



THE
STARTING LINE
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

420



Letter from the Editor

Gloom and doom seem to be the order of the day. I sit here on Christmas Day and after having read the newspaper I get the feeling a lot of people are unhappy with our presidential choice, maybe even some of those who voted for him. A type of buyer's remorse, I suppose. Not to worry, here at JTC Running we have much to look back on fondly and to look forward to with great relish and anticipation.

Our Guana Back-To-Nature Trails event, that comprises three races --our only Ultra, a two-person 25k relay and a 12k -- took place on Dec. 4. It was a great success both in terms of attendance and enjoyment. It was produced smoothly, too, all thanks to race director Mark Ryan.

While attending the post-race bash at The Reef restaurant I had the opportunity to talk to many of the runners, some of whom had never attended the event before and I was heartened by all the positive reviews. Everyone was very enthusiastic and said that they would be back next year. Yes, folks, our Guana event is a hit, a big hit. If you missed it this time, or even if you didn't, mark your calendars: First Sunday in December is always Guana Back-To-Nature day.

Looking ahead, our Winter Beach Run is set for Saturday, Jan. 28. This, as usual, is a two-race combo -- a 5-mile and the classic 10-miler both on familiar Jacksonville Beach sand. I hope by the time you receive this newsletter you will still have time to register and get in a good Gate River Run tune-up and perhaps even a GRR seed time.

The Gate River Run! Ouch, that's coming up soon, isn't it? Doesn't it seem like we just had that race? As I write this (it's now Jan 11), I am jolted by the realization that the race is just two months away. I am nowhere near ready so I better get moving. I can remember a time when I was always prepared to run a race. Boy, those days are long gone. It is the 40th running of our great race and I am going to have to dig deep to find a way to finish upright.

There is something new and exciting this year, The 40 Days of the Gate River Run. This is a scavenger hunt type of contest that will move all over the city and award all kinds of great prizes to winners and others. It should be a lot of fun. You will be kept up to date on its movements via Twitter, email and a whole bunch of other methods of communication that were inconceivable back in 1978 when the first River Run 15,000 took to the streets of Jacksonville. Amazing to

think how much life has changed in those 40 years, isn't it?

Ten years ago, for the GRR's 30th anniversary, a Retro River Run 5k took place. This year the Retro is back and I like the look of it. Why? Because it is short and starts at 6 p.m. (I should be out of bed by then.) It is also about as cheap as I am, 5 bucks. Five dollars was the cost of the first River Run so we get to relive the time when 5 bucks could buy something. The 1978 race attracted a crowd of 2,204 people so the Retro is limited to the first 2,204 registrants. There is also an Oldest River Run Shirt contest. I owned a slew of shirts from the race at one time but threw them all away. What a blunder. Now I have no chance. It's like throwing away the first Superman comic book. Of course, I imagine there is Streaker out there who has a full set of historic River Run tees. He has that contest in the bag.

I have already signed up for the Retro River Run and I am looking forward to it. The shirt contest is lost, and I won't come anywhere near to winning the race, but I am sure I will be awarded with a fun time and a wonderful walk down memory lane.

We do some good things here at JTC Running. We try to support running however we can. Sometimes that means keeping a great thing like our track meet series going and not charging for a single lap of it. That's right, free. We are currently financing a project that will improve not only the experience of runners but everyone in our city who cares to enjoy the trail at Tomahawk Park in the San Jose area.

Tomahawk is a nice little shady trail and used to be a favorite place to put in some miles. Over the years, however, the trail was overtaken by tree roots and a wooden bridge became a decrepit hazard. Our club is happy to announce that we are now building a new bridge and covering the obtrusive roots so that the trail will be usable again. Doug Alred has been spearheading this project in coordination with the city and he has written it up for this issue.

On behalf of myself and our club I wish you all a safe, healthy and prosperous 2017 and a super 40th Gate River Run.

President's Letter

In recent years we have celebrated the 40th anniversary of JTC Running and the 40th running of our Last Gasp cross country race. Now it is time to celebrate the 40th running of our biggest event, the Gate River Run, coming on March 11. It is going to be special in many ways. This will be the race's 24th year as the USATF 15k Championship and one of just 10 races nationwide that comprise the USATF Running Circuit.

The list of elite runners recruited by our Elites Director, Richard Fannin, is simply awesome and will also draw wide attention to the event. A special promotion this year is The 40 Days of the Gate River Run. A replica of one of the 40 race logos is on display each day at a location in Jacksonville. Everyone who checks in at that day's location is in a drawing for a prize.

The Retro River Run that was so popular 10 years ago has been brought back to run again on Saturday, March 4 at 6 p.m. at the Landing. The entry fee is just \$5, typical for a 1970s event, but registration is limited to 2,204 the number who entered the first River Run! There will be contests for the oldest River Run shirt and '70s costume, so don't miss it!

The Runners Expo will open at 11 a.m. on Thursday and Friday, March 9 and 10, at its usual Fairgrounds location. Be sure to stop by the JTC Running booth to check out our new shirt and running shorts, and to pick up your wristband for admission to the Club hospitality tent on race day. Club Vice President Larry Sassa has arranged a great experience for active members including bag check, refreshments (including beer!), and private port-a-lets. Make sure your membership is current so that your name will appear on the wristband list! If you would like to volunteer for a shift at the booth or the tent please sign up under Events at JTCRunning.com.

If you have wondered how to check membership status or renewal date, let me remind you of the process. First, on the address label of the print copy of

this newsletter, just above your name, is your renewal month and year. Mine says 'JUL 19', meaning July 2019. Second, on our website JTCRunning.com home page, click on the Membership tab then, Member Directory. If your name appears on this list, your membership is active. If it does not, your membership has lapsed. Third, for the details of your membership click on the Membership tab then, Member Profile. Enter the email address associated with your membership and password. If you have forgotten your password, click on the Forgot password link to reset it. Once logged in, you will see full details and links to change membership level, to renew, and Social Network log-in options.

If your email address does not work, check to be sure you have tried the one that is associated with your account. In our membership management system, the control data field is your email address. If you have multiple addresses, only one at a time is valid in the system. To change your JTC Running email address at any time, send your old and new info to jtcrunningclub@gmail.com. See you in March!



The Starting Line

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New & Returning Members

Miranda Abbas	Charles DeLay	Elizabeth Jimenez	Sandra Rechis
Susan Abraham	Annalisa Derryberry	Hannah Johnson	Victoria Reppert
Jennifer Adams	Melissa DiSciascio-Maynard	Karen Johnson	Jeffery Richardson
Karen Albert	richard donahue	Laurie Johnson	Joseph Richardson
Jaymon Alvis	Debbie Donlan	Tim Johnson	Morgan Ricketts
Richard Amell	Stephanie Doran	Colleen Jones	Alex Riggins
Bjorn Anderson	Greg Doss	Trevor Jones	Susan Roche
Kathy Anderson	Jocelyn Dray	Cindy Kaneer	Bryan Rohlin
Cynthia Angresano	Lanier Drew	David Kelley	Kris Rosenbush
Herb Armstrong	Barb Ebers	Edward Kelly	Judy S Rowan
Alex Asuncion	Sage Edwards	Fran Kennedy	Drew Rowland
Samuel Atwell	Ron Elinoff	Jill Kennedy	Hilonka Ruiz
Marcia Baker	James Elledge	Donna Kling	Bob Ryan
Angela Banks	Phil Ellis	Michelle Kogan	Brian Santiago
Lisa Barrus	Rosalyna Escoto	Julius Lacerna	Matthew Saxton
Viola Barther	Faith Fetzer	Gary Ledman	Chris Schappals
Mary Bascom-Pooler	Lina Fichera	Kaitlin Legg	David Schreck
Jose Bascon	NiCole Finch	Mandy Lewis	Diana Schroeder
Dave Batten	MaryJaneFitzsimons	Julie Liszka	Buddy Schulz
Bill Beaumont	Steven Foppe	Will Lloyd	Susan Scovill
John Belli	Monica Forbes	Leigh Mangus	Christine Scrimme
Aimee Bellmore	Gianna Forte	Zachary Marquis	JoAnne Seach
John Blanton	Kristina Foster	Jake Marshall	Joachim Seide
Karen Bock-Losee	Lori Frederick	Jennifer Marshall	Catherine Serico
Hirsch Boucchechter	Michelle Fredette	Nicole Marshall	Bernadette Shannon
Wendy Bourgholtzer	Crystal Fulco	Rosiane Martin	Brad Sherrill
Tom Brandies	Bob Gailey	Velislava Mateeva	john snowden
Susan Briers	Mark Gannon	ChristopherMathison	Alfonso Solano
Alex Brucker	Sonja Gapinski	Gregory McConnell	Marie Sorita
Lily Buchholz	Leigh Gardner	Janie McMillan	Mindy Stamulis
Lucas Buehrer	Fred R. Gaudios	Thomas McVey	Kelly Stephens
Jan Bullock	Hal Gilreath	Jerry Miller	John Stringfellow
Catherine Buskirk	David Glade	Ryan Miller	Angie Swaney
April Bynum	Sue Granger	Tracy Milligan	Ian Swann
Deryle Calhoun	Deborah Gray	Stephen Miron	Lisa Swartz
Patrick Carmody	Emily Gray	Paige Montooth	Rebecca Taylor
Steven Cartwright	Linda Green	Gary Myers	John Terry
Jacqueline Cascante	Shaina Green	Brent Narkiewicz	Bill Thomas
Trinity Cheyenne	Matthew Hallenbeck	Zachary Newman	Randal Trinidad-Ambar
Roy F. Clarke, Jr.	David Halstead	Chad Nordstrom	Pamela Turbeville
Andrew Clayton	Dennis Harrison	Cherie Norman	Christa Tyson
Kari Clement	Billy Hart	Bob Opkins	Carl Utter
April Cobb	Heather Hascall	Kimberlee Ormond	Carolyn Van Sant
Melody Coble	Brittany Hasty	Jessica Palmer	Micah Ward
Scott Coble	Jim Hatch	Jesse Parker	Peggy Watters
Debbie Coffman	Desiree Haubner	Norman Patton	Michele Weed
Jack Coles	Sharon Hawley	Raven Pazmino	Deeanne Wells
John Coles	Lauren Heard	Perry Pelham	Karen Wendzel
Sam Coles	Stacey Hendry	Iris Peters	Molly Whittaker
joe Cooksey	Paul Hibel	Shaun Phillips	Jeffrey Wilhl
Dasha Cooper	Hal Higdon	Roy Dean Pickle	Anna Williams
Sara Corrigan	Jessica Hill	Nicole Pierce	Michael Williams
John Crawford	Julie Hill	David Pizzi	Steve Williams
Julia Crook	Robert Hogan	Jamie Poindexter	Ken Wilson
Cathy Crowe	dan holloway	Cody Pontius	Lara Wolf
Beth Davey	Bruce Holmes	Ron Porter	Anne Woodhouse
Inita Davis	George Hoskins	Leigh Powell	Malcolm Wooton
Stephanie Davis	Stephen Hughes	Aimee Pragle	Terence Youngblood
Robert Deal	Robert Irvin	Carmen Preeschl	Kimberly Zavon
Tammy deGraaf	Chloe Iulanio	Page Ramezani	

