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43 Years of Running
www.jtcrunning.com

THE
**STARTING
LINE**
NEWSLETTER



Letter from the Editor

Another Gate River Run has come and gone. Was this the best one yet? It could be; it was so smooth. The weather was made to order. What runner doesn't want a cool, dry, humidity-free day? Perfect for anything, but especially an event such as this one. Everything was superb on the course. The spectators played their parts magnificently.

I "ran" slower than usual and with friends. My objective was to smell the roses and slurp the booze (which also happens to be the title of my potential Pulitzer Prize-winning story inside). My "running" certainly wouldn't win me any prizes; those days are gone with the wind. The famous GRR top-10 hat has slipped further and further from my grasp. I used to get them routinely, I'll have you know. Did you know that in the very first River Run 15,000 back in 1978 I finished in the top 50 overall? No, of course you didn't. Well, there were only 2,400 finishers but still ... Well, enough of me blowing my own horn, I'm starting to feel like the perpetual trumpeter, Donald Trump – and that's not good.

Elite runner Julie Stackhouse has written a very engaging account of her experience at Gate River Run 2018. America may not be "great again" but Julie says that "Jacksonville is Gate again." That is the title of her story and you will find that it's gate, I mean great.

Next to the JTC Running booth at the GRR expo was the Jacksonville University biomechanics/kinesiology lab booth (which our club helps to support financially). I hope you had the opportunity to go by and talk to them. If you haven't been by the Jacksonville Beach 1st Place Sports store to have a personal test, then maybe you should. As a club member you get a substantial discount on this valuable service.

Inside this issue you will find updates from the JU lab. They are doing some amazing things and we are lucky to have them. Just read their reports and you will see what I mean.

Plaudits to the prez. No, not Trump, heaven forbid, but our president, Larry Roberts, who did such a fine job of recruiting at the GRR expo and The Last Gasp. (He must have read Trump's masterpiece, *The Art of the Deal*.)

For each issue of The Starting Line I attempt to have a "theme." For example, if the Summer Beach Run is coming up then in the July/August issue I try to have as much SBR-related copy as possible. Keith Brantly wrote a very nice piece about drugs in running for the last issue. But there was not enough space for it, so I had to hold it for this issue. This gave me the idea to use cheaters and

cheating as the theme for the March/April issue. I wrote a little something about it, and Keith's wife, Kim, also chipped in.

Cheating, especially via performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) is a serious problem in our sport as it is in many others. It's a problem that refuses to go away. In this issue we cover it. I know this is a heavy and depressing subject, but I hope you won't mind and in addition to that I hope no one will be offended. I know this is just a pokey little track club newsletter but still ... we aspire to be more than that.

"We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars," Oscar Wilde.

There was a time when JTC Running organized a race known as The Couples Run. It was a unique event that involved male/female relay teams. Not only was it different but it was almost kind of romantic. One of our club's most energetic, involved members, Richard Fannin, is contemplating bringing it back. You will find an article in this issue that ponders this question as well as tries to fill in the blanks concerning the race's history.

Shakira sang that "hips don't lie." Who could forget it, certainly not me. Mark Baughman reiterates those words in a column dealing with runners and their weak, inflexible hips. Although Mark's informative article will never outdo Shakira's video, you will gain a lot from its reading. Shakira better take note, the day when her hips give out she's in big trouble.

Sometimes you feel like a nut. Sometimes you don't. Ain't it the truth? And some people go nuts about nuts. Our resident nutritionist, Jon Vredenburg, looks at the good and bad sides of this popular snack food. So, grab a handful of pistachios and give it a read.

I wanted to have something about the death of iconic runner Roger Bannister. Ultimately, I decided it would be a bit late. However, I'll say a few words. In 1954 on a cinder track in Oxford, England, the 25-year-old Englishman did what was considered physically impossible: He broke four minutes in the mile. Unbelievable, was what they thought of Bannister's time of 3:59.4. Some said no man could do it, "his heart would burst."

A humble, intelligent man, Bannister was a student at Oxford University studying medicine. He ran for only a couple of more years, then became a doctor of neurology and wrote several books on the subject. His lifelong fame, though, was as a miler and that one history-making moment. He died March 3 at the age of 88.

