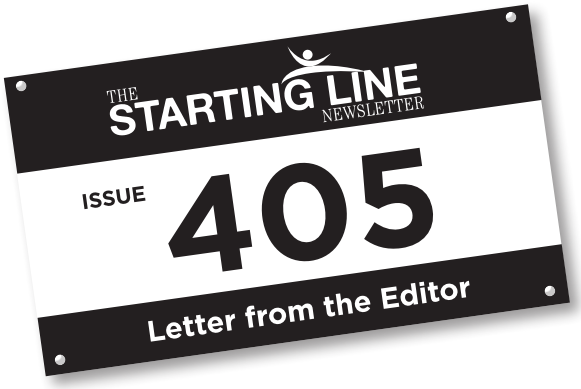
July/August 2014 | Vol.40 No.4

JTC RUNNING
www.jtcrunning.com

THE STARTING LINE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 405

TIJUANA FLATS SUMMER BEACH RUN



Well, the World Cup is all over and that has nothing to do with running, but it is a great athletic marvel. Not as great as our 50th Anniversary Summer Beach Run, coming up on August the 16th, but still. For soccer, not bad.

The USA did amazingly well. Never given a hope of progressing from the 'Group of Death', the USA did so, with 4 points instead of the zero points all the pundits predicted. The USA put up a gallant display against Belgium in the second round but was subjected to an honorable, though painful, one-goal defeat.

The American public got behind the team in unprecedented numbers; the country went soccer mad. Will it be this way from now on? Or was this just another jingoistic nationalistic flag wave?

That's how I have felt about the Olympics. How come Americans seem to go crazy for sports like, Gymnastics, Swimming and Track and Field, when for the three or four years in between they care nothing, watch nothing and support nothing. If it's about beating the Russians then, well, hell, yeah! Otherwise, we'd rather keep up with the Kardashians.

Speaking of beating the Russians, the next World Cup is set to take place in Russia. In light of Russian President Putin's land grab in the Crimea and the downing of the Malaysian commercial airliner that cost the lives of nearly 300 people, why not take that honor away from Russia, and Putin, and bring the World Cup back to America? I'd love to see a World Cup match in EverBank Field. Let the rest of the world admire our humongous Jumbotron screen and take a dip in the end zone swimming pool. Sure can't do that in Putingrad.
Sorry, that doesn't have much to do with running, or our fine track club, but this does. A hugely important day is coming up on August 16. That is the day when history will be made, our 5-mile race, the Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run, will celebrate its 50th running. 50 years! The SBR is the oldest race in Florida and was elemental in getting our club together and keeping it going. You will read why and how later in this issue.

For the first time, finishers of this year's SBR will receive custom, 50th anniversary medallions. The 5-miler starts at 6PM and the 1-Mile Kids Fun Run gets underway at 6:05PM. You can enter by logging onto either JTC Running.com or 1st Place Sports.com.

Also, for the first time we will hold a Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run gathering/run at, where else? Tijuana Flats. This will be a race prelude gala at the restaurant in Lakewood Plaza. We will run a little, drink a little, eat a little and celebrate the 50th a lot. If you haven't entered the race already, you can get a $5 discount at this event. There will be some free beers, free appetizers and some discounts on food. It will be fun, fun, fun, 'til somebody takes your taco away (and no one in this track club would dream of doing such a thing.) Make plans to be there on Monday, August 11th at 6 PM. It will be worth it. How could it not be? No cost, no sign up, just show up.

You will find a nice piece inside written by Jay Birmingham, it's all about the heat that none of us can avoid at this time of year. Jay will get you through it; don't miss his article, The 100 Days of Summer. Then you'll get a kick out of Jay's nostalgic SBR bit and some great race day advice.

Richard Fannin remembers a thing or two about the 1978 SBR and his writing brought a tear to my eye. You'll see what I mean later on.

I tell you, this race means a lot to a lot of people. You can't evoke these kinds of feelings by throwing food dye on people, or making them wallow in mud or illuminating the sky with a bunch of lights. You can't even duplicate it by saying it's "tough" or "special" and charging them 70 bucks apiece. Nope, it takes about 50 years to get there. The Summer Beach Run, Florida's Oldest Race, the race that pulled this track club together.

Our beach; what a magnificent place it is to run, we have so much to be thankful for and one of them is that it is not located in the township of Orange Park. It is getting more and more complicated to organize a race in OP these days. Why? I'll let you know later in this issue.

Let us not forget that there is another great place at the beach where we can run: The Guana State Park, in South Ponte Vedra. This huge nature preserve is the site of JTC Running's December 7th race, the Back To Nature Trail Races. Events include a 50k Ultra, a 12k and a 2x25k Trail Relay. Let's not forget the wonderful post-race bash at The Reef restaurant. Due to environmental concerns, the event is limited to 150 participants, so you better enter now.

Features

'78 Summer Beach Run | P 3
Summer Beach Run Turns 50 | P 4
Guana Back to Nature Entry Form | P 5
Virtual Half-Marathon Challenge | P 6
100 Days of Summer | P 7
Come Heat or High Water | P 8-10
Rue the Shoe | P 11-13
Striders Limited by Ruling | P 14-16
John TenBroeck's Last Summer Beach Run | P 16-17

Departments:

President's Message | P 1
Board of Directors | P 2
New and Renewing JTC Members | P 2

THE STARTING LINE NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 405

President's Message

Greeting!

On June 26, the Club honored members of the local running community at the annual Awards Banquet. It was held once again at a very popular venue, Maggiano's in Town Center. Over 130 Club members, honorees, and guests celebrated the best athletes, coaches, volunteers, media and sponsors involved in running, track, and field during the past year. Rodney Smith, one of JTC Running's founding members, received the Distinguished Merit Award in recognition of his dedicated and successful long career as a high school teacher and cross country coach at Stanton College Prep. Also, the winners of the 1st Place Sports Grand Prix competition were announced and awarded. All this while enjoying a wonderful Italian meal! It was truly a wonderful and inspiring evening. A full list of those honored is available at JTCRunning.com on the results tab.

A record number of students had been selected for summer running camp scholarships this year. In all, 33 young runners will receive assistance to attend camps in North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Three of these scholarships were funded from contributions to the Terry Sikes Memorial Fund. Terry was a great guy, runner, and club member...contributions to his fund have now sent five deserving and aspiring runners to camp, with more going next summer.

The Club held the fourth track and field meet of the 2014 series on July 12. Even though weather cut this meet short, the total turnout for all four meets well surpassed last year. Coaches Eric Frank and Eli Sunquist did a fine job of directing the meets and The Bolles School was a wonderful host. Plans are already underway for the 2015 Track Series.

