

Wisconsin's Jason Ryf Cruises to Inaugural Star Wars Half Marathon Victory at Walt Disney World Resort

Oshkosh runner easily wins after second-place finish last year at another runDisney Star Wars-themed race at Disneyland Resort; Katie McGrath is top women's finisher; More than 43,000 runners take part in the race weekend

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (April 17, 2016) – After finishing second at the *runDisney Star Wars* half marathon at Disneyland Resort last year, Jason Ryf summoned even more of The Force on Sunday to win the inaugural *Star Wars* Half Marathon – The Dark Side at Walt Disney World Resort.

Ryf, 45, from Oshkosh, Wisconsin won the 13.1-mile race through Epcot, Disney's Animal Kingdom and Disney's Hollywood Studios in 1:13:39. Marc Burget of Jacksonville, Florida was second (1:14:38) and Chris Trebilcock of Tampa, Florida was third (1:15:27).

Katie McGrath was the first female runner to cross the finish line, covering the course in 1:24:05. Elizabeth Meadows-Harland of Nashville, Tennessee was second (1:26:36) and Kim Hunger of Antelope, California, was third (1:28:36).

For Ryf, conquering the race from a galaxy far, far away held a lot of sentimental value. Ryf said he grew up watching the *Star Wars* saga and is a real fan of the franchise. He finished second at the inaugural *Star Wars* Half Marathon at Disneyland Resort in 2015 with a time of 1:10:56. His time Sunday was a tad slower, yet he managed to land in the winner's circle.

"I love *Star Wars*. I saw the original movies in the theaters. Ever since I was a kid *Star Wars* has just been awesome," Ryf said. "So coming here and winning is pretty good. Being able to celebrate Disney and *Star Wars* and the race all together is a pretty nice time."

The race was the newest addition to the *runDisney* series which involves nine races at Walt Disney World Resort, Disneyland Resort and, for the first time later this year, Disneyland Paris. The next *runDisney* race weekend is the Tinker Bell Half Marathon Weekend presented by PANDORA Jewelry (May 5-8) at Disneyland Resort.

The *Star Wars* Half Marathon – The Dark Side involved several family-friendly events, including a Health and Fitness Expo with the latest in fitness apparel, running gear and high tech gadgets, the *Star Wars* 5K, the *Star Wars* 10K and the Dark Side Challenge, which involved running the 10K and the half marathon on consecutive days. There were also *Star Wars* characters along the course and opportunities for runners to pose with them before and after the races.

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