

Hit-N-Run Pee-Wee Run attracts 160 participants, exposes youngsters to running

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – Sunday morning broke cool and sunny with some clouds in the sky.

Near-perfect weather for a summer run, especially if you're taking part in an event that's one of the oldest of its type in the nation.

The 38th edition of the **Hit-N-Run Pee-Wee Run**, a non-competitive run of a half-mile for participants 7-14 and a quarter-mile run for those under 7, drew a very nice crowd of 160 participants to Gordon Moore Park in Alton Sunday morning. Those taking part on the event were given T-shirts and drinks from the Riverbend-area Hit-N-Run convenience store company and were also eligible for a post-run raffle where prizes were awarded such as bicycles, baseball tickets, footballs, basketballs and other items.

The idea of the run – part of the club's Summer Running Series events for youths – is to introduce youngsters to running and various types of races, such as on grass (like cross-country running, which was the surface for the June 11 Alton Memorial Hospital Family Run), road racing and track racing (such as will take place in the final event of the series, the July 31 Dash-N-Splash event at East Alton-Wood River High School's Memorial Stadium and the nearby Aquatic Center in Wood River).

The Pee-Wee Run first took place in 1979 and may well be one of the the oldest running events of its type in the nation, and it's a source of pride for the club and the club's secretary, **Kathy Colona** (wife of club president and EAWR cross country and track coach Russ Colona). “We had about 120 who pre-registered (for the run) and had about 40 register this morning,” Colona said, “so it's a big crowd today. They (the youthful participants) all have fun.

“That's what the concept of the series is (to introduce runners to various forms of running and racing); the first one (the Memorial Hospital run), we do in the grass so they get (introduced) to a cross-country run, and then this one is on the road and the last one will be at the (EAWR) track.”

Hit-N-Run has been the title sponsor of the event ever since the inaugural run in 1979 and Colona thanked the company for their many contributions to the race. “All 38 years, they've been the sponsor,” Colona said, “and they do everything for this race; they get all the shirts, they get all the raffle prizes, they get all the drinks and refreshments – they are indispensable.”

Sunday's event was a fun time for everyone involved, Colona felt. “It's a lot of fun,” Colona said. “Families come from year to year and it's like they look forward to getting back to seeing everybody during the summer; it's a lot of fun.”

For more information on the upcoming Dash-N-Splash event, visit www.altonroadrunners.com