August 16 is THE running event of the summer, JTC Running's Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run. The oldest foot race in Northeast Florida is celebrating its 50th running with a special commemorative medal and a range of festivities to make it an event to remember. Registration is open at 1stPlaceSports.com. Club members are entitled to a $2.00 discount through August 9. Start time for the five mile distance is 6 pm. Come out and enjoy the beach, the race, Tijuana Flats food, and fun!

Larry Roberts, President

THE STARTING LINE NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 405

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THE STARTING LINE NEWSLETTER | New & Renewing Members

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1978 Summer Beach Run

Written by: Richard Fannin

In the summer of 1978 I was 10 years old ...The first ever River Run 15,000 (now known as Gate River Run) had just been held 4 months earlier.

The second largest and most prestigious race in North Florida was the Summer Beaches 5 mile run. Anybody who was anybody would run each and every August.

It was a true "slugfest". The race was held at 2:00 pm. Usually at least 90 degrees, and a straight shot from Hanna Park to the Lifeguard Station in Jax Beach.

To add to the challenge in 1978, the beaches were in the middle of a large beach re-nourishment project, and there were probably 4 or 5 very large dredge pipes (probably 3 feet high) that were spaced throughout the 5 mile race, turning it into a modified steeple chase for one year only.

Top runners in Jacksonville included those from the "new" running shop team First Place Sports. Mike Wachholz, George Burns, Frank Jones, and "beach legends" Dan Clay and Mike Yarborough.

Bragging rights were on the line. Most of the top Jax runners ran bare foot, with a strategy of running right along the water line, where the sand was firm and didn't chew your feet up.

My family had been renting a beach house near the 2 mile mark. Close to the "old pier" near the Chateau Restaurant (long since demolished).

A great landmark was the old Ferris wheel, about 1/2 mile from the finish, where you could begin your kick. If you had one left.

I had been running in the beach for 2 weeks, practicing the "pipehurdles" and toughening my feet to emulate my local running heroes, so I could run barefoot like them.

My dad and older sister Laura were running as well, and we hosted a huge post-race party back at our beach house for all comers from the Jacksonville Track Club.

Although my memories are hazy, I remember what a big deal the Summer Beach run seemed at that time.

I remember struggling through, but eking out an award in the 13 and under age group. I believe my sister won the girls 13 and under age division, and my dad (President of the track club at the time) placed in his age group as well.

My best and fondest memories are going for a cooling swim in the surf after the race, where probably 40-50 runners splashed around, trading war stories, particularly the makeshift steeple chase feature of the 1978 race.

The Jacksonville Track Club was in its prime, and there were easily 200 people at the post-race party, drinking cold beer and polishing off hotdogs and hamburgers.

I do remember a fellow from "up north" named Wally Rodriguez won that day, surprising all of the local favorites.

Not sure what it would take to return the Summer Beach Run to its former lofty presence on the local running scene, but for those that were there that day and remember the electric atmosphere, it truly was a magical event and stands out in my memories of the JTC "heyday"!

Mark your Calendar!

Dec. 7

It's 'Back To Nature' and Back to Guana

JTC Running Presents

The Back To Nature Trail Races

Sunday, December 7th, 8:00 AM

At Guana Reserve, South Ponte Vedra Beach

50k Ultra, 2x25k Relay, 12k (1:00 PM)

Field Limited to 150 Runners

Register now @ JTCRunning.com

or 1stPlaceSports.com

Summer Beach turns 50

Written by: Jay Birmingham

For 50 years, runners in Northeast Florida have migrated, like crabs, to the Atlantic Ocean in August, for the Summer Beach Run. Fifty years! Amazing!

I first dropped in on the migration in 1973. I'm sure Lamar Strother was there; he was the de facto organizer of the event. He had sunk a concrete block high into a dune near a wooden staircase at Hanna Park--the starting line. Runners drove to, or were dropped at the start, five miles from the Jacksonville Beach Lifeguard Tower, the finish.

One year, my family took over the event to keep it from dying. We made simple trophies from a block of wood and coat hangers. Another year, the Jacksonville Rugby Club took the reins. And then--the JTC was born. The race has never faltered since.

In the early '70s, some national class runners from the Florida Track Club posted wind-aided times that may never be approached. But now that the course is out-and-back, the wind is a wash.

Advice? Barefoot running is not advised: I've seen tough feet lacerated by shards of seashells.
Pace yourself with the wind in mind. You'll overheat with the breeze and feel like a mountain climber into it. If you find yourself in a pace line, seeking shelter from the wind, take a turn up front--don't be a parasite. Enjoy being able to start near the front--it's the year's widest starting line.

The SBR and a little 5K in Manassa, Colorado, are the two event I've run most in 50 years of racing. I love being part of them both. Come out to Jacksonville Beach in August and let's make this Fiftieth Running of the Summer Beach Run a great one.

2013 Summer Beach Run

Mark your Calendar!

Aug. 16

The Classic of Classics!

Tijuana Flats 50th Annual Summer Beach Run

Hosted by JTC Running

Saturday, August 16

5-Mile at 6:00 PM, 1-Mile Fun Run at 6:05 PM

Huge Post Race Party

Collect the 50 Year Finishers Medal

The First SBR Medal In Race History

JTC RUNNING PRESENTS

50K 12K

GUANA Back to Nature TRAIL RACES

December 7th, 2014

The Guana Reserve

Back to Nature Trail Runs

50K Ultra, 50K Relay, 122K Race

Sunday, December 7th, 2014

50K, 50K Relay at 8:00 AM

12K Race at 1:00 PM

Guana Tolomato Matanzas Estuarine Research Reserve

505 Guana River Road, off A1A in South Ponte Vedra Beach, FL (9.5 Miles south of Mickler's Landing)

Sponsored by Mizuno Footwear in association with 1st Place Sports

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The Course

Consists of winding, wooded trails in the Reserve. No cement, no asphalt, a true back to nature experience. The 50 K Ultra and 2x25K Relay will begin at 8:00AM. The 12K shall begin at 1:00PM

Awards

Finishers of the 50K Ultra will receive medallions. All runners will receive a commemorative technical t-shirt. Plaques awarded two deep in each age group in 50K and 12K. Relay goes three deep.

Mizuno shoes will be awarded to the first male and female over-all in the 50K and 12K and first Masters male and female in both races. Mizuno shoes also to the first team in the relay.

