Marathon and 5K, visit www.polanskyrunning.com.

For more information about the "Love the Half" challenges, visit www.lovethehalf.com

Three Lake Grapevine Runners and Walkers members recognized: Rick Hanson (male runner), Mindi Rice (female runner) and Bridget Smith (masters female) of the Lake Grapevine Runners and Walkers club were recognized as the Road Runners Club of America's Southern Region road runners of the year. The Southern Region is composed of 11 states.

Tal Morrison Scholarships to be awarded Saturday: The annual Tal Morrison Scholarships will be presented to six area high school seniors following the Feb. 3 Tal Morrison Classic 5K and 15K at Winfrey Point at White Rock Lake. The scholarship funds increased to \$10,000, primarily from donations by the Dallas Running Club from money raised by The Half.

The male recipients are: John Goodson of Bryan Adams, Joshua Neuroth of Woodrow Wilson and Rafael Jamaica of James Madison. The female recipients are: Rosa Garcia of Thomas Jefferson, Lissa Storey of Hillcrest and Jacqueline Nicole Coleman of Hillcrest.

Briefly: The 12-race Toyota Run-Bi-Tri SuperSeries kicks off Sunday at the Lewisville ISD Natatorium, 1766 Timbercreek Road, in Flower Mound. The Flower Mound venue will host races May 27 and Sept. 30. The other sites are in Allen, Keller and Plano. For information, visit www.runbitri.com. ... The Plano Pacers Fresh Start 10K, 5K and Kids K, the club's January run, will be Saturday at Harrington Park in Plano. For information, visit www.planopacers.org.

AREA HALF MARATHONS

Includes marathons that offer half marathon races:

Jan. 27	Lake Benbrook Half Marathon and 5K www.polanskyrunning.com
Feb. 10	The Texas Half (Dallas) www.texashalf.com
Feb. 24	Fort Worth Cowtown Marathon www.cowtownmarathon.com
April 1	Big-D Texas Marathon (Dallas) www.texasmarathon.com
April 14	Run Away Train Half Marathon (Dallas) www.thrustonracing.com
May 6	Heels and Hills Half Marathon & 5K (Irving) www.heelsandhills.com

- May 20 North Trails Half Marathon (Dallas)
www.thrustonracing.com
- Nov. 4 The Half (Dallas)
www.thehalf.org
- Dec. 9 Wellstone's Dallas White Rock Marathon
www.runtherock.com

CALENDAR

SATURDAY, JAN. 27 - Lake Benbrook Half Marathon and 5K, Winscott Road and U.S. Highway 377, South, Benbrook, Texas, 8:30 a.m. Half marathon: \$30. 5K: \$25. 817-738-7475 or www.polanskyrunning.com.

SATURDAY, JAN. 27 - Plano Pacers Fresh Start 10K, 5K and Jr. .7-miles sprint, Harrington Park, 401 West 16th St. behind the Spaghetti Warehouse, Plano, 8 a.m., members free, others \$5, 972-967-7223 or www.planopacers.org.

SUNDAY, JAN. 28 - 2007 Toyota Super Series Run-Bi-Tri Reverse format triathlon, Lewisville ISD Natatorium, 1776 Timber Creek Road, Flower Mound, 9 a.m., run \$20, run-bike \$40, run-bi-tri \$60, 972-906-8954 or www.runbitri.com.

SUNDAY, JAN. 28 - Carrollton Runners 5K and 1-mile, McInnish Park, Carrollton, 7:30 a.m., 972-245-3341.

TUESDAY, JAN. 30 - The Colony Roadrunners Club Prediction Run 5K, Five Star Complex, 4100 Blair Oaks, The Colony, 7 p.m., free, www.tcroadrunners.org.

SATURDAY, FEB. 3 - Fillie Trot 5K and 1-mile, Grapevine Lake, Oak Grove Park, 2500 North Dove Loop, Grapevine, 8:45 a.m., \$15 through Sunday, \$20 after, 817-481-8872 or www.active.com.

SATURDAY, FEB. 3 - American Heritage Academy Run for the Children 5K and 1K, Carrollton, 8 a.m., 972-416-5437 or www.starsaha.org.

SATURDAY, FEB. 3 - Dallas Running Club (formerly Cross Country Club of Dallas) Tal Morrison Classic 15K and 5K, Winfrey Point, White Rock Lake, Dallas, 8 a.m., members free, others \$10, 214-855-1511 or www.dallasrunningclub.com.

SUNDAY, FEB. 4 - Burleson Runners Back to Basics 10K, 2-mile and Kids' 1K, Burleson Community Center, Burleson, 3 p.m., 817-496-3734.