

Arciniaga Conquers the Galaxy with First-Ever Star Wars Half Marathon Weekend Victory at Disneyland Resort

Arciniaga and female winner Jennifer Berry both won 2014 Disneyland Half Marathon; Event was first of four runDisney events at Disneyland Resort this year; More than 23,000 runners started races during the four-day event weekend

ANAHEIM, Calif. (January 18, 2015) -The "Force" was obviously with Nick Arciniaga at Disneyland Resort. The Fountain Valley, Calif. native blasted along an intergalactic journey Sunday to win the inaugural Star Wars Half Marathon presented by Sierra Nevada Corporation at Disneyland Resort, his second runDisney victory here in the past five months.

Arciniaga, 31, who now lives in Flagstaff, AZ, won the Disneyland Half Marathon in August before breaking the finishing line tape first again Sunday, this time greeted at the finish by Mickey, Minnie, Donald and Goofy dressed as their favorite Star Wars characters. Jason Ryf of Oshkosh, WI was second (1:10:56) and Jacob Abrego of Corpus Christi, TX was third (1:14:49).

"It was pretty big for me," Arciniaga said of the victory which he accomplished with a time of 1:08:13. "It's a hometown race for me so I like coming back to Southern California and having my local fans and my family come out and cheer me on, so coming out here and being able to win is something that's always pretty special to me."

Jennifer Berry, 34, of Denver also seemingly runs at warp speed at Disney, streaking across the finish line Sunday as the female winner after doing the same thing last year at the Disneyland Half Marathon and the Disney Wine & Dine Half Marathon. This time she set a personal record (1:22:34) and easily beat out second-place finisher Carla McAlister of San Clemente, Ca. (1:25:32) and third-place finisher Kellie Nickerson of Albuquerque, NM (1:27:03).

"It's been a big Disney year for me," Berry said. "When I won the Disneyland Half Marathon and the Wine & Dine Half Marathon, I figured I'd come out and try to round out a third (win)."

Arciniaga and Berry outran a galaxy of more than 12,200 runners in the new 13.1-mile intergalactic journey through Disneyland and Anaheim area streets where a variety of Disney entertainment, including Star Wars characters, cheered on runners at every mile.

"I came here once a year as a kid so it was pretty exciting to run through the park," Arciniaga said. "Running backstage is still pretty new to me and running through all the lands that I knew was pretty exciting."

The *Star Wars* race weekend kicked off with the *Star Wars* Wookiee Welcome Party, a private event that featured character meet-and-greets, entertainment, a dessert reception and an opportunity to ride select attractions, such as Space Mountain and Star Tours – The Adventures Continue, Astro Orbiter, and Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters.

In addition, there were several family-friendly events throughout the race weekend, including a three-day Health and Fitness Expo with the latest in fitness apparel, running gear and high tech gadgets, plus speakers such as *runDisney* training consultant Jeff Galloway and *runDisney* nutrition consultant Tara Gidus.

The *Star Wars* Half Marathon Weekend was the second *runDisney* race weekend of 2015 and the first this year at Disneyland Resort. The new event offered runners a variety of race experiences for all levels, from Padawans to Jedi Masters – the *runDisney* Kids Races, the *Star Wars* 5K, the *Star Wars* 10K and the *Star Wars* Half Marathon. And for an ultimate test for *Star Wars* rebels, there was the *Star Wars* Rebel Challenge – a two-race challenge that combined the *Star Wars* 10K on Saturday with the *Star Wars* Half Marathon on Sunday. Jedi runners who finished the 19.3-mile challenge earned a special *Star Wars* Rebel Challenge finisher medal in addition to medals for the 10K and half marathon.