President's Letter



Greetings!

Wow! What a great 41st Gate River Run! Did I enjoy addressing the 13,000 runners before the start? Heck, yeah, I did! It was a great opportunity to welcome them on behalf of JTC Running and remind them of the central role our Club has had in the event since the very beginning.

It was an almost perfect day for running. A few degrees cooler might have seen records broken. The start was smooth and flowing, thanks to Race Director Doug Alred, Stuart Toomey and many others. The crowds along the course were as exuberant as ever and the water stations were well stocked, even for us walkers at the tail of the pack. JTC Running's Race Team competed and took several awards. Coach Jennifer DeSantis' training class showed the value of their weeks of preparation with positive results. The Club's hospitality tent was extremely popular with members enjoying snacks and beer and the bag check went flawlessly-- all adding up to a first class operation. Thank you, Larry Sassa!

And thank you to the Club volunteers who worked our booth at the Runners Expo. We signed up a lot of new members, renewed many members, and sold merchandise. I hope you had a chance to visit the Jacksonville University running Lab booth next to ours. Club members receive a 50% discount on sophisticated running analysis. Go to www.1stplacesports.com/runninglab for more information and to sign up. On the other side of the Club booth was Marathon High, who brought 400 high school runners to the race. They are training for the Run 13.1 half marathon on March 25. Come out and join or cheer them and our Race Team!

As wonderful as the Gate River Run was, numbers were down from last year, continuing a downward trend over past several years. I heard a lot of theories about potential runners opting for other forms of exercise and workouts. If you have any **ideas** on the subject or thoughts **on how to increase registration**, email them to jtcrunningclub@gmail.com. I'd like to hear from you.

Our **2018 Track Series** continues with the Distance Carnival of running events at **The Bolles School** on **Saturday, April 14**, at 4:00 pm. Two full track and field meets will follow in June and the last two full meets in July to round out the season. Registration is free online and one registration is good for the entire 2018 series. **Please pass the word!**

One of JTC Running's best philanthropies is the Summer Running Camp Program. The Club awards \$400 towards attendance at week-long running camps to deserving high school runners. Last year a record number were sent and we hope to do as well this year. Applications are now being taken online at: www.signmeup.com/site/reg/register

Please pass the word on this program as well.

Each year we celebrate Marathon High on National Running Day with a fun run and cookout at 1st Place Sports Baymeadows. The \$10 registration goes to Marathon High along with a \$10 match from the Club. It's on Wednesday, June 6 this year. Please signup online ahead of time to ease the crush at this very popular event for a great cause.

Last but not least, mark your calendar for the annual **Awards Banquet at Maggiano's on June 21**. Outstanding runners and coaches will be recognized along with the 1st Place sports Grand Prix winners.

The Starting Line

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Gary Asuncion	David Frank	Natalie Loomis	Jaclyn Saide
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Julie Bevington	Thomas Goins	TJ McCaffrey	Jennifer Sexton
David Bishop	Bonita Golden-Sikes	Jason McClung	Brad Shepherd
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Michael Chafardon	Desiree Haubner	Niko Negron	Janet Swaim
Brian Chappell	Victoria Henke	Murphy Nmezi	Amanda Sweeney
KathrynChes	Marcy Herbig	Cherie Norman	Millie Tanner
Bentley Christopher	Joel Hickox	Jenn Nuber	Bob Tatum
Hunter Clark	Hal Higdon	Talmadge Nunnari	Beth Toner
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Jennifer DeSantis	Nancy Kemner	Don Redman	Erik Williams
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Cleaning up our sport: Are there cheaters next door?

We've all read the headlines screaming; "Ex-teammate: I saw Lance Armstrong inject EPO," "U.S. sprinter Justin Gatlin involved in doping investigation," "Jones stripped of five Olympic medals, banned from Beijing Games." And like a punch in the stomach, we double over in disbelief our heroes could fall to the temptations of money and fame only performance-enhancing drugs can purchase.