Refreshments and Post Race Party

Water, Sports drinks, and snacks will be provided. **Power Bar is the official supplement.**

Post-race party/awards presentation will take place at the Reef Restaurant, 4100 Coastal Hwy., Just north of Vilano Beach (on A1A) at 3:00PM.

Entry Fees **Sorry, there are no refunds**

50K Ultra—$35 ($31 JTC Running Members), until Sept. 20th. $45 ($41 JTC Running members), Sept. 21st—Dec. 3rd. Race day entry $60 (no discounts), cash or check only on race day.

50K (2x25K) Relay- $70 per team ($62 if JTC Running members), until Sept. 20th, $90 per team($82 if JTC Running Members) Sept. 21-Dec. 3rd. Race day entry $120 per team (no discounts), cash or check only on race day

Entry Fees Cont.

12K- $25 ($21 JTC Running members), until Sept. 20th. $35 ($31 JTC Running Members), Sept. 21– Dec. 3rd. Race Day entry $45 (no discounts) cash or check only on race day.

Limited Participation

Due to the Environmental Sensitivity of the Guana Reserve, this event is limited to 125 participants per event. Enter as early as possible, there may not be space on race day.

Parking

Parking in the park is $3.00 per vehicle. Use southern most entrance just north of the gas station.

Proceeds

Proceeds benefit: Friends of the Guana Research Reserve.

Packet Pickup

Race packet pickup day of the race only.

For More Information

For more information contact: Mark Ryan, Race Director 50K, at Markryan.unlimited@gmail.com or (904)338-3230, Bob Fernee, Race Director 12K at Bob@1stplacesports.com or (904) 743-3161

Mizuno Footwear and Apparel

Purchase Mizuno products at ***1st Place Sports*** and enjoy the "Back To Nature" races.

For more info contact: Bobfernee@aol.com or 904-342-2699

Attention JTC Running Members: How about a fun way to run your next race? Join the Virtual Half-Marathon Challenge to benefit Marathon High!

Simply choose your course, set your goal and then run your 13.1 miles when and where you choose -- any time from September 1-8. You can run (or walk) all 13.1 miles in one day, several days or over the course of a week. You will be running virtually with runners all over the world!

When you are done, post your race photo and finishing time on Marathon High's Facebook page, and you will earn your victory medal. You can even join local runners at the Galloway/Rogue Runners group run on September 6 to "race" together if you want.

This virtual race is put on by the awesome folks at Jax Rogue Runners and benefits the students at Marathon High -- a nonprofit that trains at-risk teens to complete a half-marathon as a way to better themselves and their futures. The race fee is just $30 and includes a race bib, custom medal, a chance to win a free pair of running shoes or Marathon High hoodie, and bragging rights.

For more details and to sign up, visit:
www.MarathonHighFL.org

JTC Running Supports Marathon High

Deborah Dunham, Larry Roberts and Bonnie Brooks

100 Days of Summer

Written by: Jay Birmingham

The average runner in Ohio, Colorado, and Nebraska—three states where I lived for many years—backs off in the brutal cold from December through February. The thermal challenge of winter is joined by piercing wind chills and impossible-at-times footing: ice, snow, slush, potholes.

Races become scarce. Dedicated road soldiers see the mileage in their training logs plummet. Perpetually gray skies extend from days to more than a week. YMCAs in those cold climes see memberships spike in the winter. Treadmill motors burn up. Creative excuses for skipping workouts reach new heights. Some runners refuse to train when the temperature is lower than their age.

Drop southward now to Florida. Wind chill? Nope. Heavy clothing? Nope. December? No problem.

The Florida runner's challenge is June through September, what I call the 100 Days of Summer. I've known lots of running enthusiasts who exchanged their passion for our sport for days in front of the TV, a bag of chips and a cooler full of their favorite cold drinks.

You've got two choices: Quit for the season or run in the steam bath. I'm gonna suggest ways you can select the second option.

Your first challenge is mental. If you don't leave the house, you cannot train (unless you cheat by logging your miles on a refrigerated treadmill). So you must leave the house. Walk out the door, your hair wet, clad in your sleeveless shirt and shortest shorts. Walk until you break into a jog, and then walk again when you feel a little fatigue. You are out there, acclimating to the heat and the humidity. You have ventured out while the faint of heart (weak of will) have not. You are a champion.

Remove expectations of speed or distance. Do set yourself a minimum time. One hour of walking will net you about 4 miles. Spice that with a few strideouts through pleasant parts of the course. Run through sprinklers. Stop for ice and drinks, either at stores en route, or in caches of goods you've squirreled away in the shrubbery. Laps around the block will ensure you a steady supply of everything.

Cover your head with a wet cap if you run at midday. If you've never tried a knotted handkerchief on your noggin, do. A handful of ice cubes under your head wear makes a world of difference.

Summer is the time to give yourself permission to reduce your miles. But it is a great time to gain some leg speed. A set of repeat 100s on grass with a 100-meter walk recovery is a lot easier than a sustained distance run. Bridge sprints. Stadium steps. Stair cases. Any short, sharp run, repeated, with adequate recovery intervals, will not only make you feel like you are training hard but will keep the pounds from descending on your midsection.

Now here's the ultimate challenge. Pick a date and count 100 days forward. June 1 through September 8 is the hundred days we choose for my cross country runners. Start on Day One and do not miss a day until you get through the hundredth. Declare a minimum (2 miles was my recent pick in 2013). Get your shoes on, pass through the doorway, and keep a large calendar posted. Write your workout in large letters and numbers at the end of each day. Let no square go uncovered.

You can do it. You are tough. You are a Florida Runner in Summer. All 100 days of it.

Come Heat or High Water

Written by: Bob Fernee

Come Heat Or High Water, The Summer Beach Run Keeps Rolling Along

If there were one race that epitomizes Jacksonville's running heritage that race would surely be its oldest one: the Summer Beach Run. The race has now become so distinguished that it is older than most of the people who run in it.

On August 16, the 5-mile race will be run for the 50th time. Yikes! 50 years multiplied by five miles adds up to a lot of sand, sun, heat, pain and sweat. The venerable SBR is also known as Florida's Oldest Running Event, which it is.

I always remember the SBR as one of the most competitive races of the year. Any local runner worth beans would fight for his reputation on the sands of the Summer Beach Run. All summer long, local runners could be seen training hard on the beach. It meant a lot to run well in a race so highly contested. One had to be ready for anything. Early SBRs began at 1 or 2 in the afternoon, so the course was boiling hot. Your biggest competitor was the merciless sun and his best friend, Mr. Heat, and the heat was always on. Today's race that starts at 6 or 7 in the evening is puny by comparison.

