

RUNNING

# Trash Dash winner took an early lead in annual 5K



**Herb Wills**

TLH BLOGGER

At Leon County's Apalachee Regional Park, running doesn't end with the high school cross country season. On Saturday morning, Nov. 14, exactly seven days after the high school harriers had their turn at the FHSAA State Cross Country Championship, the fifth annual Trash Dash 5K was run on the course. And while the race was considerably smaller than the State Meet, Ricardo Estremera, the Trash Dash winner, ran faster than any of this year's high school champions, racing the 3.1 miles in 15:10. Tara Rooney edged Bella Poole for the top women's spot 19:28 to 19:34, the two runners placing 11th and 13th overall among the 99 athletes who finished the race.

The field of the Trash Dash enjoyed excellent conditions for cross country running — clear skies, a gentle breeze, and temperatures around 50 degrees when the race started just after 8:30 a.m. As soon as the runners were underway, Ricardo Estremera bolted into the lead. He wasn't unfamiliar with the trails at Apalachee Regional Park.

"I ran the men's 8K at the FSU Invitational here last month," said Estremera. "I led that race for a few miles."

Estremera led the Trash Dash the entire way, unchallenged during his winning run. His 15:10 was the fastest Trash Dash 5K ever. Still, it wasn't the time that he was looking for.

"I'm a 14:00-low guy," said Estremera. "I started off right. I went 4:38 on the first mile, but I fell off during the second mile."

Estremera is a doctoral candidate working on a dissertation in sociolinguistics. He currently works at Capital City Runners, and he'll be teaching Spanish at

Florida State University during spring semester.

Florida A&M University student Joseph Garcia placed second in 16:15. Michael Nazareth, a first-year student at Tallahassee Community College, was third in 17:09, and Lincoln High cross country runner Josh Liles took fourth in 17:21. The battle for fifth place and the top master runner spot went nearly to the wire, with Michael Martinez ultimately getting the nod over Jay Wallace, 18:24 to 18:27.

The women's side of the Trash Dash developed into a race between two Florida State cross country runners. Bella Poole was leading the ladies' field halfway through the race, with Tara Rooney trailing by 30 yards. Rooney didn't stay 30 yards back, though. The sophomore from Vernon Hills, Illinois, gradually reeled in Poole, then built her own lead in the final quarter mile of the race, winning the women's title in 19:28. Poole was second in the women's standings with a 19:34. Florida State cross country runners also took the next two women's spots, with Alex Midgett finishing 15th overall in 20:09 and Cecilia McMillan 17th overall in 20:15. In fact, the first 11 female finishers were all on the Seminoles' cross country team.

"Apalachee Regional Park is a real success story," said Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge, who finished the race in 34:17, coming in 76th. "There have been a lot of events out here this year."

2015 has been one of the busiest years for the Apalachee Regional Park Championship Cross Country Course. Before the Trash Dash, the course hosted the Big Bend Pop Warner 5K, both days of the FSU Invitational, the ACC Cross Country Championship, the FHSAA 3A District 3 Cross Country Meet, and the FHSAA State Cross Country Championship. The FA-CA Senior All Star Cross Country Classic and the Tannenbaum 6K are slated before the end of the year. But on Nov. 14, Leon County's cross country playground belonged to Ricardo Estremera and the Trash Dash 5K.