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Naperville marathon sells out in one day

By Marie Wilson

Spots in Naperville's inaugural marathon and half marathon sold out in about 14 hours, organizers said Tuesday.

Online registration opened at 6 a.m. Monday and closed before 8:30 p.m. when all slots were filled in both races, said Bob Hackett, one of five race directors for the Inaugural Naperville Marathon and Half Marathon, to be held Nov. 10.

"We were pleasantly surprised that it filled up as quickly as it did," Hackett said. "We knew it would fill up quickly; we didn't know it would fill up quite so quick."

A total of 3,200 runners registered at an even split between the 26.2-mile marathon and the 13.1-mile half marathon, Hackett said. The remaining 300 spots are reserved for those who sign up through charity partners, including Kids in Danger and the Les Turner ALS Foundation.

Now that open registration is complete, Hackett said race directors will focus on finalizing both courses and securing additional sponsors.

Naperville Running Company has signed on as the race's official pace team sponsor and as a gold-level running store sponsor. Dick Pond Athletics also is a gold-level running store sponsor, and Hackett said he expects Road Runner Sports and Naperville's New Balance store to sign on for that level of sponsorship as well.

As temperatures in the 60s spread across the area Tuesday, Hackett said runners are enthusiastic about preparing for the distance-running challenge, even though it's about nine months away.

"It's a little early to start training because the race isn't until November, but people are jazzed," Hackett said. "From the comments I'm getting, people are excited — first of all to get in (the race). There's a high level of excitement."

Race directors on Thursday dropped the prices of both races in response to hundreds of online comments complaining entry fees were too expensive.

Marathoners paid \$105 and half marathoners paid \$75 for race entry, which includes a long-sleeve technical shirt, a personalized race bib, a commemorative medal for all finishers, a race packet with coupons and giveaways, an online finisher's certificate and age group awards.

Parking and a gear check will be available free and trained pacers will be on the course along with 13 aid stations stocked with water, Gatorade, gel packs and plenty of portable toilets.

Hackett said the flurry of price-related complaints actually created more enthusiasm around the races, and he expects that energy to grow as organizers plan group training runs on segments of the course to help athletes prepare.

"The amount of energy that went into people emailing and calling and getting on Facebook to express their opinions

certainly raised the level of excitement and energy for the race,” Hackett said. “Our ability to react to it even helped to create a real positive effect.”

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