The SBR's 50-year history is quite a story and one always worth telling. It started small in 1965 but in its heyday grew to be the biggest race in Jacksonville boasting over 2,000 runners.

In the early 1960s, local high school coaches took their untested cross-country teams to Vero Beach for a preseason race. By the middle '60s they were wondering why they traveled so far for a beach run that they could easily organize on their native sand. So it was that Larry Monts, Ron Poppell and Chuck McPhilomy conceived the first Jacksonville Beach Run. The public was invited, however the small field consisted of 99% high school and college runners. No entry fee was charged, a tradition that continued for the first nine races. Fletcher High School's Del Lewis won the premier event in 26 minutes, 49 seconds.

No women entered the race until 1968, when two 17-year-old girls had the nerve to stand on the starting line. One of them, Glenna Mackey, finished in 44:18. Historically, she will never be able to say she had the fastest women's finish time, but she can always boast to having the first women's finish time. Nice to have something that no one can ever take away from you, and when you are part of a saga, that is just how history works.

1969 was an historic year-the year of "the record." The original 5-mile course began at what is now Hanna Park in Seminole Beach and ran south straight down the beach to the lifeguard tower in Jacksonville Beach. Usually there was an odd dogleg shaped portion along the beach that caused runners to angle westward, avoiding the surf. But this year the low tide was way out and the dogleg gone. In addition, the wind was blowing from north to south. Perfect conditions for super fast finish times.

Ken Misner took advantage of the situation and not only outran the other 65 finishers but also ran the race's fastest time ever: 23:26.9. Was the course short? Maybe, but we will never know for sure. Interestingly, Misner won the previous year also, in the more believable time of 26:17, tied with Jack Bacheler in 25:54 in 1970, won again in 1973 (24:17) and stamped his name all over the SBR record book for many years afterward.

Misner; that beach resident was one heck of a beach runner, but one cannot help but wonder, what ever happened to Ken Misner? Remember that old TV show, hosted by Star Trek's Leonard Nimoy, titled 'In Search Of"? Surely it is time for Dr. Spock to do a Ken Misner episode. Hey, Spock, life began on the beach, he may still be there; take a good look on the sands of Jax Beach.

On a personal note, the Summer Beach Run of 1973 was my first contact with the race. I had been living in England and came home for a vacation. My father, Norman, and I had been doing what we thought was training, but come race day we felt like lambs to the slaughter. Five Miles! It seemed like an awfully long way. Could we survive it and actually finish?

Well we did, and it didn't quite destroy us but it did give us a healthy respect for the race and its strength-sapping course. It is a serious respect that is shared by

all runners even to this day.

Not many may realize it, but in the old days the SBR started at 1 or 2 in the afternoon, the absolute hottest part of the day. It seemed a Herculean task; racing in temperatures in the upper-90s or higher, sweating through impenetrable humidity, burning beneath a merciless summer sun and seeing every ounce of energy disappear in the sand, but we loved it. It brought out the masochist in us, and isn't that what running is really all about? Oddly enough, some of us old-timers look back affectionately on those torturous afternoon starts.

1974 was an extraordinary year. Some profiteer came up with the idea of charging the runners a whole dollar to run the race. Things deteriorated from there and by 1976 the entry fee was all the way up to two dollars. Gosh. Maybe that's what happened to Ken Misner, he could endure the grueling five miles but not the extortionate entry fee.

Coach Dan Brown of Bishop Kenny High School and the Jacksonville Rugby Club organized the 11th edition in 1975. It was never expected to be a long-term arrangement and a new host had to be found in order to keep the race going. A new, fledgling running club, the Jacksonville Track Club, stepped up. Having no races of its own, the club was more than willing to take the SBR under its wing. So in 1976, for the first time, there would be more than one women's division and of the 300 starters, the first 100 would receive something called a "finisher's T-shirt."

In 1977, the JTC never expected the race to more than double, but it did, and 778 runners backed up in the finish line chute. Two hundred t-shirts were awarded and club pioneer, Lamar Strother, measured the course with a 100-foot tape for perfect accuracy. Perfection has always been Lamar's middle name.

The Gulf Life Insurance Company sponsored the race in 1978, which had 1,947 finishers. Runners had to leap massive puddles and erosion, while a beach reclamation project was in progress. All runners received shirts; it was the start of a habit that would become a mainstay for virtually every race. Conditions were even worse in 1979. The race became a veritable steeplechase as runners were forced to hurdle huge pipes and jump streams of water, all compliments of the seemingly never-ending beach reclamation project.

In 1981 John Rogerson ran 23:59 and beat 1,956 others. The race's largest field of all time assembled in 1983, 2,649 runners, and Mabry McCray won in 24:34.

The weather has always been a major factor of the SBR. Aside from the heat and humidity, runners have also fretted over the wind, the sand and the tide. One year the race had to be postponed two weeks due to an inopportune hurricane. There was one time when a vicious storm let loose right in the middle of the race. The wind destroyed the finish line area and blew the finish clock right off its stanchion. It landed right on one runner's head, giving him a time he'd never forget.

Yes, the Summer Beach Run is more than a race of historic significance; it is one of surprise, mood and personality.

A big change was made in the race's course in 1994. No longer would it start at Hanna Park and go five miles south. Runners would start at the lifeguard station in Jacksonville Beach, run south for 2 ½ miles and then turn and return to the starting point, "out-and-back" in runners vernacular. The entry fee was $7 and the new course was here to stay (the $7 wasn't). The club kept the race, but not its own name, changing it to JTC Running.

Local legend, Rick Patterson, stamped his mark of excellence on the race in 1995 and '96, winning in 26:01 and 26:25 respectively. Randy Hollinger in 25:45 ran the fastest time on the current course, in 1997.

Not everyone has run so well on our famous beach sand.

"We used to call them 'Floppers', said Jim Burke. "I used to be a lifeguard over there at the lifeguard tower when I was a kid and the race was run at one or two in the afternoon. We would watch the runners cross the finish line and fall over; we nicknamed them the 'Floppers'.

Come Heat or High Water

Written by: Bob Fernee

Funny how others see us and I'm sure that over the years, many of us have felt like flopping.

It was a sad time when the race's sponsor, Carrabba's Italian Grill dropped out, but we have more than made up for it. Today the restaurant, Tijuana Flats, generously sponsors the race and the event is as popular for its fantastic post-race party as it is for its challenging course and conditions. Food, beer, live music, endorphins gone wild, this extravaganza has it all. Proceeds from the race go to the Tijuana Flats' foundation, Just In Queso. You can see all the great things that Just In Queso does online.

