



June 7, 2011

## Rotary 5K set for June 11

*By Joe Lee  
Special to The Herald*

Chris White of Madison, a financial advisor with Prudential Securities and a member of the Rotary Club of Madison-Gluckstadt, is also a long-distance runner. As such, he wanted to organize a 5K race in Madison County.

The Just Have A Ball 5K Run/Walk is set for 7:30 a.m. Saturday, beginning and ending at Fleet Feet Sports of Ridgeland.

White, who will likely work at a registration table and help oversee the race, said he and his Rotary club committee began planning the event three months ago. He said he has spent 15-20 hours a week on it since mid-May.

"The biggest challenge is logistics," White said. "How much food, water, T-shirts, and goody bags are needed. We really don't know what to expect for walk-up registration, and trying to factor in those numbers is definitely a challenge."

Fleet Feet Sports owner Lesley McLin, also an avid runner, has worked closely with White and the city of Ridgeland to support the first-time event.

"Lots of people assume it's easy to plan a race," McLin said. "Plan way ahead and get lots of sponsors. It's too late to get them if you wait too long."

Proceeds from the event will benefit Just Have A Ball, a program created by The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi to combat childhood obesity.

"Just Have A Ball furnishes elementary school-aged children with a ball," said Sandra Shelton, executive director of The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi. "When we deliver the balls, we show the children routines for playing with the ball and provide nutrition education in a fun-filled, high-energy presentation. The idea is to reinforce a child's natural tendency toward play as a method for staying physically fit and active."

McLin said because of Fleet Feet Sports' relationship with Nike, which has budgets for charity events, it's making a donation to the race.

"Nike, basically as a thank-you to us, will be providing 200 of the Just Have A Ball kids with free shoes," McLin said. "I was thrilled, and so was Chris."

One of the first orders of business for White and his committee was to register the event with the Mississippi Track Club and get on its calendar and website, which they did in February.

MTC president Jack Ward said many factors play into how many entrants will take part.

"I'd say that 150-200 would be successful for their first time," Ward said. "Summer is here, and if it's too hot that day, some folks may stay home in the air conditioning."

Race-day registration, which begins at 6:30 a.m., is \$25 and includes a T-shirt as long as supplies last.

The 5K run will start at 7:30 a.m., with the 5K walk beginning approximately a minute later. The one-mile fun run will take place after all runners and walkers have finished the course.

To register online, and to view a map of the course, visit [www.mstrackclub.com](http://www.mstrackclub.com). For more information, call (601) 454-2420.