

Rachel Booth Claims Disney's Princess Half Marathon and Historic "Coast to Coast" Milestone

Louisiana runner establishes record time and becomes first to capture women division titles of runDisney events at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and Disneyland Resort in California; race weekend total of 27,000 participants is event's largest ever in four-year history

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (Feb. 26, 2012) - Rachel Booth sure knows how to make an entrance. Her first race at Walt Disney World Resort was one for the record books.

Booth of Mandeville, La., led from start to finish Sunday to win Disney's Princess Half Marathon in record time (1:18:11). On top of that, Booth, the first woman across the finish line at the Disneyland Half Marathon the past two years in Anaheim, Ca., became the first runner to win titles at runDisney events on both coasts.

"This was a lot of fun to have my two children there to enjoy the whole experience and just to see mommy cross the finish line with Minnie and Mickey," Booth said. "To do it at both Disneyland and Disney World, it really distinguishes it from other races. It definitely has a little bit of a special place in my heart."

Booth, 31, started fast and steadily pulled away from the pack, finishing well ahead of Brittney Christianson of Burlington, ND, who was second (1:22:13), and Heather Sipsma of West Hartford, CT, who was third (1:23:10). Booth's winning time of 1:18:11 eclipsed the previous record of 1:18:18 set by Liza Galvan in 2009, but it was a tad slower than Booth's winning times at Disneyland in 2011 (1:18:01) and in 2010 (1:15:19). "I just wanted to go out with the rest of the girls, and that first mile I felt really good," said Booth, who attended graduate school at Florida State University. "The weather was perfect and it felt like a good morning run."

Booth led the field of more than 19,000 runners who ran the 13.1-mile course that went through Epcot and Magic Kingdom, including through Cinderella Castle. In all, more than 27,000 runners competed in various events during the weekend, the largest weekend total in the race's four-year history. Among the notable half marathon finishers was ESPN SportsCenter anchor Sage Steele who ran her first half marathon in 2:16:00 with the support of ESPNW, ESPN's first platform for female athletes and fans.

Disney's Princess Half Marathon Weekend included the Disney Tangled Royal Family 5K and Royal Family Kids' Races and the Disney Fit for a Princess Expo in addition to Disney's Princess Half Marathon. The Expo, held at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, featured the latest running apparel and equipment, plus a speaker series involving running experts such as runDisney's official training consultant Jeff Galloway.

Disney's Princess Half Marathon Weekend is one of six annual runDisney events and the second women-focused event. The other is the Tinker Bell Half Marathon Weekend, which takes place in January at Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, CA. Both events are designed to celebrate and promote women's empowerment, women's health and an active lifestyle. And both are among the nation's largest endurance race weekends geared towards women.