Returning the Favor, Board Member Doug Tillett



Doug Tillett is one of those unselfish people who gives his all. He volunteers for almost everything, shows up for everything and never stops working for our club on ... everything. He has been around almost forever, it seems. He has served as the president of JTC Running and as its secretary. He

continues to be a very active board member and is highly involved in the Gate River Run. His only aim is to make the event the best it can be and ensure that Gate River Run runners have an experience they will never forget.

Of course, Doug is also an active runner, seen at many local races (especially if they carry the banner JTC Running). He knows how much running has meant to his life and that is why every day he is returning the favor.

What made you get involved in running? Tell us a little about your running history.

I started running the roads on Labor Day in 1982, six months after my son was born. I was feeling flabby and I could tell I was getting older (29!) and “losing it” (my elegant body.) I figured that long-distance running would be a good way to shape back up. There was a bonus -- the training got me out of the house for an hour or so a day. Ah, the freedom of the open road. I didn’t figure that it would become such a long-term practice, running, but I’ve been at it for 34 years and I’m glad of it.

When did you first become involved with JTC Running or the Jacksonville Track Club as it was known back then?

On the advice of some of my running friends, I joined the Jacksonville Track Club (JTC) a few years after I

started running. There were way fewer races back then. There were not many running groups either. My favorite races (River Run, Summer Beach Run, The Last Gasp) were all JTC races and the club had a newsletter. I joined up to be a local running “insider” and keep up to date on running happenings in Jacksonville and Florida.

After a few years passed, I decided to “run” for the JTC board. I wanted to give back to the club that had helped my running so much. I managed to get elected to the board and I’ve kept a seat ever since.

Running and races have certainly changed over the years. Has the track club?

I think that JTC Running has done a good job of changing with the times and with the state of running. The way we have been able to change has kept our club relevant in today’s world of running. Club membership is certainly worth the \$20 that it costs to join – in fact, it’s a bargain.

What are your favorite races and why?

I really like races with a good, long history; therefore, I love the Gate River Run, the Winter Beach Run, the Summer Beach Run, The Last Gasp, and the Peachtree Road Race. I like The Navy Run which is now named after Captain Chuck Cornett. All those races have great and unique courses.

What are your favorite race distances?

It used to be 10-milers and half marathons that I liked the best. I didn’t care for 5Ks so much because you had to run too hard in too short a distance. Now that I’m in one of the upper age groups and my Achilles tendon has gotten tender, sore and weak, I’ve decided that a nice 5K is just the thing for me to race. I only wish I could still compete well in a half marathon.

How lucky is JTC Running to have the Gate River Run?

The club is lucky to have the River Run as one of our races. Part of the “luck,” though, has been the club’s ability to change with the times and to deal properly with the changes that have happened in the racing scene, race management and race pricing. But the first and most lucky part of all of it was that our Buck Fannin, who was the president of the club at the time, made an earnest decision to establish a great race in our city. Forty years

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ago, he created the River Run 15,000. The second lucky thing was the addition of Doug Alred a few years later, who told the board that he wanted the job of being the race director, and the wisdom of the board to hire him for the job. He has ascended in status as an outstanding race director, with skill and vision possessed by few others.

Can you think of any ways that we could possibly improve the GRR?

I cannot. I'm not very good at that "vision" stuff. That's the reason I want to keep Doug Alred as our GRR race director and keep Larry Roberts as our club president. Those guys ARE good at thinking of ways to make excellent things even better. After that, they give me a job to do and I go after it, talking it up with my friends in running.

Aside from getting rid of that newsletter editor, how could we improve the track club?

Dang, Bob, you sell yourself short. Like your dad (Norm Fernee – who sold me my first pair of running shoes in 1982) before you, you love running. There are a bunch of us in the JTC who love running. Really, that's the genesis of it all and we have had a great base of enthusiastic and experienced runners, over decades. I think I'd like to see newer and younger runners helping to run the club and being on the board even though all the old people are still doing a good job of it. Young spirit, fresh insights and strong talent go a long way together toward improving any organization.

You are serving as the club's secretary, how are you liking that job?

I've enjoyed being on the Executive Committee. I like being the secretary. I got the job of secretary after our previous secretary, John TenBroeck, passed away. He asked me to fill in one time and then a second time and then he passed and I just held onto the job. I was also the JTC president for 6 years from 1998 until 2003 (I think those were the years) and I believe I was secretary for a couple of years before being president. It's part of my "just say yes" philosophy. If there is a need for something to be done and if I'm able to do it and if others would like me to do it, I say yes, if at all possible. But it's time for me to announce that a new secretary has

been chosen for JTC Running for 2017 and he is Errol Daniels who has been on the board for a couple of years and who also shares my "just say yes" philosophy. I'm excited to turn over the quill of writing minutes to Errol and will do everything I can to help him as our new secretary. I know he will do an outstanding job. He is just that kind of guy.

How many years have you been on the board of directors?

I think I've been on the board for 22 or maybe 23 years. I like it a lot. It's such a great club, especially now, with our committee-based organization and with Larry Roberts as our president. Man, he is good. He approaches his job of club president the same way a professional approaches the workday. He does JTCR stuff every day. He is an outstanding manager, has a great philosophy, and has been a superb leader. Under his presidency, the board and the club have flourished. And he is a volunteer, you know – no pay for Larry. Furthermore, I think all the other 18 board members are just fantastic. I love them all, in a running-friendly "love" sort of way. I have a bunch of friends and they are runners and they are JTC Running people.

What do you think of JTC Running's annual track meet series?

We stage five meets during the spring and summer. They are free if you register in advance. We hire the meet director. We hire the professional timing company. We rent the track. We provide volunteers to assist at the meets. We give away finisher medals and participant ribbons. We are working very hard to put on a good series of track meets all with consistent quality. I wish we had more people come to run on the track. Or try a field event. Or even sit in the stands. They are great events.

What is your opinion of today's racing scene?

I think we have too many races, to the point where we have more race availability than the market can bear. On the other hand, I am all for anything (practically anything) that will get folks to put on their shoes and come out running with us. So, race on, Jacksonville. Be sure to sign up for the Gate River Run!

Do you think that more people will take up racing or

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will races become smaller?

I think the number of people racing is going to stay about the same as it is now. If we get more races, then the number of people racing will get diluted over the large number of races out there and the individual races will become smaller. It seems there are always “new” organizations or individuals who want to stage a race to support or promote their group. Bully for them. Let’s go racing.

Are track clubs still pertinent in today’s running scene? Will they still be pertinent in 20 years?

JTC Running is still pertinent in today’s running scene. Other track clubs are as well but not all of them. The active and relevant and forward-thinking clubs will still be pertinent in 20 years. Others will no longer be so. The important thing to consider here is whether you and I, Bob, will still be pertinent in 20 years, or even alive, for that matter. If we are, I hope we are still running and that we are still racing each other in The Last Gasp, as we did this year. (I beat you, by the way.) Race on!