My first exposure to the ugly world of PED use in competitive running came shortly after I won the 1989 Gasparilla Distance Classic 15K. While I prepared very well for Gasparilla by logging in 10 weeks of over 100 miles per week including hard interval workouts, I didn't have a good sense as to how fast I could run 15 kilometers. On race day I cautiously loped along in the early miles, a 26-year-old road-racing neophyte who didn't belong with a pack of about 20 world-class runners. Cruising through 10K in 28:25, I felt fresh having one of "those" great races that are often too far between the real stinkers. Fearlessly, albeit impetuously, I surged into the lead after seven miles, never looking back. Breaking the finish tape in 42:50 and bettering my old personal best by 1 minute and 20 seconds, my time would likely land in the top 10 in the world. Quite an improvement; however, considering my last 15K was probably a few years prior to Gasparilla, my expectation of running a personal best wasn't all that big a deal. To top off the personal best time, I earned first place prize money of \$10,000, which at the time was the largest single prize money check I had earned. I was on top of the world!

However, no sooner had the foam from my post-race beer settled, the rumors of PED use to drive my "huge" personal best and victory at Gasparilla began to swirl. My first reaction to those rumors was anger and concern over public perception of my integrity. As the dust settled, I had time to calm down and reflect on the perception of my fellow competitors and the impact of my performance.

In fact, I realized the magnitude of my win and fast time actually reinforced the scorn of people who

never accepted me and the admiration of those who knew I was clean and worked hard; nothing I could say or do would change either perception. As I knew I was clean, I took the attitude that being accused of taking PEDs was almost a badge of honor, because I was improving fast and winning races well beyond everyone's expectations...including my own. My mantra was, "If some people aren't suspecting you of cheating, you must not be running fast and/or winning enough to attract attention." However, as validation of my legitimate performance at Gasparilla and at the same time giving the proverbial finger to my detractors, I had earned the ultimate shield of cleanliness; a negative PED test, one of nearly 75 such tests over my career.

The sad reality of competitive sports is that some athletes of all performance levels will cheat via the use of PEDs. Since 2001 USADA (United States Anti-Doping Agency) has handed out nearly 600 sanctions to United States-based athletes ranging from "Public Warnings" to "Lifetime Bans" in sports ranging from Archery to Track & Field to Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) including several familiar names; Lance Armstrong, Marion Jones and Justin Gatlin. And with ever-increasing financial incentives, it might appear the chemists representing athletes seeking to circumvent PED rules have the upper hand on the athletes trying to compete on a clean playing field. In addition, even sanctions that include Lifetime Bans do not seem to deter PED use.

However, in the "Professional" ranks PED use is held somewhat in check through comprehensive programs of "in and out" of competition testing for PEDs. Programs administered by WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) and USADA hunt down drug cheats all over the USA and the world through sophisticated out-of-competition testing and the use of "biological passports." For the record and in the interest of full-disclosure, early in my running career, I was prescribed an asthma medication that would cause a positive PED test had I not been issued a "TUE" or Therapeutic-Use Exemption to deal with the effects of exercise-induced asthma;

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a condition I've dealt with my entire life. I have a family history of severe asthma as my parents habitually smoked cigarettes while my brothers and I were young. Ongoing pulmonary testing during my running career showed a 30% to 40% lowered lung-function compared to males with similar age and height metrics. Had my parents not smoked it is reasonable to assume I would have experienced fewer post-race issues and probably performed better in competition. (Parents....don't smoke around your children.)

A disturbing trend facing our sport is the apparent rise in cheating in the amateur and age-group ranks through course-cutting and potential PED use. Some recent high-profile incidences of cheating via course-cutting have made news in recent months. Recently, a course-cutting cheater and prominent food-blogger from New York City tried using her fictitious time to qualify for the Boston Marathon. At first blush, we could dismiss the notion of cheating among age-groupers because of the lack of direct financial incentives such as prize money. However, much like a professor or prominent business leader lying about their credentials to gain a higher position or employment, social media will likely improve the financial prospects for Personal Trainers/Coaches, Bloggers and other attention seekers who choose to boost their performances by cutting courses or using PEDs.