The Tijuana Flats' Summer Beach Run is never an easy race but it is one that should never be missed; it is the oldest race in the state of Florida and club members, it belongs to you. The tradition, the history, continues on August 16th; don't miss it. The 5-miler starts at 6 PM, there is also a very popular 1-mile Fun Run for kids at 6:05. Log onto JTCRunning.com or 1st Place Sports.com to learn more and to sign up.

2013 Summer Beach Run

2013 Summer Beach Run After Party

Mark your Calendar!

Aug. 16

The Classic of Classics!

Tijuana Flats 50th Annual Summer Beach Run

Hosted by JTC Running

Saturday, August 16

5-Mile at 6:00 PM, 1-Mile Fun Run at 6:05 PM

Huge Post Race Party

Collect the 50 Year Finishers Medal

The First SBR Medal In Race History

Rue the Shoe or Exalt the Shoe

Written by: Bob Fernee

Lawyers Barefootin It To The Bank

The Italian company, Vibram, famous for its "five finger" barefoot style running shoes, has recently had to face a class action lawsuit. It seems that the company made statements that a lot of Vibram buyers took seriously and when they didn't pan out like they thought they took it out on Vibram. It's not the first time something like this has happened. Reebok got hit once and Skechers took it on the chin when the company claimed that if women wore their rocker-style walking shoes they would develop the derriere of a super model. When these women later inspected their results in the mirror and saw the same immoveable flabalanche, they came after Skechers with both buttocks blazing. Skechers capitulated, as did Reebok. Money changed hands and a slew of happy women disappeared into restaurants for some high calorie victory meals. Buttocks be damned.

Before things got too bad, Vibram decided to squash the suit and settle. Vibram told consumers that if they wore their minimalistic "toe shoes" and ran in them correctly (that is, hitting the ground very lightly with a mid-foot to forefoot strike) they would never, or nearly never, be injured. That, it appears, was their mistake. Because if someone did, they could turn and sue. And in true American style, someone did.

Of course, I'm being a little hard on Vibram (almost as hard as the courts). There are people who can run perfectly well in wafer thin minimalism shoes. They will probably continue to do so and good luck to them. I saw a fellow run this year's Gate River Run barefoot. I was right behind him as he made his uncomfortable way across the steel grate of the Main Street bridge. Ouch, babe!

"What was the sense of that?" I wondered. I suppose he got to go to work on Monday and tell people, "yeah, I ran the Gate River Run, and I did the whole 15 kilometers in my BARE FEET."

From some, this might receive the reaction he so craves: "You beast! You're a running machine!"

Others are more likely to think: "You idiot, what's the matter with you?"

Fact is minimalism is close to being dead and buried. To paraphrase the punk rocker, Billy Idol, "minimalism isn't dead, it just smells bad." Many who tried it have returned to more conventional running shoes; a Saucony Kinvara, Altra Torin or Brooks Pure Flow rather than a Fila Skeletoes, Vibram Bikila or Merrill Glove. Even the book that started it all, Born To Run, must be doing laps around the closeout tables by now. For the author, it more than served its purpose. He's probably running laps too-around his private island in the Caribbean. (He may not actually have one, I just said that.)

But let's get back to our hapless footwear friend, Vibram. The company has deposited 3.75 million dollars into an escrow fund that will pay to class action members as much as $94 (but said to be realistically more like $20 to $50) each.

Runner Valerie Bezdek (wouldn't you know it, she lives in Florida) originated the lawsuit along with the help of a powerful Boston law firm that makes a good buck or two by attacking consumer products companies. Naturally, the lawyers are the big winners, having pocketed a million bucks already. The suit alleges that Vibram "deceived consumers by advertising and marketing that its Five-Fingers shoes could reduce the incidence of foot injuries and strengthen foot muscles, despite the presence of scientific evidence."

It would be easy to say that Vibram got what they deserved, but did they? There has been considerable backlash against this suit, coming from authorities as well as consumers. They say the suit is "unfair" and "unjust." Yes, some people love minimalistic shoes and they are happy to say so.

One authority, Jim Hixson, wrote extensively in a recent blog. Hixson wrote: "In the wake of

the recent settlement in the class action lawsuit against Vibram Five Fingers (VFF), the media seemed especially joyous in providing us with the news that the "barefoot fad" and "minimalist craze" were now over. It was an "I told you so!" reaction, that occurs when we have been encouraged to act in a certain way or purchase a particular product that is supposed to improve our health, but then we discover or are told that this claim is false and we are now free to resume our flawed, but comfortable, way of life."

Wow, I couldn't have put it better myself. And Vibram can say, in perfect Richard Nixon like manner, "now the media won't have Vibram Five Fingers to kick around anymore."

Sometimes you have to run for a while in a shoe before you can praise or condemn it, that's common knowledge, as all seasoned runners know. But what of this Valerie Bezdek woman, did she even give Vibram a fair chance? The lawsuit does not say how long she ran, or tried to run, in the unconventional "toe shoes". Was it just once or twice? Nearly everyone who runs in such a flat shoe (as Vibrams are) experiences lower leg muscle tightness and even some Achilles tendon pain. Vibram even say so in their How-to-Transition-to-Vibram instructional literature.

Or did she say to herself, "I hurt, therefore, I sue."

Bezdek bought the Vibrams on the company's website in April 2011 and at some point became disappointed with the shoes and concluded that she had been deceived by VFF's advertising claims that she would experience health benefits. No mention of how long she actually wore the shoes before deciding to take legal action in April 2012.

Hixson continued: "My first reaction to the decision by the plaintiffs and VFF to settle their lawsuit was one of scorn for the plaintiffs. My second reaction, after looking at the VFF models in my closet and thinking about the many customers, who have truly benefitted from wearing VFFs, was the same."

Ironically, the plaintiffs admitted that the VFF website made strong recommendations on how to safely transition into their shoes. Stated clearly by Vibram in words easy to understand: "Minor discomfort is not unusual in some individuals, depending on your foot type and running style, but you should not continue if pain persists. Transitioning slowly to build proper strength is imperative when beginning to run in Vibram Five Fingers."

