



## Hoffman Estates inline sports fest continues to grow and succeed

By Ashok Selvam | Daily Herald Staff

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Hoffman Estates has seemingly found a community staple with its Fitness For America Sports Festival.

Now in its second year in the village, the main draw is the Chicagoland Inline Marathon. Today is the biggest day of the three-day event, which this year also added cycling and foot races.

On Saturday, the course near the AT&T campus was buzzing with action, as skaters whizzed past spectators, all while runners and cyclists competed in their respective events.

"The coolest part is the hardest part," Cale Carvell. "That's having an inline skate race going off that way and a bike race going off that way and a running race going off that way and having them not cross in each other's way."

Carvell is a member of Chicago-based Team Rainbo, which used to train on the streets of Hoffman Estates. That gave organizers the idea to approach the village about having them host the event. Carvell lauded the village for helping grow the event.

Organizers expect 800 people to participate over the weekend, and the inline skating marathon is the second-largest in the country. More than 150 people walked up on Saturday and registered alone, meaning the event has likely surpassed expectations.

The event is sponsored by Alexian Brothers Hospital Network and the Blackhawks, sponsorships that were no easy feat to land, as many corporations have cut back sponsorships.

"We're growing in a time that nobody's growing and we're really excited about that," event organizer Peter Starykowicz said.

He said he wants to continue to expand at a healthy pace, including adding a running marathon next year.

The race drew athletes from 32 states, and Starykowicz beamed with pride talking about some of the renown racers set to skate this weekend.

Yet while attracting top-notch talent, such as Harry Vogel and Tony Muse, will earn the event a good reputation, ultimately what will drive its success is participation from recreation athletes of all fitness levels.

"I think that's the secret to getting the numbers and building the sport," said skater Ken Huss.

Huss is a member of the Flying Fossils team out of Minnesota. The 58-year-old also skated in last year's event. He's a vice president of a manufacturing company who has traveled the country competing.

There's also the Kounick family from Cary. Nancy Kounick is a member of Team Rainbo, and she's set to skate today at the fest. Her husband, Luke, enjoyed the mild summer temperatures Saturday on the course while racing his bicycle. Meanwhile daughters Kelsey, 6, and Lindsey, 4, competed in their own races and wore medals that dangled from their little necks. And don't forget grandpa. Hermann Boehm, who still skates for Rainbo.

"It's really a family affair," Nancy Kounick said.

The summer breeze provided skaters with ideal conditions, as medical staff only treated one athlete who momentarily blacked out, but was OK.