Thankfully with today's new race timing technologies, Garmin watches and good-old competitor intelligence, it's relatively easy to get caught cutting a course in an attempt to qualify for a major marathon. There's even a website, MarathonInvestigation.com, devoted to catching "course-cutters" and "bib-swappers."

However, talented amateur athletes who want to enrich themselves financially through prize money and/or draw additional clients to their Personal Coaching/training businesses could dramatically improve their performances by taking PEDs and fly completely below the radar of USADA and WADA. Some studies suggest that between 13% and 39% of

amateur competitors use or have used PEDs. And only when an athlete enters the super-regional or national ranks would they need to worry about an "in-competition" PED test. In the meantime, that athlete could likely earn tens of thousands of dollars through competition in obscure, regional prize money races. Recently, several "B" level African runners, allegedly represented by an agent based in Kentucky tested positive for PEDs. Allegedly the agent was providing PEDs to the athletes for a 50% cut of their prize money in regional races where prize money rarely topped \$10,000. Apparently, these athletes ran a race with too high a profile and attracted the attention of USADA.

While there is no certain way to know the total number of amateur or "B" level athletes using PEDs, the widespread availability of performance-improving drugs like testosterone creams, rhEPO (a red-blood-cell boosting hormone) and HGH (Human Growth Hormone) have opened the door for abuse. And with little chance of detection through in- or out-of competition testing at the local or regional level, athletes who chose the shortcuts of PEDs are only hurting the clean, honest athletes who have worked hard to improve and gain a name for themselves through fair play.

So, as a running community committed to fair-play in sports, what can we do to prevent and call out athletes we suspect of cheating, whether simply cutting course or PED use? First, take a tip from the TSA slogan, "If you see something, say something." If you have material information about an athlete cheating; i.e., a confession or witnessing of PED use, take responsibility and report that abuse to USADA or a race director. As PEDs could have deleterious health effects, your action could save the life of that athlete. Secondly, join a "Clean Sport Initiative" organization such as the "Clean Sport Collective" at Cleansport.org, a community of powerful voices comprised of athletes, brands, events, clubs, fans, and public to support the pursuit of clean sport and athletics through the absence of performance-enhancing drugs. In addition,

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USADA.org provides a list of drugs and chemicals that are banned for use in or out of competition.

I do hold hope that continued vigilance from sports fans, coaches, athletes and parents will create a cult-of-conscience that drives out the desire for “performance at all costs and financial gain” replacing it instead with “honesty in effort at all costs.”

In reality and by definition, PEDs used to profit financially is theft. It’s theft from those who have legitimately trained and worked hard to compete fairly and theft from sponsors who expect a fair contest. As for those who continue to seek profit from PED use, whether they are coaches, agents, athletes (amateur and professional) and their affiliates, I believe a day of reckoning is coming. That day will arrive when states and the federal government treat profiteering from PED use as a crime for which criminal and civil prosecution will be the norm. The first criminal indictment of PED use by a professional or amateur athlete will catch every potential cheater’s attention; and if that doesn’t grab their attention, 20 years of jogging around a 200-meter track inside the walls of prison just might.

About the author: Keith Brantly is a 1996 U.S. Olympian in the marathon, eight-time national champion, and 12-time member of United States Roadracing, cross-country and track teams. As a U.S. Olympic Trials participant, Keith participated in the 5K, 10K and marathon, competing in a total of seven trials events in 2000, 1996, 1992, 1988, 1984. Lifetime personal bests include: marathon 2:12:31, 15 kilometers 42:50, 10 kilometers 28:02, five kilometers 13:36, 1500 meters 3:40.7 (3:58 mile). Keith earned career prize money in excess of \$400,000.

Keith conducts inspirational and entertaining motivational seminars for corporations and special interest groups on topics related to health and fitness. As a successful specialist in health-care sales, Keith inspires sales teams and organizations

with meaningful and practical formulas for success drawn from his years of successful athletic competition. He especially enjoys speaking to children and young adults, encouraging them to start and stay involved with sports and recreational activities and stressing the importance of strong leadership practices. Keith’s extensive experience in television and radio color commentary include the New York City Marathon and US Olympic Marathon Trials telecasts. His articles and features are published in over 100 fitness magazines.