Here is your chance: If there is anything else you want to say, or even rant about, go ahead.

I wish that races would give us nice, soft, thick cotton T-shirts that we can wear to the grocery store and feel comfortable wearing after the event. Yeah, they say “everybody” wants tech shirts but they stink (literally! They smell bad) after wearing them just a little while. And they cling to my body, revealing my saggy old man-boobs and my need for a guy-girdle. It’s horrible. It’ll make friends who see me go blind. Oh, and I’d also like a cool design on the front. Perhaps a whimsical or funny logo or something. Please.

And another thing: we need a beer keg at the post-race. Or cold cans or bottles. At every race. Let’s have a party after the race! Running is supposed to be a fun thing that we do. We train, we race, we drink a beer and party with our running friends. Bob’s your uncle and we all go home happy. Run happy, y’all, and keep it simple.

40 DAYS OF GATE RIVER RUN

Many events are planned to celebrate the special 40th running of Gate River Run, including an exciting citywide scavenger hunt-type 40 Days of Gate River Run contest.

1. The contest will be held for 40 days from Tuesday, Jan. 24, through the Retro River Run on March 4. Each week we will publish the check-in locations for that week on the GRR website and by email.
2. The check-in location will move each day somewhere throughout the First Coast area.
3. The 40 Days of Gate River Run poster will change each day. Day one will have the logo from the first year’s race, day two will have the logo from the second year and so forth until day 40, which will have the current year logo.
4. Participants will be asked to upload a photo of themselves with the current day’s poster using Instagram and the tag #GRR40+@gateriverrun.
5. We will randomly choose a winner each day from that day’s tags for prizes such as Yeti coolers and cups, Skechers shoes, sponsor gift certificates and more. Every time participants check in at a new location they get another entry to win for the Grand Prize!
6. Only one check-in per location is allowed for the daily prize drawings.
7. The Grand Prize is a \$500 GATE gift card and Yeti cooler. Grand prize value is \$900.
8. The Grand Prize winner will be announced on Tuesday, March 7.
9. All prizes will be claimed at 1st Place Sports, 3931 Baymeadows Road, during regular business hours.

The 40th Anniversary Gate River Run

It is a banner year for JTC Running's hallmark race, the Gate River Run 15k. March 11 will see the 40th edition of this great event, which is also the USATF 15k Championship. For local runners, this is the big one, the race that nobody wants to miss, especially this time around. Regardless the cost and no matter what awful shape we might be in, we will all be there, won't we?

I am one of the renowned "Streakers," those few who have done every one of the races since 1978 when it was called the River Run 15,000 and its parent club was named The Jacksonville Track Club (or JTC, for short). Actually, there are more than just a few Streakers left, the number stands at 40, and that seems like a lot to me. One must wonder how many of them will continue to endure the 9.3 miles, that seemingly have only grown longer and harder. How many will cross the finish line this year and say, "Well, that's it, I've had enough." In fact, I wonder if I will. I am considering calling upon the age-old wisdom that says, "quit while you are ahead."

We have seen a lot over the years: Sweltering hot days, rainy days, cold and blustery days. Who could ever forget the time when the race had to be postponed a day and run on Sunday due to the Storm of the Century? That could have been the most memorable GRR of all time. Of course, there is nothing like the first time, and I will always remember the excitement and anticipation connected to the inaugural River Run 15,000 of April 1978. Yes, the original race was held in April, not March, and was later in the morning. The heat and humidity were impressive, to say the least, and runners dropped like flies all over the place. Fortunately, none of the runners, many of them new to the game, died. Afterward, race officials knew something had to be done to alleviate the suffering and the event was set back a month. The second Saturday of March was later designated River Run day, due to that day's history of being dry and, frequently, cool(ish).

One thing has remained constant in the race, however, and that is the Hart Bridge. It is the most dreaded part of the course and the bit that more people talk about – and hate – the most. Me too, for as the years go by, the Hart Bridge, often referred to

as the Green Monster, has become ever more difficult and added more and more minutes to my finishing time. That's right, I blame the bridge, not myself.

That massive obstacle, what if I could move it? Where would I want it on the Gate River Run 15k course so it might be less of a race-killing, time-sapping colossus?

Would it help if it were at the very start, while my legs and lungs were fresh, happy and snappy? Or more toward the middle, though I can't imagine what advantage that would produce.

Before we try to answer these questions, let's take an appreciative look at two of Jacksonville's most iconic landmarks, the St. Johns River and the Hart Bridge.

Our St. Johns River is itself special; nearly unique. It is only one of two rivers in the world that flows from south to north, the Nile River in Africa being the other. In and around Jacksonville eight bridges span it. For runners, the Hart is the Godzilla of bridges.

The Hart Bridge was opened on Nov 2, 1967. It was derisively nicknamed 'The Green Monster' originally by commuters, not runners. We runners are a clever bunch but we can't take credit for everything (we'd have come up with a better nom de guerre anyway.) What were those commuters griping about? There has never been much traffic on it, particularly in the early days. By 2013, the average daily traffic was only 39,000 vehicles. That's nothing; if they wanted to complain why didn't they suffer the Mathews Bridge -- now there's a real joy. Or the first Buckman Bridge before it became two spans. Remember that nightmare? One little accident and the thing shut down for hours.

Anyway, the Hart Bridge was named after Isaiah David Hart (1792-1861), the man who is credited with founding Jacksonville in 1822. Jacksonville's original name was Cowford. Oh boy, as much as I like cows (you know, steak, roast beef, etc.). I'm glad they ditched that small town-sounding name. If you think there is nothing to do in today's Jacksonville, the over exaggerated, self-professed, "Bold New City of the South," when it consolidated the City and Duval County governments on Oct. 1, 1968, what would

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you get up to in Cowford? Cow tipping? The “new” Jacksonville boasted that it was now geographically the largest city in the world. That is, until Juneau, Alaska, corrected our Bold New City’s bold claim.

Some of the city’s downtown streets still bear the names of Hart’s kids: Julia, Laura and Ocean. That last one was for Ossian B. Hart, who went on to become Florida’s 10th governor in 1873.

The Hart is a truss bridge and the Historic Bridge Inventory lists its 1,088-foot span as the longest in Florida. The bridge’s total length is 3,844.3 feet (0.7 miles), but it feels a whole lot longer when you’re hot, tired, sweaty and in a footrace trying to get over the thing and cross the finish line before the beer truck runs dry.

Yes, the Hart Bridge can be a soul-destroying, lactic acid-producing painful experience, as any Gate River Run participant would agree.

Running legend Jay Birmingham was tasked with measuring the original 1978 River Run 15,000 course and when he arrived at the on-ramp of the Hart he was stopped by police and told he could not cross it on foot with his calibrated bicycle -- no way, no how. It was “against the law.” What a dilemma; if he couldn’t measure the bridge then the course would not be sanctioned. An unsanctioned race would never be anything more than a glorified fun run, and hopes of becoming a world-class race would go right down the drain. No half-decent athlete would come to town to compete in an unsanctioned race. Luckily, Birmingham worked for a local engineering firm that was involved in the building of the bridge and they owned detailed blueprints of the Hart. He was given accurate measurements to the millimeter. Problem solved, and the bridge was conquered -- at least on paper.

Some runners not only run over the Hart, they run with it, and wear it like a race bib. Carey Hepler has a somewhat smaller version of the Hart Bridge that he wears and carries with him throughout the race. It draws attention to not only him but also to his causes. For 14 years Hepler has collected used (I mean, gently worn) running shoes and unwanted T-shirts at the GRR expo. Last year he gathered 795 pairs

for the St. Francis Soup Kitchen and the Downtown Environmental Services Council. For the local nonprofit, Rethreaded, he amassed 2,300 T-shirts. That is almost as amazing as running 9.3 miles with a bridge dangling around your neck.

A quick word about the “other” bridge on the GRR course, the Main Street bridge; often called the “Blue Bridge.” Officially it is neither of those, it is the John T. Alsop Jr. Bridge. It opened in 1941 and in 1957 was named after Alsop, who was one of Jacksonville’s mayors. People delight with and marvel over the bridge’s nightlights that were added in 2005 when Jacksonville hosted the NFL Super Bowl. Its continuous truss vertical lift span (huh?) at the center is the longest in Florida. Think about that on March 11.

There you go, two “longest” bridge accolades all right there on one mighty racecourse. Never knew you had it so good, did you? Naturally, runners care nothing about any of this, they only know that one bridge is excruciatingly hard and the other one is a piece of cake.

Those of us who ran the original course recall that the Hart Bridge appeared about two miles from the finish line. A good location? Not really. It left a lot of work to do on very tired legs. I seem to recall those last miles were sheer drudgery (and I had much better legs then than I do now). I doubt very seriously that I would want to return to that scenario.