Here is a summary of the plaintiff's argument:

- Barefoot running has increased in popularity, because it supposedly provides health benefits.
- VFF claims that their shoes mimic barefoot running and provide the same health benefits.
- VFF had an advertising campaign that implies that their claims are supported by scientific evidence.
- In fact, research has not yet adequately shed light on the immediate and long-term effects of this practice (barefoot running) and VFF had no scientific evidence to support their claims about the benefits of barefoot running or their own products.
- Indeed running in VFFs may increase injury risk as compared to running in conventional running shoes, and even when compared to running barefoot.
- Claims that a product provides health benefits that are not supported by scientific evidence are inherently deceptive.
- VFF's deceptive statements about barefoot running are also deceptive statements about FiveFingers.
- These deceptive statements were made to take advantage of customers in order to sell them expensive shoes that did not provide health benefits and, to the contrary, might even lead to

an increase in some injuries for some runners.

Phew, pretty boring stuff, no wonder why lawyers get paid so much.

Unfortunately for Vibram, they might have inadvertently shot themselves in their scantily shod foot with this statement on their website: "Vibram Five Fingers footwear is different than any other footwear on the planet. Not only does it bring you closer to your environment, it also delivers a number of positive health benefits-by leveraging all of the body's natural biomechanics, so you can move as nature intended."

"Oops, wish we hadn't said that," they must have admitted to themselves later.

Ultimately, Vibram decided to "put the lawsuit to rest and avoid any additional legal expenses." The court brief itself stated: Vibram expressly denied and continues to deny any wrongdoing alleged in the Actions, and neither admits nor concedes any actual or potential fault, wrongdoing or liability.

Furthermore, the settlement was not a victory for either side: the plaintiffs did not have to prove any of their claims and VFF did not have to refute any of these same claims. But Vibram coughed up $3.75 million. If any of it is not claimed then the leftovers will be donated to the American Heart Association for research on the health benefits of running. That is, of course, if the lawyers don't get it first.

Hixson wrote: "One of the silliest claims made by the plaintiffs was that VFF shoes had been designed to 'capitalize on this fitness craze' (barefoot running). But VFF products had been on the market since 2005 and this 'craze' didn't even start until after the publication of Christopher McDougall's Born To Run, in 2009.

In fact, the prototype for the first VFF shoe actually went back to 1999, when it was invented by Robert Fliri, a design student at Italy's Free University of Bolzano."

The first Vibrams were not intended as running shoes, they were supposed to be used for water sports; perfect for yachting or surfing, they provided traction but didn't hold water.

Hixson also said, "Since Vibram was not originally a running shoe company, it didn't know the first rule followed by companies that sell traditional running shoes: Don't make any claims about the health benefits of a shoe, because there aren't any!"

Indeed, in fact it turns out there is no scientific evidence that wearing a proper, conventional running shoe, be it neutral, stability or motion control, can prevent injury either, let alone improve health.

I know what you're thinking: "Come on, Bob, cut it out, tell us what you think!" Okay, I will.

Seems to me that some people can do this minimalism thing and some can't. When I try it, my Achilles tendons flare up and I don't care for that, so count me out. Those who can do it, and want to, fine; just be careful, there is little protection or support in those things. I guess I like convention (what did you expect from such a dullard?) and I still think that things like protection, shock absorption and support are paramount to comfortable, injury-free running. Running shoes should fit well, bend in the right place and not make the fillings fly out of your teeth when your feet hit the tarmac. If you over pronate, then find a shoe and/or orthotic device that will cut it down and make your alignment more 'neutral'. If that doesn't work for you, don't sue anyone, just use another shoe and let Mother Nature take her course; it is not an exact science and there are no guarantees.

Striders Limited by Ruling

Written by: Bob Fernee

Striders Stride Limited By An Orange Park Ruling

We are so lucky to have our beaches. So long, so runable, so beautiful, and for 50 years we have been able to stage our Summer Beach Run with such ease. Well, not exactly, the Jax Beach authorities have made us jump through a lot more hoops lately but still admit that it is our beach and that we have every right to use it. Good thing too.

The same cannot be said for our sister city, the town of Orange Park. In so far as staging races goes, things have gone from bad to worse. I almost hate to open up this unsavory can of worms but these worms need to have their say.

I met with four of the Florida Striders' officers, former president, Dave Bokros, Race Directors, Vicky Connell and Joe Strickland and President Scott Hershey in order to construct this report. Their insights and opinions were critical.

Some history: The Florida Striders have been around since 1978 and since 1980 the club has handed over the lion's share of its profits to the Clay County school system's sports department; a donation of some $20,000 a year for nearly 35 years. The club creates revenue from only a handful of events: The Resolution Run 5k, in January; a new trail race, the Angry Tortoise, in February; the Run To The Sun 8k, in April; the Memorial Day 5k, at the end of May and the Hog Jog, a cross-country 5k in November. All of these events feature free 1-Mile Fun Runs designed to introduce children to the healthy habit of running. The Striders also provide financial assistance to the Hershey Games, a children's track meet.

"We used to give 500 dollar grants to schools but we could never be sure where the money was going, so we later invented our assistance plan for school running programs," said former Strider's president, Dave Bokros.

These days, on an even bigger scale, the Striders encourage and promote children's running and the healthful running lifestyle attached to it, in elementary schools, not just in Clay County but also in Duval and other nearby counties. Forty-two schools are currently involved, 32 of them in Clay County where the Florida Striders are headquartered. If a school wants to start up a running program the club makes kits with everything they will need to get it established. These kits are provided free of charge and keep going as long as the school continues its students' running program. The program has been the cornerstone of virtually everything this noble club does. To say that they are proud of it would be a huge understatement.

The club also funds and organizes a summer running camp that takes place at St. Johns Country Day School. Open to anyone, it promotes and involves people in running, health, fitness and camaraderie. What could be better than that?

But the Striders are feeling hard done by. Despite all their marvelous pubic works, the public, or at least a certain vocal and influential minority of it, are dead set against them. Most of it revolves around a certain road that happens to be the most popular running route in all of Orange Park.

River Road is a beautiful place; the tree-lined, two-lane blacktop sits alongside the majestic St. Johns River and the view is spectacular, almost breathtaking. It is also a favorite running route and a spot that the Striders have used as a racecourse for decades. Trouble is, some of the residents along River Road don't care for more than a few runners at a time on their beloved, it would seem, cherished, road. Moreover, they sure don't like crowded races, and sometimes the Striders have over a thousand people in a couple of their events.

"Those house owners on River Road pay a lot of property taxes, so of course the City is going to listen to them," Bokros said. "It's only a few of them, but they are very vocal and very well organized."