Keith’s volunteer service includes a term as President of Florida Track Club, volunteer coach for Best Buddies and motivational speaker for the American Heart Association. Keith raised over \$20,000 for the National Association for Attention Deficit Disorder and other charities in less than 12 weeks. He appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show and is pictured in National Geographic Magazine’s September 2000 issue. Twice he has appeared on the cover of Runner’s World magazine. He is also a member of United States Olympic Team Mentoring program. Keith has served as a board member for several not-for-profit organizations including, the National Marathon to Finish Breast Cancer, Runwell and Wound Outreach.

Keith is enshrined in the University of Florida Athletics, Florida Track and Field and Road Runners Club of America, Halls of Fame. Along with a successful career in medical equipment sales and management, Keith manages his online personal coaching program, BrantlyRunning.Com. In 2018, Keith received the Jimmy Carnes Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Florida Track and Field Association. He is a proud parent of his son, Thor, and daughter, Ace. Keith lives in Saint Augustine, Florida with wife Kim Pawelek, who competed in four Olympic Trials Marathons and owns a personal best marathon of 2:37:54.

Research Highlights: A Review of Modifiable Biomechanical Factors Affecting Running Economy



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Whether you are a competitive or recreational runner, we all share a common goal: to run fast. Therefore, all of us can benefit from understanding the factors that have a big impact on running performance.

For this month, we share some highlights from the following research article:

Is There an Economical Running Technique? A Review of Modifiable Biomechanical Factors Affecting Running Economy

Isabel S. Moore, Sports Med (2016) 46:793–807

This is a review article, which means the experienced scientist reviewed many research manuscripts and provided a summary of overall findings. The topic of interest is Running Economy (RE) which is a measure of how efficient the runner is (how much oxygen is burned per kg of body weight at a given running speed). This review was particularly extensive: Moore cited 165 manuscripts!

Most of us have at least heard of some of the fancy terms explored in this study such as kinematics, kinetics, lactate threshold, and maximal oxygen uptake (VO₂ max). The bottom line is that your running biomechanics can have a big impact on the amount of oxygen you burn while running. We will present some of the highlights from this article to help you better understand which biomechanics appear to be most important to focus on.

Stride frequency and length. Are long, powerful

strides efficient? Or should a runner take short, quick strides? Surprisingly, this topic remains quite mysterious. It is important to realize that stride frequency and length collectively determine running speed. Think about yourself for a moment... When you start running faster, do you increase your stride length, stride frequency, or both? To run faster, most runners first increase their stride length and then move on to increasing their stride frequency (cadence).

The other topics related to this are swing time (the leg's time spent in between periods of contact with the ground) and stance time, (the ground contact time). As runners change their stride length and/or frequency, they may also change the percentage of time spent in stance and swing. Researchers try to determine which patterns are most efficient.

From the preliminary studies, it is clear that runners are really good at developing and maintaining a personal/preferred stride length and frequency. What is not clear is this: Do runners tend to choose the stride lengths and frequencies that are the most efficient possible options for them? We will not thoroughly understand this topic until more long-term studies are completed that track runners (stride length and frequency) and follow them over time to determine if they become more or less efficient.

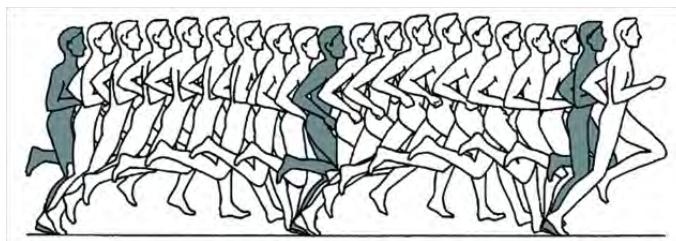
What is clear, at this point, is that runners have a "window" around their preferred stride length and frequency that they can "safely" perform within. The window appears to be about 3-8% of the preferred stride frequency and length. What this means is that runners can maintain their running economy within that window. But if the stride frequency (or stride length) is altered by about 10% (or more) the runner begins burning more oxygen. This is why it is so important for us to focus on maintaining our biomechanics during training and racing!

