

Costa Comes Out on Top Again at Walt Disney World Marathon

Brazilian runner captures fourth straight win and sixth in the last seven years; Fellow Brazil runner Giovanna Martins wins women's title; More than 23,000 runners tackle 26.2-mile race amid chilly Florida weather; Race video and photos available

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (Jan. 8, 2017) – Apparently not even Mother Nature can beat Fredison Costa at the Walt Disney World Marathon presented by Cigna.

The Brazilian runner, who has dominated the 26.2-mile *runDisney* race in recent years, shrugged off unseasonably cool Florida temperatures early Sunday morning to notch his fourth straight Disney marathon victory and sixth in the last seven years.

This win, however, didn't come without a fight. In addition to battling the chilly conditions, Costa fought off fellow Brazilian runner Vanilson Neves who pushed Costa for the lead through much of the race which went through Magic Kingdom, Animal Kingdom and Disney's Hollywood Studios before finishing at Epcot.

But with about six miles to go, Neves started to run out of gas and Costa turned on the speed, finishing in 2:23:15. Neves crossed the finish line in 2:30:24 followed by Samuel Fazioli Salem, NH in 2:33:23.

"At Disney, every mile is magical. It's all this happiness around and that's what motivates me to come here," Costa, who resides in Orlando and trains at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort, said through an interpreter. "The atmosphere is amazing and I have a lot of fun running here...The (weather) affected me a lot at the beginning of the race, especially the wind. But I was able to overcome it and finish strong."

Martins won the women's division for the second time in three years, leaping across the finish line while screaming with joy. She had little trouble outrunning the field, winning in 2:48:05, which was sweet redemption after an injury prevented her from finishing the race last year. Kelsey Wiberley of Fenton, Michigan was second at 2:52:56 and Heather Schulz of Orlando was third in 2:59:13.

"This year I found out my nephew has spinal muscular atrophy and I ran to dedicate this to him. It was my motivation for the year," Martins said through an interpreter, explaining her jubilation and tears at the finish. "I wanted to get the message out on behalf of kids like my nephew who have this kind of condition."

The marathon was the final race of the four-day race weekend that included events for runners of all ages and levels. It was also the first of four *runDisney* race weekends scheduled for this year at Walt Disney World Resort, which hosts *runDisney* events along with Disneyland Resort and Disneyland Paris.