

Russell captures third-straight 5K

Beats training buddy Spencer by four seconds

KRISTEN ODLAND
CALGARY HERALD

Ryan Russell went for the three-peat. And he wasn't disappointed.

For the third straight year, the CALTAF runner was the fastest man in town in the five-kilometre distance at the 33rd annual Sport Chek Mother's Day Run and Walk on Sunday.

Despite the rain, snow, and cold at the start of the race, Russell was 42 seconds faster this go-round, finishing in 15 minutes and three seconds.

But he wasn't alone at the finish line very long. Russell's training buddy Spencer Pootz came in just four seconds behind him while last year's runner-up Abdelkader Dib finished 30 seconds after Pootz for third.

"We went out a lot quicker than I'm used to," admitted Russell. "I came back and caught (Spencer) in the last kilometre. This was my fastest time yet. It was good, I'm excited."

Russell, who races for the University of Calgary in indoor and cross-country track, said Sunday's event couldn't have gone better.

"I take this one seriously," he said. "I work at the Tech Shop on fourth street so I've always gotta do it. That was about as perfect as I could have done."

"It was perfect weather. Clear and a singlet and



Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald
Holly Ratzlaff was top woman in the 5 km, just ahead of Riley McQueen. Ratzlaff recorded a personal-best time of 18:39.

But before he could even barely begin, the former Dino track star wound up finishing with the day's fastest female 5K time in 18:39 — her personal best.

"I was pretty happy about it," said Ratzlaff. "I don't run too many 5K's. I usually do the 800-metre."

"This is the start of the outdoor season, so it was a good run to see how things are going."

Calgary's Riley McQueen was a second slower than Ratzlaff while the next

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who pocketed \$1,000, \$500, and \$250, for the top three finishes, respectively — the 5K event didn't receive a cash prize.

And for the second year in a row, Calgarian Glenn Scott earned a payday capturing the 10-kilometre wheelchair title, finishing in 37:39.

The slippery conditions, however, made it a less-than-ideal race for the wheelchair athletes.

"It was pretty wet and slippery out there today," Scott said. "The rain really makes the pushing tough. I was slipping on the hill. It was a little tougher than usual."

Scott, who also took top honours in the recent Calgary Police Half Marathon, was followed by Calgary triathlete Dana Halvorson, who became a paraplegic after a motorcycle accident nine years ago. While the race part was easy for both, he agreed with Scott that battling the elements was the real challenge.

"It was really cold," said Halvorson, chuckling, who is preparing for the 46th annual Scotiabank Calgary Marathon at the end of the month and the 70.3 Calgary Ironman later this summer. "It's tough on the hands when it's really wet. The hands freeze up and you can't feel anything."

"It starts my season off nice and strong"

gloves and a singlet and I'm good."

Meanwhile, fellow CALTAF runner Holly Ratzlaff started out the day thinking she was going to tackle the 5K race for fun while her dad Doug joined the 10K runners.

Ratzlaff while the heat fastest runner was Maddy MacDonald of Calgary, who was racing in the 15 to 19 age category and finished in 18:54.

Unlike the 10K run and wheelchair participants —

and strong.

Halvorson finished in 42:06 while Margaret Conquest was third with a time of one hour, 13:56.

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