These principles of "self-optimization" are not well-understood yet. But it is clear that the innate, fine-tuning that runners develop is the result of physiological adaptations related to running experience, or as runners would say, "the trials of miles."

Research Highlights: A Review of Modifiable Biomechanical Factors Affecting Running Economy

Vertical oscillation.

Another “global” biomechanical measure is vertical oscillation (how much the runner’s center of mass travels “up and down”). Not surprisingly, research suggests that runners should attempt to minimize their vertical oscillation (avoid “bounding” up and down). The idea is that the runner performs “less work” against gravity (when they maintain a stable center of mass).



Interestingly, vertical oscillation research is also still in its preliminary stages. At this point, it is clear that runners can quickly alter their vertical oscillation (in a laboratory setting) when given visual and/or auditory feedback. However, to date, only one study has assessed the effect of specifically decreasing a runner’s vertical oscillation. For the most part, researchers have yet to manipulate vertical oscillation, in a similar manner to stride frequency and stride length, to determine whether runners have an optimal magnitude of vertical oscillation.

However, it is clear when a runner is “way off.” Excessive vertical displacement clearly harms running economy (RE). This likely occurs when the runner’s foot lands “too far” out in front of the body. Then, the foot contact time with the ground becomes excessive (muscle contraction is prolonged and there is an increased metabolic cost). Clearly, the time spent decelerating affects RE.

Leg extension toe-off.

Leg extension at toe-off is an interesting topic. Economic runners tend to have a large stride angle, meaning they do a good job extending the leg back behind the body (to push themselves forward). However, “overdoing it” can be detrimental. What appears to be key is not to overdo it at a single joint.

For example, the runner should not fully plantar-flex the ankle, fully straighten the knee, or excessively extend the hip. These joint actions appear to be too extreme. Extreme joint actions appear to have detrimental effects, such as slowing stride frequency or putting muscles/joints in weak positions (stretched out too much). The bottom line appears to be that the runner should strive to achieve good overall extension (but avoid being extreme at the ankle, knee, and hip).

Style of foot contact.

Interestingly, style of foot contact appears to have minimal impact on RE. Thus far, findings shows no major differences in RE between rearfoot, midfoot and forefoot striking. These styles are common among elite and recreational runners. The preliminary studies have shown that runners can switch foot contact styles without major impact on RE. Like the other topics, long-term studies have yet to be completed. However, at this point, it looks like runners have the “freedom” to use different foot contact styles (without harming their overall economy). This is an important concept for runners and coaches to understand as we strive to better determine how to optimize each runner’s foot contact and landing style.

Conclusions

To date, numerous short-term studies have been completed to explore the relationships between running biomechanics and running economy. However, minimal long-term training interventions have been completed. The good news is that we now appear to understand which factors can/should be experimented with (to help each runner find their most economic running mechanics).

Our Approach

In the JU Running Laboratory at 1st Place Sports, we assess running biomechanics and running economy for runners. When runners come to the lab for an analysis, our goal is to help identify the 2-3 biomechanical factors that appear to have the most potential (to improve their running economy).

Cheaters Never Win (Do They?)

The Winter Olympics are just a memory now. They were quite a spectacle and I watched more events than I usually do. The Russians were only just sort of there. Their team was nailed for a state-sponsored drug program. In other words, they were cheating and planning to do so at the Olympics. The Russian athletes who were deemed "clean" went to the Olympics as the OAR (Olympic athletes representing Russia). They competed under the Olympic flag rather than the disgraced Russian one. Despite their supposed cleanliness two were caught with performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) in them and were disqualified. One guy "won" a gold medal in curling. Curling! That's like shuffleboard, for God's sake! They took his medallion away and erased him from the history books. Only goes to show that some people will cheat at anything and everything. Curling!

Our mothers always told us, "cheaters never win." Right, mom, but some of them get away with it for a long time. Just think Lance Armstrong. Man, that guy pulled it off for years. Seven Tour de France victories, a slew of endorsements and money rolling in faster than his bike's wheels could keep up with. He was rich and famous, to say the least. Then it all came tumbling down. Lance flew off his bike and could never get back in the saddle again. Not to compete anyway, he was banned worldwide. Disgraced worldwide too.