Theoretically, putting the Hart Bridge at the very beginning of the race would be an easy thing to do. Just turn the course around. Instead of going west we could run east and tackle the bridge well within the first mile. Our worst labor would be behind us and we could get on with the job at hand, establishing a steady, even pace until the end, which would be where the start is now. We could even get the other ugly, more miserable stuff – the Atlantic Boulevard – over with and have the delights of San Marco to look forward to. What a boost that would be! Our final obstacle would be the relatively puny Main Street bridge and afterward we could enjoy (?) a long finishing straight alongside the mighty St. Johns River just like in the old days when we strode down Coast

The 40th Anniversary Gate River Run



Line Drive. Someone will find something defective with this plan, but it sounds good to me.

Believe it or not, some people like the Hart Bridge. Richard Fannin told me that it was his favorite part of the course. Richard has been around since the beginning. He helped plot the original River Run course, has been a JTC Running member since the first “Boom,” and now serves as Gate River Run elite athlete coordinator, a very important and, I would think, painstaking job. But for years now Richard Fannin has been riding in the press vehicle, watching the race’s drama unfold in air-conditioned comfort. He doesn’t run the race; probably doesn’t even remember what the Hart Bridge is like on foot. Huh, some opinion that is. (I’m kidding, Richard.)

The Hart has been nice to some people. I remember in 1979, just before the second River Run took place, my friend Jerry Odlin came to town to stay with me and run the race. We were in the same “athletics club” (as they call them in England) in London. We went to a lot of races together and I got to watch him from behind disappearing into the horizon. Yeah, he was fast and I was slow, it was as simple as that. Anyway, I took him out for a drive around the course a couple of days prior to the race. As we drove over the Hart he remarked that it would be a good place to make a move and go in front. He did, and won the race thanks to an uphill breakaway. He has probably gone through life with a whole different opinion of the Hart.

Have to admit that despite my hatred for the Hart Bridge I tend to look at it these days in a different light. It has become a stress reliever; well ... sort of. You see, for some years now I have given up and decided that when the ascent of the Hart comes along

I’m going to walk. That means I have a walking recovery break of about half a mile. So now in some sort of perverse way I “look forward” to the Hart Bridge. Beaten and bowed, this old warrior accepts his defeat.

In the mid-1990s, while the Gator Bowl stadium was torn down and being rebuilt for the arrival of the Jacksonville Jaguars, the race’s starting line had to be relocated to the Southbank near where the two-mile point is today. This put the Hart much more in the middle of the race. In 1995, the same year when Todd Williams ran the course and American 15k record (42:22), I had a very good run. Mind you, I don’t think it was the position of the bridge that helped me, it was just that it was a time when I was in tip-top shape and I was due a good race. It’s a long way home when the bridge is so far away from the finish line. I don’t think it would suit the majority of today’s Gate River Run runners.

So ... considering everything, I think that having the Hart Bridge so near the end of the course is probably the best solution. The bridge is not going to disappear. And as much as we would all like to see it go, there is no way back except by going over, so we are just stuck with it – that big, green, intimidating beast.

The finish line area has been the place to experience the most changes in the course. I saw a report on the local news recently in which the mayor, Lenny Curry, suggested that the Hart Bridge’s exit ramp leading into downtown should be taken out – removed. He cited the incidence of traffic accidents and the dangerous curve in the down ramp. Removing the ramp would impact the GRR’s course once again. As I am sure you are aware, there is also an amphitheater being built in a section of the EverBank Stadium’s parking lot.

As the years unfold I am quite sure there will be other alterations to the Gate River Run’s course. However, I am also just as certain that it will remain what it has always been: One of the world’s finest racecourses.

Train your Biomechanics for the Gate River Run

What do you focus on when you run?

As you prepare for the Gate River Run, I urge you to focus much more attention on your running biomechanics. This is particularly important for the Gate River Run, because it is very difficult to maintain your biomechanics throughout the race. The 15K is tough. The race is quite long (9.3 miles!) yet the pace is not that far from the 5K. Throw in a couple bridges and you have quite a challenge!

So what biomechanics do we struggle with when fatigue sets in? There are four classics:

- 1) Lift the knee. When swinging the leg forward, it becomes very difficult to lift the knee to its highest point. You may have a strong urge to “kick” the foot forward instead of lifting the knee high.
- 2) Full arm swing. Similarly, rotating the torso and maintaining a full arm swing may become very difficult. As fatigue sets in, it becomes tempting to run with less torso rotation. It is also tempting to find a “new” arm swing path that feels “refreshing” or “easier.” For example, you may “drop your hands” and run with straighter arms. Or, you may bend your elbows more, and begin to “shrug” your shoulders to help swing your arms.
- 3) Maintain athletic “bounce.” Typically, at the beginning of a run, we have a nice “athletic bounce.” The foot lands, you feel your leg muscles load and then unload quickly. Your leg feels like a “pogo stick”. Then, when fatigue sets in, the pogo stick feeling begins to go away, and you no longer feel young and athletic! Your foot feels like it is in contact with the ground for a long time.
- 4) Maintain high cadence. When you first start running, your legs may feel like they are “running themselves,” with very high turnover, and it is easy and natural for you to maintain a high cadence. Then, as fatigue sets in, your “hip flexors” may start to tire, it may become very difficult to maintain a high cadence. Your legs no longer run themselves, and with each step, you must focus on lifting your hip to drive your leg forward. It becomes exhausting.

Most of us have probably seen race photos (of ourselves) where we are obviously suffering from a “mechanical breakdown.” Those photos make us chuckle as we have a painful look on our face and our mechanics look “goofy!” When fatigue defeats us, we may adopt a sort of modified “speed-walk” or “shuffle.” Or, we slow our cadence way down, and our knee bend becomes very deep. It feels like we are doing lunges at the gym. In this scenario, our cadence drops from 90 steps per minute to what feels like 30 steps per minute!

How to avoid a mechanical breakdown

The key to avoiding/eliminating mechanical breakdown is practice! This year, for the Gate River Run, I urge you to commit to establishing and using “sound biomechanics” during every step of training. This could have a profound effect on your race experience and performance.

If you are like most runners, at least half of your miles are completed at an “easier” pace. Most runners relax and “turn off” their brain during these runs. This year, I urge you to try something new: focus on using “elite biomechanics” during your easy runs.

Focus during your easy runs!

Have you ever seen an elite runner run super-slow miles? Imagine an elite runner at a 9-minute pace. Interestingly, they still look fast and lively. No matter the pace, the elite runner keeps their feet moving (high cadence) and maintain an athletic bounce. Their foot always lands below their body with their leg in a strong position. Their arm swing and torso rotation remains active.

In contrast, most recreational runners use a different approach during their “slow miles.” When running slow, most recreational runners “turn off” their focus and pay little attention to their mechanics.

Consequently, during slow runs, most runners use “non-elite” mechanics. Essentially, the runner’s mechanics tend to become a bit “lazy.” The runner stops making an effort to “lift the knees” and “swing the arms.” The runner appears “rigid” and the cadence is slow. The athletic bounce disappears.

The bottom line is that most recreational runners have two sets of running mechanics (slow and fast) and elite runners do not.

Simple Training Approaches

This year, try running with “elite biomechanics” for every step of training. At first, it may be a bit difficult for you to maintain a knee lift, active arm swing, high cadence and athletic bounce on your easier runs. If you sense fatigue, there are two options to try:

- 1) Walk/run. If you sense fatigue, try running half a mile with excellent biomechanics and then walk for a minute. Repeat until you hit your target miles for the day. Over the next 4-5 weeks you could gradually cut the 1-minute rest down (and/or increase the distance run between rests).
- 2) Slow down! The other option is to slow down further, until the fatigue goes away. Run as slow as necessary (for your legs to feel comfortable running with elite biomechanics). Over the next 4-5 weeks you can gradually increase your running speed as you become accustomed to running with elite biomechanics during your slower runs.

The Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal is to have one set of running mechanics that you use. You should always look similar, no matter the pace. You should always lift your knees, swing your arms, maintain an athletic bounce, and maintain a high cadence. When you run slow, it will simply be a scaled-down version of your racing mechanics. When you run slow, you simply will not stride as far. If you do this, your legs will develop new resiliency, and the ability to maintain a high cadence and athletic bounce (in training runs and races).

The Last Gasp 2016

“The Gate River Run may be JTC Running’s main event but it’s for the ‘world.’ The Last Gasp is for the old-time dedicated members.” Everett Crum, longtime club member.

The race was over, the crowd was gone, and as I walked part of the course looking for directional cones and signs, it was all very quiet. One might even say eerily so. Just me and my thoughts, as I reflected on a race that had now been run 40 times. It is hard to imagine that something like a race could become such a part of one’s life. But for me, The Last Gasp is undeniably that.

Was I alone? I walked with shadows as the light dimmed and shadows fell over a racecourse that long-gone runners had departed years before and yet were somehow still there. It felt uncanny. There was a weird feeling in the solitude of the vacant field. The sensation was one of ghosts. Do you believe in ghosts? I’m not sure that I do. Like a lot of things, I cannot discount the possibility and yet I can’t exactly call myself a card-carrying believer either.

I thought about the races gone by and some of the people, too. Rodney Smith though was in attendance, finishing his 40th one. Yes, he was on hand for The Last Gasp when it was originally staged in 1977. Jay Birmingham ran this year. Jay was only 31 years old when he first laced up his spikes to take on the grass and hills of Jacksonville University’s campus. The race was 5¼ miles long back then. Chicken feed to a man who would soon run across the entire United States with only a pack on his back.

