

Alemayehu, Conley claim SACTOWN titles

*Defending champion, Olympian
cruise in race helping children*

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Defending champion Tesfaye Alemayehu pushed hard from the start, daring anyone to stay with him in the third annual Credit Union SACTOWN Ten-Mile Run.

Olympian Kim Conley treated the race as a strength workout, taking a longer-term view as she prepares for an upcoming track season she hopes earns her a spot on the U.S. World Championship team.

Both strategies worked well on a mild, sunny Sunday morning, with Antioch's Alemayehu and West Sacramento's Conley winning individual titles in an event that serves as USA Track & Field's Pacific Association 10-Mile Championship and helps raise money for Children's Miracle Network.

The race, which started and finished at the state Capitol and went through Midtown and East Sacramento, also featured two U.S. Masters records. Kevin Castille, 41, set a new 10-mile mark with a 48-minute, 56-second effort and Melody-Ann Schultz, 71, established a 70-74 age-group record with a 1:20:10 performance.

No one ran faster than Alemayehu.

"I just took off from the start," said the 29-year-old Ethiopian, who finished in 47:42. "It's fast, no uphills.

"It felt very good."

Shadrack Biwott, from Eugene, Ore., finished second in 48:30, with Jameson Mora of Arroyo Grande third in 48:52.

“I was with him (Alemayehu) until the last 5 ½ miles,” Biwott said. “He kind of took off ... With three miles left I realized I’m not going to catch him, so I just settled in.

“It’s flat. It’s a really good course. You can fly on this thing.”

Conley, a former UC Davis standout who runs for the Sacramento Running Association’s Elite Team, cruised to an easy victory with a 56:21 effort.

SRA teammates Alia Gray (56:52) and Lauren Jimison (56:56) completed a top-three sweep.

“It went really well,” Conley said. “It got a little bit hard around mile 7 ... but near the end it felt good again.

“I loved the support from everybody on the road. I felt a lot of love from Sacramento.”

Conley, 27, captivated the track world last June with a stirring, come-from behind effort to finish third in the women’s 5,000 meters at the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials in Eugene and earn a trip to the Olympic Games in London.

After earning a spot in the recent World Cross Country Championships in Poland, her target this year is to make the U.S. track team for the upcoming World Championships.

“This was really to continue to build some strength,” said Conley, who plans to run the 1,500 meters at the Mt. SAC Relays later this month before shifting her focus to the 5,000.

“The goal would be to make the world team again.”

Castille, from Nicholasville, Ky., holds several U.S. Masters records. He easily broke the old 10-mile mark of 49:34 in finishing fourth overall.

“Last week I tried to break the 10k record and missed by two seconds in New Orleans,” he said. “I definitely wasn’t going home two weeks in a row feeling the same way.”

The event, which included a three-person relay and a Kids’ Miracle Mile, attracted 1,700 runners and was part of a nationwide effort that has raised more than \$483,000 this year for Children’s Miracle Network, which includes UC Davis Children’s Hospital. Fund-raising efforts surpassed \$180,000 locally.

Stockton’s Nancy Snider, 53, ran the 10-mile race to honor her daughter, Laura, who died at age 11 after an Arteriovenous Malformation – an abnormal connection of blood vessels in the brain – ruptured.

Snider remembers the overwhelming support her family received from the UC Davis Children's Hospital staff and the care provided her daughter during a challenging 10 ½-week stay six years ago.

"The people on the course were wonderful," said Snider, who finished close to the 1:35 mark. "Each mile represented a week of Laura in the hospital. The last two miles were really rough.

"I kind of had to run and cry."

The SACTOWN race is modeled after the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten-Mile Run held the same day in Washington, D.C. That event attracted 15,000 runners and raised \$515,000 for the Children's Miracle Network in its 40th annual race last year.

Children's Miracle Network Hospitals is an affiliation of children's hospitals throughout the country. Each year these non-profit hospitals provide state-of-the-art care, cutting edge research and preventative health education.

These hospitals treat 98 percent of children needing heart or lung transplants, 88 percent of children with cancer and 76 percent of children with cystic fibrosis.

Credit Unions for Kids is the brand under which America's credit unions and affiliated organizations fundraise for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. To date, credit unions have raised more than \$100 million since the introduction of the CU4Kids program back in 1996.

The Sacramento Running Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to finding ways to encourage people of all ages and abilities to run. The SRA is committed to developing new, quality running events that appeal to a broad variety of runners.

SRA events include the Gold Rush 100k on May 11, the Folsom Blues Breakout Half Marathon on Oct. 19, the California International Marathon on Dec. 8 and the Super Bowl Sunday 10k Run on Feb. 2.

SRA beneficiaries include the American River Parkway, youth fitness programs, local running venues and aspiring young runners.