The French were on to Lance from the start. They had their suspicions but couldn't prove them. They took urine and blood samples off him after every win and froze them thinking that one day the technology would be such that they could test the samples definitively. That day came and all seven of Lance's samples proved positive – he was cheating all the time.

Now some people have said, "we know that professional cycling is dirty with drugs and if they are all taking them then that just levels the playing field. Only difference is that Lance did it better than the rest." Maybe that's part of the problem, the public has come to expect it. So, "cheaters never win, unless they

cheat better than the losers."

Politicians and men of power; lately we've seen a bunch of them "retire" after being exposed for some sort of indiscretion or other. Yet others take the attitude, "I'll ride out the storm and eventually the public will forget and/or forgive." Too often they are right.

There are lots of types of cheaters. Besides the druggies there are course-cutters and finish time-fixers. People have been known to tamper with their times to qualify for the Boston Marathon, for instance. There was an article in the New York Times titled, *Swim, Bike, Cheat?* by Sarah Lyall. The story told of a man who fabricated a race complete with all the trimmings – fake marathon, fake website, fake competitors, fake race officials and a fake winner -- himself. All this so that he would "qualify" for the Boston Marathon. The story went on to tell of the exploits of an Ironman course-cutter who had an almost psychopathic obsession for cheating. You can pull up the story by entering run bike cheat? on your computer. The whole thing will absolutely amaze you.

What's worse, druggies or course-cutters? According to Dan Empfield, of the company Slowtwitch, the cutters are the most heinous. "At least if you dope, you're still trying to win the race by actually completing it," he wrote.

Course-cutting has an almost hilarious history. Who could forget the ridiculous Rosie Ruiz? It was the 1980 Boston Marathon when Rosie, not even dressed like a bona fide runner, suddenly appeared out of nowhere to breast the finish tape and accept the trophy. Her "finish time" was a course and world record, 2:31:56, a full 25 minutes faster than her time in the New York Marathon just six months earlier. (Rosie used the subway in that one.) At Boston, she jumped into the race a half mile from the finish. Standing on the podium, Bill Rodgers, who had just won his third straight Boston, asked her some common runners' questions, such as: "What were your

Cheaters Never Win (Do They?)

splits?" Rosie replied, "what are splits?" Oh, dear. That was an all-telling giveaway. Eight days later she was stripped of her Boston "win," New York Marathon officials removed her from their results also. Nice, though the world of running had a new cheating icon. Jacqueline Gareau won the 1980 Boston Marathon but who would know it? The world only remembers Rosie Ruiz, the infamous cheater. Terrible, isn't it?

What do people get out of cheating? Somewhere inside they know it's all a lie. You can lie to others, but you can't lie to yourself. Where is the victory?

Do we have much of a problem with cheating in local races? No, probably not. There was a group of Russians (man, Russians again?) that were training in Gainesville that were caught taking PEDs some years ago. I suppose if a "dirty" runner chose some easy local races where he or she could scoop up \$500 or so, that might be worth their while. A coach might encourage his athletes to take PEDs to make them more successful and make him look good, then others might see his success rate and want to sign on with him. It would drive business and bring

athletes to his door which would mean more money for him. It's all about money, it's always about money.

Local race director Doug Alred of 1st Place Sports thinks attempting to nail dirty athletes at races is mostly a waste of time and complicates things for race officials. He makes a good point; smart athletes and their coaches know how to get "clean" before a race and pass the race day drug test. When runner Mo Trafeh, who "won" the Gate River Run three times, was finally caught, the authorities swooped in while he was at a Paris airport. Case closed.

It would be nice to think that the entire drugs issue would come to an end. With modern technology being what it is you'd think it would. Until that day it will just go on ruining our sport as well as other ones.