Naturally, I thought of my father, Norman, who helped me found the race. He died in 1991, and loved cross-country, too. We would often do training runs on the JU campus and I thought it was such a nice place to run that we should organize a race and share the place with our fellow runners. For Jacksonville, JU offered something unique. It still does. The course has character: Hills, grass, trails, dirt. Sure, it’s a slow course, but a challenging and interesting one.

My old friend from London, Jerry Odlin, who was a freshman at Murray State University, was staying with us for Christmas. He got a “full ride” to run cross-country and track there. Jerry had no trouble winning the inaugural event. He won the second one as well. Buck Fannin, race director of the first two River Run 15,000 races, was suitably impressed and had Jerry join the field for the 1979 River Run. Jerry won that one as well.

Before there were so many races around the area The Last Gasp was one that local runners keyed in on. The competition was cutthroat. We gave out special awards to the top 20 overall and if you won one of those it was a real accomplishment. In the revised 5-mile course, which stood for many years, you’d have to run sub-29 minutes to collect a top-20 prize.

This year, The Last Gasp was a true last gasp.



It was as it was originally intended to be, the final race of the year. Held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 31, the 5k cross-country event gave 2016 an ultimate goodbye. At 1:30, a well-attended kids free one-mile fun run took place. We hope that those youngsters will develop a love and appreciation for cross-country that will ensure the sport’s future.

The day could hardly have been more agreeable. The temperature was near perfect, the humidity virtually nonexistent and the course dry and relatively firm. Concerns about the northern end of the course, where a future seniors center is being built, did not materialize. A slight modification to the route was easily accomplished and no one noticed the difference.

When the race began, the runners circled what used to be a 9-hole golf course but is now an open grass field. Most were JTC Running members and many were running the race for the first time. New blood; that’s good, and is exactly what we wanted. Although The Last Gasp might be for the “old-time dedicated members,” as Everett said, we hope that some of these newbies one day will be more of the same.

Was it the retro entry fee of \$4 that brought them out, or the race’s mystique? Was it the custom sweatshirt or the

The Last Gasp 2016



post-race New Year's Eve party? Who knows. We can just be thankful for what turned out to be the best attendance

in years. The early registration was 255 with another 26 signups on race day. Not all the 255 showed up but 245 finished the race (131 men and 114 women). Good news for the race, and shows that it is getting back where it should be.

For the 29th consecutive time, race director Herb Taskett did a fine job of making it all come off just right. Another comment from Everett Crum was: "If you get the chance, tell Herb and the gang that I for one think they do a great job with the event and I still appreciate their work."

Chance taken, and another successful edition of The Last Gasp goes in the history book, ghosts and all.

The Starting Line / Doug Alred

Running Projects/Trail Improvements

JTC Running is always looking for running related projects to pursue. My job as the Chairman of the Vision and Planning Committee is to try to find those projects. We are currently working on trail improvements to Tomahawk Park, which is located on Ardo Road off San Clerc Road north of the intersection of San Jose Boulevard and Baymeadows Road. This is a passive park with a nice one-mile loop through a wooded area that crosses two bridges at the north head of Goodbys Creek. I started running in this park in 1981 soon after the City of Jacksonville converted Camp Tomahawk into a park. Camp Tomahawk was a summer day camp, which was established in the latter 1950s.

Over the years, roots along the path had become exposed due to wear and tear and natural erosion. The wooden bridge located at the north end of the park had deteriorated and become unsafe to cross. The trail was overgrown in sections and needed to be trimmed back to expose the natural beauty of the route. JTC Running decided that this unique setting needed our attention. The Club's Board Members voted in early 2016 to fund improvements to the trail system. As it normally goes when dealing with government, things moved slowly, but I am very happy to report that the improvements have started and we hope to have the trail and bridge in tip-top shape in early 2017. The trail has been cut back, giving needed room for running and crushed coquina shell



is being placed over the roots to eliminate possible trip hazards. We have a contract in place to replace the bridge and also one boardwalk over a wet area. Once completed, this will be a wonderful place for a short run or just a relaxing walk though the woods in the middle of a heavily populated area.

Our plan is to have a JTC Running social at the park as soon as all improvements are in place. A picnic would be perfect since this park has picnic tables, water fountain, and restrooms. The park also features a kids playground and a canoe or kayak launch. Watch for our official announcement coming soon.

Doug Alred



Big Time Fun at the Smaller Races

Bob Fernee asked me to write an article about my top 10 race choices, with an emphasis on the smaller races. I guess he figured since I have run a total of 207 races since I ran my first race in February 2012, I'd have a good selection to choose from. They have included road races on asphalt and concrete, cross country, trails and track. And maybe he recalled that I keep a logbook of all my races since Jeff Galloway recommended doing so after I was amazed that I finished my first race upright and not last.

Bob asked for my top 10 but I'm not that fond of math so, following his suggested opening statement of "The blue ribbon events are everybody's favorites. Races like the Gate River Run, the Breast Cancer weekend, the half-marathons, Marine Corps and Thanksgiving Day. But what about some of the smaller, maybe lesser-known, races? There are some truly wonderful races and they are great for a lot of different reasons. These are the unsung heroes of the local scene." Here goes.....

Let me start with a recent race that I have run four times, the Guana 12K Trail Race. It is run along with a 25K relay and a 50K on some challenging terrain at The GNERR. It had been run in October but when I first ran it they had changed the date to early December because October proved to be too wet a month. Even then, there were a couple of muddy areas that seemed normal for a trail race and helped make it interesting. Some of the other first-timers that year seemed intimidated by the trails and some even fell along the way, but I'm in the woods most every day and relished the opportunity to take in the natural beauty of the location. To be honest, I did take note of the quantity of hickory nuts on the ground and made a point to keep them in mind during my run.

This race provides a high-quality long-sleeve technical shirt as part of the race packet, a good-looking medal as you cross the finish line and the after party is like no other. It's held in the upstairs private dining area at the Reef Restaurant in nearby Vilano Beach with good food and beverages. Every participant attending the after party receives a special pint glass. I've been lucky enough to win in my age group each of the four years and received a standing plaque for doing so. This year I was the oldest woman to run the 12K and the last runner in but you wouldn't have known that from the camaraderie extended to me at the after party. The JTC race director, Mark Ryan, and his crew provide lots of support and it is a race I look forward to during the first

days of December.

During the last days of December is another favorite race, also put on by JTC. It's the Last Gasp 5K cross country race held on the grounds of Jacksonville University. Who knew there were hills at JU? It's a fun race nonetheless, and always a reasonable entry fee for JTC members and the after party has hot pizza and cold beverages and is full of lively conversations as the year comes to a close. The Last Gasp provides sweatshirts for all participants who register early and those shirts have no advertisements on the back, something rarely seen these days.

Something new to me this year, but will continue to be on my race calendar, is the JTC Track series. The big draw is that these races are FREE to JTC members!! You just show up and then decide which distances you want to run when each is called. I really enjoyed the fact that participants of all ages attended, from the little ones to the seniors and all ages in between. Some were really serious with their racing flats and spikes, using the blocks provided and others were more casual, so I fit right in running three heats on each of the two dates I attended. At both of those events coaches and their youth teams took advantage of a chance to compete at these professionally timed events. I especially loved it when a 14-year-old young lady felt comfortable explaining to me what I needed to do to run a better 200-meter race the next time. Extra nice was that I came away with medals each time because I was the oldest woman for each of the distances I ran.

Another surprise in 2016 was a new race, the Rotary 501, a 5K at Moosehaven in Orange Park with a course along the St. Johns River. It was held in conjunction with a craft fair and an auto show with some pretty cool vintage cars and trucks, giving you lots to view while doing your post-race cooldown. I have to tell you my favorite part; what was advertised as a free pancake breakfast for race participants proved to be an indoor, sit-down, full breakfast of pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, grits, toast, hash browns, sweet rolls, fruit, coffee and chocolate milk! Plentiful food and tasty!!

Using the same River Road is the Florida Striders Run to the Sun 8K. A beautiful course and an uncommon distance, this race is a real family-friendly event and is part of the Grand Prix series. Last year I ended up running every race in the 2015/16 Grand Prix series, but this one was special because of the high number of children

Big Time Fun at the Smaller Races

given the opportunity to run a Fun Mile free. It's heartwarming to see the young ones so excited about running!

A great 5K that also offers something wonderful is the Kiliwin's 5K. Though the course is run through the streets of the St. Johns Town Center, the after party includes all the Kilwin's ice cream you can eat before they pack up. Since it's in March, the ice cream stays cold and believe me, I can eat a quantity of ice cream before it's time to go home! As a side note, this race supports a great cause, the Clarke Schools for children with hearing impediments. I'm proud to say I'm a stalker for this race.