"I felt like a hostage in my own home," said Ann Camarda, in a story titled, Stride Right Out of the Neighborhood, which appeared in the January 23rd issue of the local newspaper, Clay Today. Her complaint involved the Striders' January 11 race, the Resolution Run 5k. Although the race started at 8 AM, she was told she could not leave her home until 10 AM. Camarda was miffed. For such a short race, that is a ridiculously long

closure, as we runners know. Could it be that part of the problem here is poor planning and defective thinking on the part of the local police?

Vicky Connell points out that the club has done its best to get the police understand that auto traffic should be allowed to flow whenever possible even in the middle of a road race. Yet, this problem continues to be a contentious one and a major stumbling block on the road to community happiness.

The familiar phrase, “hostage in my own home”, is a popular one and I have heard it used by some beaches residents while the Breast Cancer, 26.2 with Donna, Marathon is staged. Come on! Inconvenienced for one Sunday morning a year so that money can be raised to combat cancer and aid destitute local breast cancer sufferers and their families, one would think they could be a bit more understanding. These days, though, it seems people only care about their own agenda, be it ever so trivial.

Ann Camarda’s ex-husband, Jeff, wrote a letter to Orange Park Mayor, Jim Renninger, griping about the race, the road closure and the (inaccurate) fact that the run was “not one that raised money for any foundation or cause.” Right, school kids, not a “cause”. Well, it is comforting in a way to know that these two exes can still agree on something, even if it does involve meanness, hatred, anger and venom.

Then again, maybe the Striders themselves are partly to blame. Perhaps their main outreach program, the one for the school kids, has not been broadcast sufficiently to the community. Has it been hammered home enough? Apparently not enough to the homes on the war front, River Road.

Basically, thanks to the vocal minority, it boils down to this: The controversy has escalated into a new city ordinance that dictates that no road within the Orange Park city limits can be closed more than one time every month. For the Striders, this would have not have been an issue years ago but today every school, church and organization wants to have a fund-raising 5k, and most want to stage them on River Road.

Last May, a new race, the Young Life 5k, reserved the Striders’ course used for their Memorial Day 5k that begins on Milwaukee before the Striders did. Consequently, the club was done out of its own territory. Young Life held its event and the Striders had to move theirs to a new course starting in Clarke Park. A simple race of first-come-first-served that the Striders lost.

“I have all of our events already reserved for next year,” said Striders’ Board Member, Joe Strickland, who also serves as race director for the Striders’ Run To The Sun 8k, a race whose course is largely the controversial River Road.

Good move, and one that might become a necessary procedure in the future. Book your place, one full year in advance.

But could things get even worse? Might OP dictate that one road closure a month, no matter where it is, is enough? “Doesn’t matter if you create a new course within the city limits, one road closure event a month is it”, they could say. Then Orange Park could go even further, with the final blow, “that’s it, no more road closures, no day, no time, no how”, ending road racing in OP forever.

“I don’t think it will ever come to that,” said new Town Manager, Jim Hanson. Hanson, the former town manager of Jacksonville Beach, took over in April this year. He may be just what this argument needs. A serious runner himself, with more than 250 races under his belt, he can best see both sides of the controversy. He will at least be a sympathetic ear that the Striders, and others, have needed for years.

Hanson seems to think that the OP police have not been versed enough in the fine art of race day procedure. Traffic flow might have been overly curtailed when it needn’t have been.

“I think we also have to consider which events are more important. If the Striders have a run that brings in a thousand people, then that should have precedence over a walk that has 30 participants,” Hanson said.
He continued: “We want to showcase Orange Park and,

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of course, River Road is a great place to do it. I have a condo in Orange Park, we also kept our place at the beach because my wife teaches there, and I would rather spend my free time running rather than doing a white knuckled drive twice a day on the Buckman Bridge, and I love running along River Road."

The Striders are worried though, and are even thinking of moving their events out of the township of Orange Park. There is talk of Fleming Island and also Ortega and Riverside. But not Green Cove Springs, the city that terminated its longtime partnership with the Striders and the club's Memorial Day 5k. The bad blood created by that move has not been forgotten and perhaps, never will be. Ironically, the race that Green Cove Springs decided upon is now kaput and so, with egg on its face, the city council is imploring the Striders to come back.

For the present time, the Striders will continue on their present path and hope for the best. As Vicky Connell, said, "We will go on doing what we are doing until they (OP) tell us that we can't do it anymore."

We will all hope that day never comes.

John TenBroeck's Last Summer Beach Run

Written by: Doug Tillett

The Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run has always been one of my favorite races, going all the way back to when I first started running in 1983, when the race didn't have a title sponsor yet. In the heat of the summer with oppressive humidity and frequent thunderstorms, it was and still is a time when racing tends to taper off and all of us runners who manage to keep running are only training. The Summer Beach Run used to be the first big race at the end of the summer where everyone would show up and test out their legs to get an idea of how the upcoming racing season was going to be for them. Plus it had a big party afterward, giving everyone the chance to socialize with other runners.

There was a friend of mine named John TenBroeck who also had the Summer Beach Run on his list of favorite races. A lot of our club's members knew John TenBroeck because he had been running his whole life, his history with JTCR went way back to when the club was first established, he had been President TenBroeck of the club six times, and he was an important part of all our races for decades. Especially so, it seemed, with this race. He really liked the Summer Beach Run.

John TenBroeck was "Mr. JTC" and volunteered for anything that needed to be done for our club. I remember that he was the club secretary. He also was keeping our website updated. He was our representative for USATF in Florida and he was our representative at the RRCA convention. So all of us on the board wondered what was going on when he announced at one of the board meetings that he had gotten some bad news and that he was going to be stepping back from many of his club duties. We didn't question him very much since he didn't want to tell us about the bad news but he also didn't really step back from any of his club duties.

In time, though, we found out that his bad news was that he caught cancer. It seemed like he was just running right on through the disease, though, because he was still doing all the JTC stuff and he was still running all the time too. Nevertheless, I'd check on him every few days when the club was between events or meetings, calling on the phone or visiting his house, and as our friendship got closer he let me know more about the cancer – that it had started as skin cancer but had spread and had moved to his bones. It hurt a lot and he was losing his capacity to do many of the things that he had always enjoyed. Instead of running

at races, he would walk them. Instead of leading group runs, he would give pre-run advice and then wait for the group to return from their workout. And then there was the chemotherapy that he would receive, hoping to get the cancer out of his body so that he could continue on. Chemo is hard on a person.

