



Comment, blog & share photos
Log in | Become a member | Search people

Why miss local news when you're on the go?
Visit rocnow.com. Learn More...

Chase Corporate Challenge favorites Holtschulte, Byler come through

KEVIN OKLOBZJA • STAFF WRITER • MAY 29, 2009

[Post a Comment](#) [Recommend](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#) [?](#)

The Chase Corporate Challenge was still hours and hours away, yet everywhere Trisha Byler went at work on Thursday, she kept hearing the same thing.

"Everyone was asking me, 'So you're going to win?' and I kept saying, 'No, no, don't say that,'" Byler said. "I was stressed the whole day. I typically do better when I go into a race carefree."

ADVERTISEMENT

Neal Holtschulte was hearing the same sort of predictions all week. With three-time defending champion Jeff Beck not entered, the 2008 runner-up was seemingly everyone's choice to hit the tape first.

Carrying the role of favorite wasn't a burden for either. Holtschulte won the men's division and Byler was the women's champ, splashing their way over the pavement during heavy rain.

Holtschulte kicked away from Dave Bradshaw in the third mile, building an insurmountable advantage that he maintained to the finish for his first Corporate Challenge victory.

"There was definitely pressure because this race gets so much attention," said the 25-year-old Holtschulte, an analyst at Klein Steel.

His time for the 3.5-mile course on the Rochester Institute of Technology campus was 17 minutes, 1 second, winning by 14 seconds over Bradshaw.

"I tried to stay with him, but I was running all out and he was pulling away," said Bradshaw, for whom top-five finishes are a habit. A physical education instructor in the Palmyra-Macedon school district, Bradshaw won the Chase event in 2005, was second in '07, third in '06 and fourth in '08.

"I'm 30 now, my years are numbered," he said with a smile. "I can't keep up with these young guys."

In the women's race, Byler went wire-to-wire, never seeing the back of another woman on the course. Her winning time was 20:32. Sarah Nazarian-Elliott was second, 13 seconds behind.

Even a cramp below her ribs on her right side didn't slow Byler down. She began to feel the pain with about a mile to go.

"I told myself all day I was just going to push through whatever pain I had," said Byler, 25, who works for Danisco.

Nazarian-Elliott has made top-five placings a specialty. She was fourth in '05, '07 and '08, and third in '06.

The overall Challenge winner, Holtschulte, employed a different strategy than he used a year ago. In 2008, knowing Beck was the runner to beat, he played wait-and-see.

"I think I pushed the pace too much last year," he said. "This year, I wanted to go at my pace and I wanted to go fast."

When he reached the one-mile split, he never saw or heard the time.

He hit the two-mile mark in 9:40, and Bradshaw was just three seconds behind.

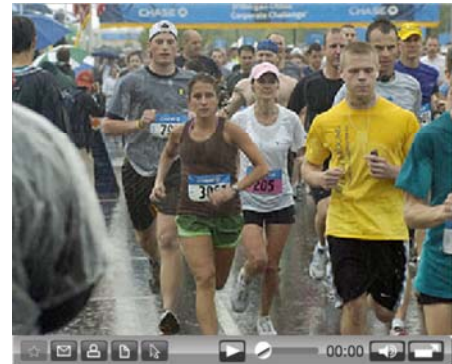
That's when Holtschulte hit overdrive.

"I was hammering that third mile," he said. "The cheering for Bradshaw got further and further in the distance, so I knew I was pulling away."

KEVINO@DemocratandChronicle.com

COZIO BUILD YOUR FAMILY CALENDAR

WHAT YOU WANT WHEN YOU WANT IT RIGHT ON YOUR CELL **ROCnow**



This year's Chase Corporate Challenge was a very rainy affair. Video story by Annette Lein

PHOTO GALLERY:



Chase Corporate Challenge



Klein Steel's Neal Holtschulte is alone in the rain as he approaches the finish line to win Thursday. (KRIS J. MURANTE staff photographer)

RELATED ARTICLES

Stormy weather didn't keep more than 9,000 from race in Henrietta