

TRACK AND FIELD: Cepero meet keeps coach's dream alive



Jacob Ford|Odessa American

Brenin Martinez, 3, wins his race in the Tiny Tots 100 Meter Dash at the 13th Annual Dr. Daniel Cepero Memorial Track and Field Meet on June 30, 2017 at Ratliff Stadium.

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For the past 14 years, the annual Dr. Daniel Cepero Memorial Track and Field meet has been one of the marquee events of the summer season.

Every year the meet has given local area high school seniors the chance to win several \$1,000 scholarships.

In order to qualify for a scholarship, an athlete must have previously competed in the Cepero meet before their year of graduation.

Dr. Cepero had a deep love for children and the sport of track and field. The meet continues his legacy by keeping kids physically active and busy during the summertime.

“It helps our community. It brings the revenue. It gives the kids an activity to participate in,” meet director Stella Neboh said. “It’s a big event. All the high school graduates for 2018 qualify to apply for the scholarship.

“We’ll see how many people apply. They have to write an essay and then Mrs. Susan Cepero will review the essays and then make a decision. We’re kind of excited. This year Walgreens came back and they gave us \$1,000. Mrs. Cepero is also donating money for a scholarship this year. We’re just hoping that we have a lot of high school students apply.”

This is the third meet to be held at Ratliff Stadium this summer. The USATF Association meet kicked off the season followed by the Nikolas Moralez meet.

Day 1 of the Cepero meet begins at 4:30 p.m. today with the 3,000-meter run. A rolling schedule will be in effect for both days of competition.

Opening ceremonies are slated for 7 p.m. Jean-Francois Martel, a former Cirque du Soleil performer, will highlight the opening ceremonies.

Passes can be purchased for each day of competition. A one-day pass costs \$5, while a two-day pass is \$8.

Members of the West Texas Track Club's Tiny Tots will release balloons and then immediately begin their events. The Tiny Tots, age's two to six, will run in the 50- and 100-meter dashes.

Tiny Tots competitors can register the day of the meet at the ticket booth for \$15.

Parents and coaches will also compete in the Old Folks Relay on Day 1.

At 7 a.m. Saturday, Day 2 will kick off with a 5K run. Field events are scheduled to begin at 7:30 a.m. with the triple jump and javelin.

Teams and athletes from all over Texas and southern New Mexico have competed in the event. This year a track club from Garden City will be participating for the first time.

The Cepero meet stands out from the rest because of its rich history and scholarship opportunities.

"This stands out because this is the 14th one. Each year it gets better and bigger," Neboh said. "Everybody looks forward to it because of the scholarships. Everybody comes from all over. We're excited to have kids from all over the state. It's open to all high school graduates in the state.

"We know it's going to be big. The turnout is going to be good. If everybody that's been calling me shows up it's gonna be a good meet. The scholarships lure a lot of people to it."