Unfortunately, the therapy didn't work, even after a long time. He was really sad and upset the day he told me that the chemo doctor told him it was time to stop receiving treatment – that there was nothing else they could do. He stopped driving (maybe it was the pain medication affecting his equilibrium) so I would take him places that he really wanted to go, like maybe a Galloway Group session or a celebratory dinner. The decline in his health progressed, he was hurting in spite of the powerful meds that hospice had prescribed, and he was having a lot of trouble with everything, but still, there was nothing that could stop him.
He told me that he hoped I could take him to the Summer Beach Run that was coming up in a couple of weeks. I said it would be good to have him ride with me but I asked if he would feel good enough to go. "Yeah, yeah, I'll be fine. I wouldn't miss it. I'll just wait around the SeaWalk Pavilion for everybody to come back." So our plans were made to go to the Summer Beach Run and even though we didn't say the words, both of us figured it would be his last one.

So after a few days I checked on him and he said he was OK considering the circumstances and then he asked if I could still take him to the SBR. "Sure thing, John. It'll be good." And after a few more days I visited him but he could hardly sit in his chair because his legs hurt so badly from the cancer that was in his bones, but still he double-checked that I was taking him to the Summer Beach Run. But then a few days before the race, he called me to say that he was going to check into hospice for a couple of days so they could stabilize him but he was still pretty confident that he'd be stabilized and back home so that we could go to the Summer Beach Run. Our plans were in cement.

Very early in the morning, like 3 am, the day before the race, John's wife, Angela TenBroeck, woke us up with a phone call that she didn't think John was going to make it. June Tillett and I got dressed fast and drove to hospice but we didn't make it before he passed. He was still in the room and the hospice staff was letting us stay there with him as long as we wanted. We talked about the circumstances of the day and the tough road that John had been down recently. Honestly, I thought he was going to rally and get a little better and that he'd still make it to the race, but whereas before this time nothing had been able to stop him, in the end it was death that inevitably did.

We left John in peace. The hospice staff said they would take care of him. We went to an early breakfast at a restaurant. Angela told me that she thought John had been hallucinating, which patients on opiates sometimes do, because he told her that he had to get out of hospice to go to the Summer Beach Run with Doug, with me. I told her that was not a hallucination; that it was the plan. She said that he said that we (he and I) were going to go to the Summer Beach Run, and that he was going to be there with his running friends, and that he was going to go into the ocean and feel the water all around him, and that it would be.... perfect. She repeated the word: perfect.

So came the day of the race, the very next day, on Saturday, September 6th, 2008. Before the start, on the microphone, we remembered John TenBroeck, told everybody that he really had wanted to be there and that he loved us all, and we said a prayer in his memory. Then the starting cannon fired and we ran down the beach. As I was running the race, I tried to go the fastest that I could go, in honor of my old friend who had passed away the day before. And after I finished, since John could not, I went into the Atlantic Ocean (even though I don't like it) and felt the water all around me, and tried to make the experience as perfect as it could be. After all, it was John TenBroeck's last Summer Beach Run.

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Submit Articles to: The Starting Line, c/o JTC Running, PO Box 24667, Jacksonville, FL 32241 OR bobfernee@aol.com

Deadline for inclusion in Sept/Oct 2014 issue is September 10th. No Exceptions!

Advertising Inquires: The Starting Line, PO Box 24667, Jacksonville, FL 32241 OR bobfernee@aol.com

Advertising Rates:
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The Starting Line is published bi-monthly by JTC Running, P.O. Box 24667, Jacksonville, Florida 32241-4667.
JTC Running Hotline: 384-8725 (384-TRAK)

JTC Running
P.O. Box 24667
Jacksonville, Florida
32241-4667

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Weekly Training Runs

Sunday 7:00 am, Tapestry Park Group Run
Contact: Loretta@jacksonvillerunningcompany.com

Sunday 9:00 am, UNF Nature Trails every other Sunday
Visit 'Jax Group Train Running' on Facebook for locations
Contact: chris@jacksonvillerunningcompany.com

Sunday, 6:30 am, Atlantic Beach: Atlantic Blvd. & 1st Street, 5-10 miles.
Contact: Linda White at (H) 246-2137 (C) 662-4928

Sunday, 6:30 am, Mandarin: Various locations and distance.
Contact: Stef at stefgriff@aol.com or 268-1503

Sunday, 6:30 am, Orange Park: Sun Tire, 346, Blanding Blvd., 6-20 miles.
Contact: Dave at 545-4538

Monday, 6:30 pm, World of Beer group run, 2+ miles
Contact: chris@jacksonvillerunningcompany.com

Monday, 5:00 pm, South Bank Downtown: River Brewing Co., 2-6 miles (includes bridges). Contact: Danny at 287-5496.

Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Tapestry Park Group Run, 3.14 miles
Contact: loretta@jacksonvillerunningcompany.com

Tuesday, 5:45 am, San Marco: Southside Methodist Church, 5-6 miles, 7-8:30 pace. Contact: JC at 803-8758.

Tuesday, 6:00 pm, 1st Place Sports on Baymeadows: 3 to 6 miles, all abilities.

Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Ponte Vedra: Sawgrass Village south lot, 3-6 miles (very social). Contact: Craig at 424-9690.

Tuesday 6:30 pm, St. Vincent's Southside, Belfort Rd., formerly St. Luke's Hospital. Good Beginners run.
Contact: Loretta@jacksonvillerunningcompany.com

Wednesday, 6:30 pm, 1st Place Sports/Aardwolf Brewery run, 4 miles, includes bridges. Contact: 399-8880

Wednesday, 5:30 am, San Jose: The Bolles School (JTC Running members) track intervals (all abilities).
Contact: JC Pinto at 803-8758

Wednesday, 5:30 pm, San Jose: The Bolles School (JTC Running members) track intervals (all abilities).
Contact: Danny at 287-5496

Wednesday 6:30 pm, Jax Beach, 1st Place Sports, Various runs intended to make you improve.
Simon@1stplacesports.com

Thursday, 6:15 pm, Orange Park: 1st Place Sports, 2186 Park Av., 3-6 miles, runners/walkers.
Contact: Denise Metzgar at 264-3767

Thursday, 6:30 pm, JTC Running San Marco Group, Park located at 1964 Largo Rd. Contact Doug Tillett at 728-3711

Thursday, 6:30 pm, Bartram Park Group Run
Contact: liz@jacksonvillerunningcompany.com

Thursday, 6:00 pm, Town Center Mall, 3-6 miles, 1st Place Sports, 620-9991

Friday, 5:40 am, Beauclerc, Mandarin: Forest Cir., 7.5 miles.
Contact: Stef atstefgriff@aol.com or 268-1503

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