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TEAM RUNNERGIRL CROWNED MARATHON RELAY CHAMPIONS FOR THIRD YEAR IN A ROW

Tampa, FL, March 1, 2009 – Team RunnerGirl won the Gasparilla Marathon relay for the third year in a row. They were the first female team to cross the finish line and second overall out of the 60 relay teams which included categories of male, female, mixed, and masters.

Team RunnerGirl consisted of:

- Leg 1: 7 miles – Jessica Pate of Holmes Beach
- Leg 2: 7 miles – Melissa Reifschneider of Venice
- Leg 3: 8 miles – Heather Butcher of North Port
- Leg 4: 4.2 miles – Pam Chaffin of Jacksonville

Their marathon finish time was 3:12:59, only 40 seconds behind the first team to cross the finish line which consisted of two males and two females. During the relay, runners passed a timing chip on an ankle strap rather than a baton at each of the exchange points. The chip was used to record the time and place. This is Team RunnerGirl's third victory in a row in the marathon relay and they also have two wins under their belt from the 2005 and 2006 Chick-fil-A Team Trio competition at Gasparilla. This is only the third year that Gasparilla has offered the marathon relay.

The team is put together every year by **Rae Ann Darling Reed** who is the President of RunnerGirl Inc. and a USA Track & Field level 2 and RRCA certified running coach. She was set to run the first leg of the relay this year but a stress fracture had her watching from the sidelines. Luckily, Jessica Pate, her top runner from the Manatee High cross country and track team was able to step up and save the day.

Jessica Pate, a senior at Manatee High, ran a strong first leg, putting the team in good position at the first relay exchange point. Jessica ran in the 3A State cross country finals in November 2008 and the FACA All Star Meet in December 2008. She has been setting personal records on the track all season long in both the 1600 meters and 3200 meters after finishing her first half marathon in January 2009 and racing seven miles of the marathon relay only three days before her first track meet.

Melissa Reifschneider is a top triathlete and runner with accomplishments that include a course record and win in the Miami Man Triathlon in 2006. She is a physical therapy assistant and mother of one who races with Team New Balance of Sarasota.

Heather Butcher is Certified Personal Trainer, Red Cross CPR and AED Healthcare provider, Red Cross Water Safety Instructor and Nutrition Counselor. She is a world class triathlete having been nationally ranked from 1997 through 2002, a USA All-American, 3-time top-10 winner at the Triathlon World Championships and a 3-time top 5 finisher at the Clermont iron man distance triathlon. She is the owner of Healthy BodyZ a complete personal fitness service.

Pam Chaffin teaches high school band in Jacksonville. She has been teaching for eleven years and recently moved from Bradenton to Jacksonville. This is Pam's third year as part of Team RunnerGirl. She is a top age group runner who competes in races from 5K to the marathon. She regularly competes in races such as the Jacksonville Gate River Run 15K, which is the national 15K championship race.

ABOUT RunnerGirl Inc. – A company created to promote health and fitness for women of all ages. It is primarily a Web based company providing free training advice, tips for new runners, motivation, injury prevention, safety tips, nutrition, and racing information. RunnerGirl offers certified personal coaching, both online and in person for runners and walkers of all abilities. Official RunnerGirl® technical running apparel, casual wear, accessories, and gifts are available for purchase at <http://www.RunnerGirl.com> and select retailers, including On A Shoestring in Bradenton.

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Left to Right: Melissa Reifschneider, Heather Butcher, Pam Chaffin, Jessica Pate



Team RunnerGirl heading to the finish line together to celebrate the win