

Pioneer Press Report about Charities Challenge 1st Annual Challenge Obesity 5k
2006 by Bruce Brothers
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A HEAVY-DUTY EVENT

Chris Lundstrom of Team USA Minnesota won the men's race and Kate Tavakly of Burnsville won the women's race in the first Challenge Obesity 5-kilometer road race last weekend at Como Lake in St. Paul, but the real winners were the runners in the oversized divisions who also ran and/or walked through the 3.1 miles.

There were 17 individuals in the Athena or Clydesdale divisions, according to Gary Westlund of the sponsoring Charities Challenge group. To qualify as a Clydesdale, a man must be 200 pounds plus, and to qualify for the Athena division, a woman must be 145 pounds or more. Westlund believes this race is the lone obesity-oriented 5K in the United States.

Lundstrom, 30, finished in 15:02 to lead the field by more than three minutes, while Tavakly, 31, finished in 20:20 to pace the women. Michael O'Day, 42, Minneapolis, won the Clydesdale division in 20:36, and Lisa Price, 24, St. Paul, won the Athena division in 24:00.

Westlund called the event a step forward for overweight people, saying, "It's OK to be big; we want to assist you in moving. What's really important in people's lives is being active."

Event organizers ordered a half-dozen XXL-sized T-shirts that went unclaimed.

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