There are a vast number of races within driving distance of Jacksonville, but one that I really liked was an 8-hour drive away, in the North Carolina forest, a 6K Race to Sustainability trail race. It was a real challenge and I ran it with my first-born daughter, Erin, on her birthday. I was so far behind, I missed the first turn and had to double back and came in last after my daughter backtracked to find me. Still, I went back and raced it again the next year. The race director (and author), Mike Jones, worked hard to have the race reflect its name in promoting environmental sustainability and managed to have hot gourmet shrimp and grits served to all participants right there in the forest post-race. Unfortunately, like many of the smaller races, it is no longer, due to lack of support. It takes a lot of effort, time and money to put on the smaller races, just like the big events, but there are more repercussions if runners don't sign up and participate.

One of my favorites that you don't have to drive as far to get to is the Florida Striders annual Hog Jog 5K. It's held in Green Cove Springs at the Ronnie Van Zant Park, in November. Another family-friendly event, the course is a double loop that takes you through a sand patch where you can view Gopher Tortoise burrows nearby, an area with some tree roots, a patch where there will be mud if we've had recent rains and around a duck pond. The advantage at this race is that once you've done the loop, you know where your personal challenges are and can plan accordingly for the second loop. There is a BBQ meal post-race on site for all participants. This year Bob Fernee was the race director and he added the treat of a live bluegrass band that played during the event. I found myself pacing to the sounds of "Rocky Top" echoing in

the air. It was a real delight.

Another race that is less than an hour away is the Cottonmouth Quarter Marathon, in Elkton, Florida. It is a unique distance and has a 5K component as well. I would never have known about this race had it not been for the fact that my running friend, David Townsend, was bitten by a cottonmouth last year. He found out about this race that was being held for the first time and a bunch of us signed up to run it. The event is staged at a working farm, has a petting area with farm animals, some in miniature form and includes some ancient live oaks in the back turnaround area. It benefits the 4H programs for youth, always a good cause. The friendliness of the people involved brought me back to run it again this year.

My most favorite of all time for any race, small or large, is the Florida Striders Angry Tortoise 25K/50K held at Cary State Forest. I love being in the woods, taking in the fresh air and ever-changing sights. When I saw that the Striders were organizing a new 25K trail race and it was being run for the first time on the day after my 62nd birthday and was limited to seventy-five runners, and knowing that even though I've run 18 half marathons I'd NEVER be running a full marathon, I challenged myself to make 25K my top distance. I even bought an annual pass for Florida's State Forests so I could run the course a few times to prepare. You don't need an annual pass, it's only \$2 a day to go there but the pass comes at a discounted price for veterans and supports the forests year round so I felt it was a good investment.

The course for this race is 100 percent dirt forest service roads and provides an awesome support station at the hub of the three areas during the race. After the first year, the 50K was added, by having runners do the course twice, giving everyone eight hours to finish and allowing a maximum of 150 participants. All proceeds support the Florida Striders Children's Running Program. There are no age group awards for this race, but all participants get a personal apple pie, long-sleeve shirt and a unique coffee mug. And, if you are last like I was last year, you get a sandbag award of a ceramic stein. Race director Charlie Sauter-Hunsberger has done such a fine job with this race; in 2017 there is the added component in that the 2017 Angry Tortoise has been selected as the State MUT (mountain ultra trail) Championship! I am proud to be a stalker for this race!!

Big Time Fun at the Smaller Races

I am fond of the major races; the Gate River Run was the second race of my life and I look forward to running it for a sixth time in 2017, mostly because my daughter is coming down from North Carolina to run it for her first time, and I've run all those half marathons and a slew of Grand Prix races, and distances from 50 meters to 25K, but the smaller races are indeed "big-time fun" and there's good food to be had (yes, ice cream is a legitimate food). Reading what I've written, it seems food is a factor in my choices. I can do without a race shirt and finisher medal

... just provide me with some food and drink before I have to head home.

Everyone has an opinion of what races are their favorites and not everyone would agree with their choices. You might not agree my mine. The main thing is that we are taking advantage of the opportunity to be outdoors, with friends old and new, doing an activity that is good for body and soul. I just hope to finish my races upright and with a kick! I wish the same success for all of you!

Mark your Calendar!



40th Anniversary

THE GATE RIVER RUN 15k

JTC Running's Greatest Race

Use Code: jtc2 for members' discount

March 11, 2016 8:30 AM

5k, Junior River Run & Diaper Dash

Enter Now at [1st Place Sports.com](http://1stPlaceSports.com)

Mark your Calendar!



Track Is Coming Back!

JTC Running's Track Series 2017

May 13, May 27, June 10, July 8, July 29

Free to all club members

More information coming

A CORRECTION

Sometimes even our newsletter makes a mistake. Last issue I said Jay Birmingham created the Western States Ultra.

He said he didn't. But what I meant to say was that he created the Badwater Ultra. Nope, he admitted, not that one either. I can say this with assuredness: Jay created Jacksonville's first marathon, the Phidippides Marathon. At least I am right about something.

Foam Roller

I often joke that if you are a runner, you have tried to cure anything from ITB syndrome to the flu with your foam roller. Foam rolls are almost as common as running shoes among runners. With all the foam rolling that is being done, you must ask the question, “what does foam rolling even do?” There will be no shortage of answers and opinions to that question, but cursory answers and personal opinions should not be sufficient to trust the health of your body to a foam roll.

To answer that question, well, we have to go to the research. The problem with that is that the research is conflicting. My hope for this brief article is to give a summary of the best evidence on the physiologic effects of foam rolling, and to provide practical applications of how to best use your foam roll.

Foam rolling does improve flexibility and range of motion of the specific muscles treated, at least in the short term. Foam rolling prior to stretching may also improve flexibility gains more than stretching by itself. These improvements likely occur because foam rolling increases the body’s stretch tolerance as well as improving arterial stiffness.

Foam rolling also helps improve symptoms of post-workout soreness. This is likely from a neuro-physiologic response causing improved pain pressure thresholds post foam rolling. There is also an increase in blood flow to the muscles that are foam-rolled which may help flush out metabolite buildup from your workout.

There is some evidence that suggests 20 minutes of full body foam rolling pre-activity added to a dynamic warmup helps improve athletic performance. This improvement may be related to the increase in blood flow to muscles from the foam roll warmup. However, it may just be the response of a more prolonged warmup. We do know that good dynamic warmups improve performance, and foam rolling may just be another mode to accomplish that same warmup effect.

Given these physiologic effects and the body’s response to foam rolling, here is my practical take-home use of foam rolls.



You can use your foam roll as part of a dynamic warmup prior to exercise to improve blood flow and improve tissue flexibility, and possibly improve performance.

For these effects to occur, the research suggests 20 minutes of global (multiple muscles of upper and lower body) foam rolling.

To improve an individual muscle’s flexibility, foam rolling should be done multiple times per week and for 2-3 sets of 1 minute for every muscle that you want to improve in flexibility. This does not need to be done post workout, but performing your foam rolling during that window of time may also be able to lessen your post workout soreness.

Now that we have gone through some of the effects and benefits of foam rolling, it is just as important to state what should not be done. The biggest mistake we see is foam rolling being performed over injured and inflamed soft tissue. Not only is this of no help, it is detrimental. I liken it to the analogy of trying to fix a headache by repeatedly hitting your head into the wall. Most sane people would never do this, but that is exactly the same mistake runners make when they foam roll inflamed soft tissues.

I hope that this article was able help bring to light the physiologic effects of foam rolling, and provide some practical applications to get the most out of your foam rolling

Mark Baughman PT, ATC, OCS

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Gate River Run Preparation: The Importance of Mileage and Long Runs

We are fortunate to have many amazing and hard-working runners in Jax. In this article we feature five of our local elite runners (and share some of their strategies for the Gate Run). We focus primarily on their long runs and mileage.

Introduction to Mileage/Long Runs

Professional/Olympic runners train several hours per day and run 100+ miles per week! Most of our “local elites” run 50-80 miles per week. High volume training is used because it works very well. Most recreational runners could benefit tremendously from increasing their mileage. Of course, you must be careful and increase your mileage/intensity gradually. The general guideline in kinesiology is the “10% Rule” (weekly increases in mileage/intensity should not exceed 10%).

So why are high volumes of running and long runs so effective? It can dramatically improve your aerobic capacity and running economy.¹ Think of aerobic capacity as the maximal oxygen a runner can consume. Distance running is aerobic in nature. Even for shorter distances, such as the 1-mile race, 80% of your energy will be produced aerobically.² This means that 80% of the energy generated is provided by the slow and steady aerobic system, as opposed to the readily available, powerful anaerobic system.² For

this reason, aerobic capacity is typically thought of as the foundation of a runner’s fitness. And the best way to boost the aerobic system is to use it a lot (high volumes of slower aerobic running). Elite runners build a strong foundation of high mileage (over several months) and then use their “secret workouts” to fine-tune their physiology and biomechanics (to become more “economic”).

Long runs are training runs (typically at a “comfortable” pace) which far exceed the duration of typical sessions. The goal is to “stress” the body’s endurance. Regularly completing long runs can help runners become very efficient/economic, like a fuel-efficient car. Even elite runners, who compete in shorter distance events, like the 800m and/or mile, complete long runs, and sometimes run as much as 100 miles per week during certain training phases.

