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From far left, runners head out at the start of the Campus 5K Run & Fitness Walk at Ocean County College yesterday. Bob Horn, 27, of Brick makes his way to a first-place finish in the race; Rainer Koch, 23, of Dettelbach, Germany, concentrates before starting the run. (STAFF PHOTOS: PETER ACKERMAN, CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER)

175 run for first place at Ocean County College 5K race

By MICHAEL AMSEL
TOMS RIVER BUREAU

DOVER TOWNSHIP — When Rainer Koch of Germany enrolled at Ocean County College this fall, he never dreamed his six-month internship would include running in a marathon race.

But there it was on the college bulletin board: Campus 5K Run & Fitness Walk.

"This is just a warm-up for me," said Koch, 23, before yesterday's 3.1-mile race through the campus. "I have been running in events all over the world, many much longer than this one. I'm going to keep my

speed constant today, and I'll do fine."

Koch, a native of Dettelbach, Germany, turned in a strong performance, finishing fifth in the field of 175 runners with a time of 17:57. But the day belonged to Bob Horn of Brick, who took top honors by completing the course in 17:00 — 31 seconds ahead of second-place finisher Scott Higgins of Dover Township.

"I was hoping to break 17 minutes," said Horn, 27. "But the winds were just too stiff. My strategy was to get in front at the start and stay there, and that's exactly what happened."

The annual event, now in its

sixth year, raised about \$5,000 for the college through donations and business sponsorship. Runners from as far as New York and Pennsylvania participated in the race.

"The first year we had a no-rain rule, and still about 80 people came out to run in the rain," said Don Jump, race director and president of the alumni association. "That shows you the dedication these runners have to their sport."

Eliana Kuhm, 59, was driving by the college Friday afternoon when she saw a sign advertising the race. She arrived at 9 a.m. yesterday to register.

"Runners always seem to find

these events," said Kuhm, of Toms River, who has been running actively for more than 15 years. "Had this been Thursday or Friday, I might not have run because of the high winds. But today was very pleasant."

Kuhm, who finished 93rd with a time of 27:58, persuaded her friend Estelle Brodkey to participate in the walking competition. Brodkey, 61, a member of the college's foundation board, walked for the first time.

"I just hope they don't need a stretcher at the end of the race," joked Brodkey, prior to the competition.

Panting heavily, sweat dripping from her brow, Brodkey

managed to complete the 3.1-mile event and was all smiles at the finish.

"I walked today so I could help support the college," said Brodkey, of Toms River. "The final stretch was very demanding, but I was determined to make it."

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Top male finishers: 1. Bob Horn, Brick, 17:00; 2. Scott Higgins, Dover Township, 17:31; 3. Chris Peters, Barnegat, 17:42; 4. Joe Donahue, Point Pleasant, 17:42; 5. Rainer Koch, Dettelbach, Germany, 17:57.

Top female finishers: 1. Barbara

Brennan, Little Egg Harbor, 19:21; 2. Joy Jaworowski, Jersey City, 20:10; 3. Dianne De Oliveira, Brick, 21:24; 4. Paula Lychock, Toms River, 22:10; 5. Melissa Todd, Ithaca, N.Y., 23:00.

Top male alumni finishers: 1. Chris Peters, Barnegat, 17:42; 2. John De Lee, Waretown, 21:25; 3. Martin McDonald, Lakewood, 22:20; 4. Jim Wendolek, Lakewood, 22:43; 5. Robert Crane, 23:35.

Top female alumnae finishers: 1. Barbara Brennan, Little Egg Harbor, 19:21; 2. Kimberly Daley, Brielle, 24:25; 3. Eunice Pschorr, Toms River, 26:16; 4. Eliana Kuhm, Toms River, 27:58; 5. Jennifer Tombs, Seaside Heights, 28:25.