



R-S photo by Eddie Maravilla

Chico's Gary Towne rounds the final corner and heads for victory in Thursday's 11th annual Redding Medical Center Turkey Trot.

Towne tears to win in 11th Turkey Trot

After years of frustration, Chico's Gary Towne finally got a victory in the Redding Medical Center Turkey Trot.

Five times — including last year — Towne, a 29-year-old Shasta College graduate, has finished second in the six-mile race to Redding's Pat Kornder.

With Kornder absent in the 11th annual event Thursday, Towne borrowed a tactic from his nemesis and pulled away from the field early, winning in 31 minutes, 34 seconds.

"I just took off from the gun," said Towne, who completed his first mile in a scorching 4:52. "I did what Pat usually does to me. I came out pretty hard. It's frustrating for people behind you if you go out really hard. I know."

Redding's Wayne Vondermeiden, 24, was second in 32:51.

The top women's finisher was 18-year-old Heather Sweet of

Redding, who finished the course in 36:26. Megan Sheehy, 26, of Redding was second in 38:06.

A field of 313 runners completed the six-mile course along the Sacramento River Trail.

In the two-mile race, Redding's Jared Scoubes was the top male finisher in 10:57, while Redding's Jessie Stratton was the top female in 13:05.

Towne, who just completed his first season as the cross country coach at Chico State University, was pleased with the win, although he would have liked to run against Kornder.

"I'd rather of had him here and finished second again than not have him here, but I'll take it," Towne said. "I've run this race so many times. When you finish second five times, it's nice to win."

Towne said the race was his final tune-up for the California International Marathon, which is next weekend in Sacramento.