



Johnson, Mortensen Blaze to Chilly Walt Disney World Half Marathon Victory

Johnson notches second Disney half marathon title; Johnson and Mortensen members of elite Hanson's Brooks Distance Project Running Club of Rochester, Mich.; field of nearly 23,000 runners contribute to record Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. – (Jan. 9, 2010) – Michigan runners Chad Johnson and Emily Mortensen weathered near freezing temperatures Saturday to take home the men's and women's Walt Disney World Half Marathon division titles.

Braving freezing rain and temperatures in the low-30s, Johnson won for the second time after streaking to the finish at the Walt Disney World Half Marathon presented by CIGNA in 2008. Johnson, 33, who trained for the Disney event by running at times in snowy conditions in Rochester Hills, Mich., battled fellow Hanson's Brooks Distance Project Running Club member Sage Canaday for nearly 10 miles before pulling away and finishing at 1:07:02 - 18 seconds ahead of Canaday. Luis Rivera from Puerto Rico was third at 1:08:55.

After the race, Johnson said he and some of his Hanson's Brooks running club teammates were going to celebrate by going to the Magic Kingdom.

Mortensen, 27, took the women's title with a time of 1:20:58, finishing just ahead of Jen Blue (1:21:37) and Elizabeth Foster (1:21:52).

Jon Williams, 41, of Miami won the Masters division (ages 40 and up) with a time of 1:18:09. Ramilya Burangulov, 48, from Gainesville, Fla. ran away with the women's Masters race with a time of 1:22:22.

In the Wheelchair division, Germantown, Tenn. resident John Payne won for the second straight year, this time crossing the finish line at 1:40:26.

Despite the unseasonably cold Florida weather, the field featured nearly 23,000 runners who covered the 13.1-mile course while being entertained with fireworks, music and appearances by several Disney characters.

Combined with the Disney Marathon on Jan. 10, more than 55,000 people are expected to take part in the Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend presented by CIGNA – the most since the event began in 1994. The weekend also includes the Disney-Pixar *Up* and Away Family Fun Run 5K, Disney's Kids Races and a Health and Fitness Expo.

Registration for the 2011 Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend begins Monday Jan. 11. To register or for more information visit www.disneyworldmarathon.com. The 2011 Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend is Jan. 6-9, 2011.