Typical long-run lengths for “serious” runners are approximately: 12 miles for the 5K, 16 miles for the 15K (Gate run), and 20 miles for the marathon. For recreational runners, establishing and completing one longer run per week can pay great dividends, especially for a longer race like the Gate River Run!

Next, are some training preferences/tips graciously shared by five of our local elites:

My Training for Gate

“I typically train for longer distance races, but I am excited to focus on shorter events this spring. A favorite workout of mine is a 20-25-minute tempo followed by 4-6x 1-minute on/ 1-minute off intervals. My coach will have me do this workout on hills (or bridges in Florida) to simulate hillier courses and practice running on undulating surfaces. This is a good workout to prepare for Gate because it taps into a variety of different stimuli that you’ll see on the 15k course.”

Long Run and Mileage Tips

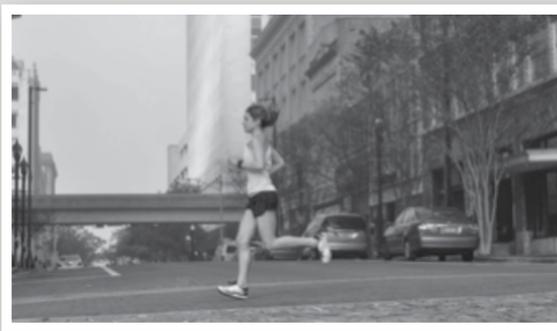
“Most of my long runs this season are progressive runs. I will run 2/3 of the run at an easy effort mainly for time on feet. The last 1/3 of run is where I am

Carley Glasser

Full-time teacher. Full-time marathon runner.

Avg. Weekly Running Mileage: 70-90

2:56 marathon PR (2016 CIM) w/ aspirations of qualifying for the 2020 Olympic trials with a 2:45 marathon.



Gate River Run Preparation: The Importance of Mileage and Long Runs

allowed to start picking it up and do what comes naturally. I tend to be a high mileage runner. My coach's philosophy, which has turned into my philosophy, is that easy days should be easy and hard days should be hard. Slowing down my easy runs has taken lots of practice, but it has helped me run stronger in my workouts.”

What I Have Learned

“Over the course of the past 4 years that I have been working with my coach, I have learned to listen to my body better and enjoy the process. Not every workout or run will be a homerun, but if you trust in the training cycle and yourself, you will be prepared on race day.”

My Training for Gate

“Coming off winter distance races I like to get in faster, shorter races like 5k's and 10k's. For speed work I like to do 800 meter repeats with 800 jog recovery. I'll try to run the repeats at my 5k pace. Early season I might start with 8 repeats and work up to 12 later on. This workout is good for developing and maintaining it later into the 15k.”

Long Run and Mileage Tips

“I don't rely heavily on individual long runs. I don't often run longer than 18 mi even during marathon training. I feel that overall volume is more important and leaves you less prone to developing injuries. I'll do tempo or progressive runs when I feel fresh, but I don't typically force speed work when I'm tired. About 80% of my running is done at a very easy pace. Less than 10% at high intensity. I also train for

triathlons year round, which helps maintain balance and general fitness, again reducing the risk of injury. I can do a high intensity swim session and then do an easy run later the same day.”

What I Have Learned

“The key thing is to always build slowly. You can maintain a higher volume with fewer issues if you get there slowly. Beware of any and all changes to your runs, whether it's running terrain, shoes, etc. Also, there's a point of diminishing returns. I've run faster marathons while running 75 miles a week compared to 100 miles. You don't need all of your runs to be blazing fast, but you should make your speed work and race efforts count. I've also had much better results in distance races when I hit the weight room once a week. The weight training helps again with muscle imbalances and injury prevention.”

Justin Jacobs

Top local triathlete and runner for over a decade.

Avg. Weekly Running Mileage: 75-85

2:30 at the 2016 Jacksonville Marathon a few weeks after suffering a calf strain.



Gate River Run Preparation: The Importance of Mileage and Long Runs

My Training for Gate

“6x 1mile and 10x 800m are my favorite sharpening workouts for distance racing. Prior to sharpening, tempo intervals, fartleks, and progression runs teach my legs to run faster when tired. When there are bridges in a race there are bridges in my training. Acosta bridge 5-6x 2min, jog back down recovery (unlike track intervals, not even the first one feels easy).”

Long Run and Mileage Tips

“Long run intensity should vary as much as the training plan stages or mesocycles. Low intensity half the time and the other half mix in some Tempo to build mental toughness and strength for the late stages of a long race. The aerobic development of mixing high volume with moderate intensity should allow you to handle high intensity later in training and racing. That being said, 2-3 "workouts" (including long run) at moderate-to-high intensity every 7-10 days is more than enough for most. When in doubt error on the lesser side. Everything else is low intensity.”

What I Have Learned

“The optimal weekly mileage distance varies as much as there are runners. Everyone has different physical training responses to the stresses of running. However, long runs are designed to increase muscle glycogen storage and resistance to running-related muscle damage as well as make fat-burning more efficient. Therefore, it's a little personal trial and error to find the sweet spot of total weekly mileage and longest run. That's half the battle and half the fun.”

Kristopher Shold

Father/Husband, Pilot, Runner. In that order...

Avg. Weekly Running Mileage: 70-85

2:41 at the 2016 NYC Marathon in brutal conditions. Looking for redemption.



Ryan Sloan

1st Place Sports employee. The word “everyman” personified.

Avg. Weekly Running Mileage: 75-95

2:38 marathon PR at the 2016 Jacksonville Marathon running 1:20/1:18 half-marathon splits



My Training for Gate

“The workout that I distinctly recall running before posting my best River Run time was a 2x2mi w/800m jog recovery (on the track). Every lap I had to speed up then slow down by ~5 seconds (i.e. run 80s/75s alternating laps).”

Long Run and Mileage Tips

“I tend to feel that a good structured long run includes a gradual build into high(er) intensity. If you're running 15 miles, do the first 10 relaxed then hit the last 5 hard. Long runs flux based on what I'm training for. On a weekly basis I just run how I feel. Feel good one day, run hard...feel crummy the next, run relaxed. Barely any of my weekly mileage is faster

Gate River Run Preparation: The Importance of Mileage and Long Runs

than race pace. I'd categorize it as medium/moderate intensity. My goal for 2017 is to do at least one dedicated workout per week."

What I Have Learned

"Everyone functions differently. Some runners are amazing with low to moderate weekly mileage. I find I function best with maintaining higher mileage throughout my training. My biggest pet peeve is the concept of the 20mi long run during marathon training. I say don't do it, either run lower mileage and hit it with intensity, or run 22mi and power through. If everyone says "you hit the wall at 20mi" then I say...why run a 20mi long run when it just trains you to stop at the "wall"? Go through that mythical wall. You'll find yourself during your training. Listen to your body."

Julie Stackhouse

Head coach at Stacked Fitness, coaching runners of varying levels. Top female runner from Florida in the 2016 Gate River Run.

Avg. Weekly Running Mileage: 60-80

1:16 half-marathon and sub 17:00 5k in 2016



Long Run and Mileage Tips

"Gate is not a 5k, so you really can't just will yourself through it without proper training (you CAN, but your experience won't be as pleasurable). For many runners, breaking the 1:00 time barrier is the goal, but for a large majority of others, successfully completing the race will involve more than an hour of running which means a long run is important.

The key is that you really need to start doing those long runs now – add on a mile each week (up to race distance or even one mile over), then drop it back after four weeks, then start a build-up again following the same pattern in February. You'll be able to drop it back the first week in March and do a mini-taper going into the race, feeling confident and prepared to race your best."

Written by: Jordon Garman

Graduate Assistant for the JU Running Biomechanics Laboratory / 1st Place Sports employee

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2. P. B. Gastin. Energy system interaction and relative contribution during maximal exercise. *Sports Med.* 2001; 31(10): 725–741.

Walk 3 miles in their shoes

Having attained my lone running objective of the fall, a sub-30-minute 5K for seeding in the Gate River Run, there seemed no reason to rise early on Saturdays for any more races. But when an entry in McKenzie's Run presented itself, I decided to undertake a completely different challenge.

See how they walk.

Walkers are becoming a bigger and bigger presence in road races, race fast becoming an obsolete term to describe the organized events for which we pay an entry fee and receive a T-shirt and some exercise. Walkers far outnumbered runners at the little fundraising 5K that my high school class in Ohio launched last summer. Three of us from the Class of 1971 ran it, but 10 others got out there and walked, not to mention their spouses, children and friends.

They expended the same amount of cash, and probably the same amount of energy. And they spent more time doing it.

More than one elite marathoner has been known to say that the people they really admire are those who take four or five hours to go the distance. They, and most of us, don't have the patience to stay the course.

McKenzie's Run on Nov. 19 fell, as it were, between a pair of headfirst dives into the pavement by this shuffling runner, leaving both knees and both palms scraped and bloody, one ego bruised and time for some soul-searching: Was the time when the benefits of walking outweigh the vulnerabilities of running arriving sooner rather than later?

In charity walks, there's little temptation to start running. But in an event that calls itself a run, could I stay true to the pledge to walk the whole 3.1 miles? And how would I feel about it afterward?

