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## **For first time, central Ohio resident clocks winning time in Nationwide Better Health Columbus Marathon** *West Jefferson man wins men's event in record field of 10,000 participants*

**(COLUMBUS, OH)** – Robb Kestner gave folks in his hometown another reason to talk about him.

Kestner took the lead for good at the 24-mile mark and won today's 28<sup>th</sup> annual Nationwide Better Health Columbus Marathon in 2 hours, 31 minutes and 48 seconds.

His win marked the first time a central Ohio resident claimed the Columbus Marathon title. The 32-year old resides in West Jefferson, Ohio, about 15 miles west of Columbus.

“What’s funny about being from West Jeff is that I’m the only one that runs out there,” Kestner said. “All my neighbors think I’m nuts.”

Only Jim Jurcevich previously had placed higher for a Columbus-area native. Jurcevich finished second in 2002 and 2003.

“More people will be talking about how our high school football team is 9-0 and for good reason,” Kestner said. “But this is really nice to win it in Columbus.”

Kestner led an Ohio-dominated top 10. Chuck Engle of nearby Dublin, Ohio finished second in 2:33:41 as nine of the top 10 finishers were residents of the Buckeye State.

A crowd of tens of thousands of spectators was treated to a record field of 10,000 participants. For the first time ever, there was no race weekend registration as all spots were filled in the week leading up to the event.

A pair of women from neighboring states dominated the women's field as both qualified for the 2008 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in Boston.

Kelly Stewart of Rochester Hills, Mich. won the women's division in 2:43:28 in just her third-ever marathon. Jessica Gall, 23, of Bloomington, Ind. followed closely behind at 2:44:38.

Stewart, 26, credited the course's flat terrain for her time.

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Columbus' Melinda Keesee led the Ohio delegation. The 22-year-old finished in third place with a time of 2:51:33.

Ohio road race veteran Thomas Lentz, 40, led all runners after five miles and the Cincinnati native cruised to the Nationwide Better Health Columbus ½ Marathon title in a course record time of 1:09:32. Jill Scully, 24, of Valparaiso, Ind., also broke the Columbus record in the women's ½ marathon. She crossed the finish line at 1:20:27.

The open wheelchair division went to 2006 champion Kevin Hosea, 22, of Champaign, Ill in 1:55:57.

Sunshine and a start-time temperature in the low 50s greeted the capacity field.

The 29<sup>th</sup> annual Nationwide Better Health Columbus Marathon and ½ Marathon will take place Sunday, Oct. 19, 2008. The Nationwide Better Health Columbus Marathon is now one of the 20 largest marathons in the United States. For more information on today's race and full race results, or to register for next year's event, visit [www.columbusmarathon.com](http://www.columbusmarathon.com).

### TOP FINISHERS

<p><b><i>Men's marathon division</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Robb Kestner (West Jefferson, Ohio) 2:31:48</li> <li>2. Chuck Engle (Dublin, Ohio) 2:33:41</li> <li>3. James Sjostrom (Aurora, Ohio) 2:37:39</li> <li>4. Matthew Paulin (Cleveland, Ohio) 2:37:41</li> <li>5. Adam Burow (Columbus, Ohio) 2:41:43</li> </ol>	<p><b><i>Women's marathon division</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kelly Stewart (Rochester Hills, MI) 2:43:28</li> <li>2. Jessica Gall (Bloomington, Ind.) 2:44:38</li> <li>3. Melissa Keesee (Columbus, Ohio) 2:51:33</li> <li>4. Lisa Cron (Irving, Texas) 2:55:07</li> <li>5. Rachel Stoehr (Cincinnati, Ohio) 2:59:08</li> </ol>
<p><b><i>Men's ½ marathon division</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thomas "T.J." Lentz (Cincinnati, Ohio) 1:09:32*</li> <li>2. Matt DeLeon (Dublin, Ohio) 1:10:48</li> <li>3. Troy Harrison (Hustontown, Pa.) 1:11:09</li> <li>4. Neal Holtschulte (Marysville, Ohio) 1:11:44</li> <li>5. Matt Wintersteen (Lambertville, MI) 1:12:30</li> </ol>	<p><b><i>Women's ½ marathon division</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jill Scully (Valparaiso, Ind.) 1:20:27*</li> <li>2. Erin Vickery-Swalley (Plainfield, Ind.) 1:22:48</li> <li>3. Leah Peelman (Cincinnati, Ohio) 1:22:57</li> <li>4. Varinka Barbini (Frankfurt, Ky.) 1:26:00</li> <li>5. Tracy Meder (Stow, Ohio) 1:26:20</li> </ol>

\*Course records