I remembered what JTC Running Vice President Larry Sassa said after leading a group through Jeff Galloway's approach to training for the Marine Corps Marathon. The objective was to walk for one minute at the end of every mile through the first 18 miles of the marathon, then try to run the rest of the way. Larry said he finished feeling as if he could have run 18 minutes faster.

If you allot upward of an hour to accomplish something, such as walking 3.1 miles, then you're less inclined to fret over the notion that you could have finished in half that

time if you'd only run. McKenzie's Run fell on a beautiful fall morning: sunny, cool, the sort of day that compels you to keep enjoying what you're doing, not get it over with. There were plenty of walkers, ahead and behind, and that little incline on Newnan Street, turning north off Bay (around the 1-mile mark of the Gate River Run) didn't seem so bad.

There was no inclination to start running. A few people jogged by, then slowed to a walk without getting out of view. The pleasant jaunt took 47 minutes, 30 seconds, a pace of a little more than 15 minutes a mile. And if you're finishing inside EverBank Field, you can watch yourself on the big video board (strictly for stride analysis, of course) a little longer.

Walking a 5K, at least after running so many of them but not so many miles anymore, leaves you feeling less gimpy and willing to do something else with the rest of the day. I did feel a little shin pain over the next few days, suggesting that yes, walking can be strenuous exercise, too.

There is nothing wrong with walking. My mother was a vigorous walker, and it must have been part of the reason she lived to within 32 days of 98 full years. In her late 70s, she walked 4 miles over the old Sunshine Skyway in St. Petersburg in an event before it was torn down, and 5K in this club's former Women's Run (66 minutes).

JTC Running President Larry Roberts, a runner for 15 years, has been a walker for 10 and says he walks more miles than he ever ran, though freely admitting retirement affords him the time. He says he entered his orthopedist's office a runner and exited a walker after being told further running would risk serious damage to his lower back.

Denise Metzgar, rehabbing from injury, posted recently on Facebook that she had just signed up to walk the Gate River Run, but "I may throw some 2-minute runs in there along the way."

I hope my run intervals will be a little longer than that come March 11, but I understand that a day will come when finishing the Gate River Run will mean a little running on a 15K walk. Maybe I'm a little better prepared now, too.

There's nothing wrong with walking.

Ledmangary99@gmail.com

TRES AMIGOS

On December 31, 2016, Rodney Smith, Bob Fernee, and Jay Birmingham completed The Last Gasp, the track club's annual cross country race on the rolling campus of Jacksonville University. Norman Fernee, Bob's father, spearheaded the race's genesis and laid out a two-lap, five-mile course, about half-a-mile from his home in Arlington. I suspect that Rodney and Bob (and especially myself) are glad the current race distance has been carved down to 5,000 meters.

Rodney Smith has run every edition of The Last Gasp since its inception, 40 races without a miss. Bob Fernee is a River Run "Streaker," and in March, will toe the line of the Jacksonville classic for the 40th time. It was my 14th time in the Gasp, moving it to third place among events I've run multiple times.

We've been friends for a long time, Bob, Rodney, and I. I met Rodney in 1975 during a March of Dimes 20-mile charity run, where we were the first two to finish. In 1978, both Rodney and Bob came to work for me at the Phidippides Running Center in Arlington. We trained together, raced together, and ate a lot of spaghetti together after our Wednesday night fun runs.

As old runners sometimes do, I have been compiling a history of my racing since its beginning in 1958. From 1974 to the current day, Rodney Smith and Bob Fernee's names appear often in race results. I hope the three of us can keep crossing the finish line together many more times.

There is one event, however, where we were more than friends running together; we were teammates.

The event was a 24-hour Relay, held in Palatka, May 19 and 20, 1979. The format was simple: teams of up to ten runners would run one mile, then pass a baton to their next teammate. Once a runner missed a turn, he was out for good, so there was no rest for the weary. The Palatka cinder track was 440 yards, a true quarter mile.

Our Phidippides team included two local standouts, George Burns and Frank Jones. Bob was clearly our third fastest man. Mark Dorion, Bates College runner and Episcopal HS grad, was our 4th man, and in top form. Rodney would run 5th, and I in 6th.

My son, Bob Reardean was only a ninth-grader at Episcopal, but had run the Pikes Peak Marathon and a 40-mile road race. I knew he had the endurance.

David Douglas, Scott Owen, and John Thrush were recruited to complete our ten-man group.

Our goal was to average six-minute miles. A tally of 240 miles would get us on the list in Runner's World magazine. And of course, we hoped to be competitive with the juggernaut from 1st Place Sports. Among their stars were Mike Wachholz, William Sullivan, Doug Alred, and Bob Beaudreau.

The grassy infield of the Palatka HS track was covered with tents from nearly a dozen teams. John Thrush whittled a branch from a trackside shrub into a baton and we were ready to go at 8:00 a.m.

Burns and Jones got us off to a blistering start, cranking out miles

under 4:40. Fernee was in great form and cracked 4:45, followed by sub-5:00s from Dorion and Smith. Our second five lacked the legspeed of our stars, but we all had marathon credentials, so paced ourselves for the long haul.

Wachholz, Alred, and company soon pulled away, running under fifty minutes for the first ten miles, and extended their lead throughout the afternoon and evening. We were game, but outclassed.

After midnight, things turned grim for nearly everyone. The dimly-lit track was mostly quiet. Some teams were taking long breaks and some runners had packed it in, leaving their teams short-handed. Only two teams were still racing: Phidippides and 1st Place Sports.

Bob Fernee had fallen into an alarming pattern. He would finish his mile, return to the tent, and then fall asleep. Our routine was to get a runner on his feet two men before his turn, so when George Burns was running, we'd rouse Bob, then have him loosening up while Frank Jones barreled around the track. It was no use. Bob refused to rise until Jones was on his final lap.

Somehow, he transformed from zombie to Ferrari, put in his four laps well under six-minutes, then crashed again in the team tent.

Still hopeful of victory, despite being 16 laps behind, we realized that around 2:00 a.m., our rivals (now running with nine men) would field their fastest four at the same time as our slowest--Reardean, Douglas, Owens, and Thrush.

Wachholz took the baton and 15-year old Bobby Reardean chased him up the track. For the first time in 17 hours, we didn't lose any ground. Then Douglas, Owens, and Thrush repeated the feat. Burns snatched the baton from Thrush with gusto and dropped in another sub-5:00-minute mile, despite the fatigue of 20 previous miles over the past 18 hours.

Phidippides gained back a lap, then Jones did the same, then Weary Bob added a third outstanding mile in a row. By four o'clock, the 16-lap lead had been erased, and we started pulling away, no longer with fast miles, but by attrition: some of their stars had gone home.

The sun rose, we dragged our guys through the final few miles, and savored the achievement: We had amassed 262 miles, 1413 yards, a team average of 5:29 per mile. Burns had averaged 5:09.5 for his 27 miles; Rodney Smith ran 5:23.1; Bob Fernee, 5:46.2; and I, 5:27.5.

I don't remember breakfast, or our drive back to Jacksonville. But I do remember how satisfied we were for many weeks afterwards, from the joy of shared suffering and ultimate victory.

We were Young Turks, then, my two friends and I. We were strong, and fast, and had stamina. We all went on to race PRs for another 15 years. But those thousand laps on a cinder track in Putnam County might have been our best day.

Editor: Bob Fernee
Designer: Amanda Mason

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Weekly Training Runs

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

Sunday 6:30 am, Atlantic Beach: Atlantic Bl. & 1st Street. 5-10 miles. Contact: Linda White (C) 662-4928 whitelindab@bellsouth.net

Sunday 6:30 am, Orange Park: IHOP, Blanding Bl. 6-20 miles. Contact: John 264-8024 john.powers@floridapowertrain.com

Sunday 8:00 am, Jax Trails Group Run: visit Jax Group Trail Running on Facebook

Monday 5:00 pm, Bridges Run: River City Brewing Co. 2-6 miles. Acosta & Main St. Bridges. Contact: Bill Krause bjk615@yahoo.com 904-860-9189

Tuesday 5:45 am, San Marco: Southside Methodist Church 5-6 miles. 7-8:30 pace, Contact: JC Pinto 655-1044

Tuesday 6:00 pm, Baymeadows: 1st Place Sports, Baymeadows Rd. 3-6 miles. All abilities, 731-3676

Wednesday 5:30 am, Bolles School: Track Interval Training, (JTC Running Members) Contact: JC Pinto, 655-1044

Wednesday 5:30 pm, Bolles School: Track Interval Training (JTC Running Members) Contact: Paul Smith, smithfccj@hotmail.com, 982-3730

Wednesday 6:30 pm, Jax Beach: 1st Place Sports various runs designed to improve your running. Contact: Simon 270-2221

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

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

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

Disclaimer on Weekly Workout Sessions

The Wednesday morning and afternoon sessions at the Bolles School are sanctioned by JTC Running and open only to registered members. Information on all other sessions is provided as a courtesy only. JTC Running does not sanction, manage, or insure these workouts.



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