Upcoming Events

JTC RUNNING'S TRACK MEET SERIES

All take place at Bolles High School

April 14, The Distance Carnival, 4-6:30 PM

June 2, Track & Field all events, 3-7:00 PM

June 16, Track & Field, 7:30-10:30 AM

July 7, Track & Field, 7:30-10:30 A.M

July 14, Track & Field, 7:30-10:30 A.M

Details and FREE entry at JTCRunning.com

Smell the Roses, Slurp the Booze

“Never again.” That’s what I said to myself after finishing my 40th Gate River Run in 2017. Over the years the 15k race had gotten longer and harder as I grew older and descended into appalling physical shape.

I told everyone: “My ‘racing’ days are over and streak or no streak, I don’t want to do it anymore.”

The streak was nothing but a monkey on my back, and the monkey was getting heavier, making him ever more hideous and unwanted. I figured if I skipped the 41st Gate River Run I could throw off the monkey and be in control of my own destiny. Then, I could pick which future GRRs I – and not the monkey – wanted to do.

Even as the entry fee rose, I put off registering for this year’s race. I was convinced I wasn’t going to do it. However, some friends contrived a pokey walk-jog that sounded almost appealing. I was suckered in. When I arrived at the GRR expo to do my shift on Thursday morning I took the plunge and signed up. I had to pay top dollar – 60 bucks – the most I ever paid to join a race. In 1978, I paid for my first GRR, the River Run 15,000, and it set me back five bucks. In that inaugural event, which had just over 2,400 racers, I finished in the top 50 and easily broke an hour. Objective this time would be to finish on the better side of two hours. So, when factoring in monetary inflation and time on the course maybe it is almost break even. Or maybe that’s a bit of George W. Bush “fuzzy math.”

This would be a different sort of River Run, a River Run just for fun. As a man once told me, “if you can’t break an hour, why not have fun and run it in two?”

I set off with club members Gary Ledman and Rick Schart. Two of our clan, longtime members Herb Taskett and John Thrush, decided to walk it, mainly

because Taskett needed to be extra careful. He had two gimpy knees that were undergoing stem cell rejuvenation.

We enjoyed the national anthem, sung by club members Michelle and Dean Krueger’s two children. It was a nice touch, much better than any recording, and they sang beautifully. Must have had some coaching from their mom, another fine singer, who has also done the vocal honors at several local events. I’ll expect to see them on TV, winning The Voice and accepting \$10 million from Lady Gaga – it could happen.

It was 20 minutes by the time our wave 3 crowd crossed the start line. No problem, we were in no rush. We jogged past the Maxwell House coffee plant and remembered the time when so many companies were pulling up stakes and leaving the Bold New City of the South. To Hoboken’s loss, Jacksonville kept Maxwell House. On the left, just ahead, the Berkman Plaza condominiums had the aspect of a high-rise slum. No construction going on in those unwanted empty shells, I wonder if we could sell them to Hoboken.

For a second it looked as though hundreds of runners had gotten lost and were running in the opposite direction, they were coming right toward us. But no, it was a small army of people in the Run For Charity 5k returning to the Fairgrounds. Next, we attacked the blue Main Street bridge and it was like buddah, we conquered it with bells on.

Since half of our objective was to sop up as much free spectator booze as possible, we looked forward to the happy hunting ground of San Marco with relish. Thanks to hurricane Irma, the right-hand turn onto River Road by European Street restaurant was eliminated. The picturesque road and all its delicacies were not to be as the road is still under

Smell the Roses, Slurp the Booze

repair. We finally threw down our first mimosa along Hendricks Avenue. It was sweet, and we were primed; funny how on such a cool day and “running” a mere 12-minute-mile pace one can still sweat profusely.

There was a welcomed beer stop on Atlantic Boulevard, but the race was now half over, and we were somewhat appalled at the lack of alcoholic offerings. Why was it that before, when we were racing, and didn’t want it, there seemed to be so much of it, and yet now ...

On the approach to the Hart Bridge I was happy to see my wife, Nancy, and son Norman keep alive the tradition of seeing me up the entrance ramp. Their encouragement, and just seeing them there, was uplifting.

I flagged on the Hart Bridge just like always. Gary and Rick went ahead. Rick said no matter what, he wanted to run the entire length of the bridge as he had never walked any of it before (his time will come).

On the bridge’s descent, a baby and its stroller must have taken a nasty capsizing. Paramedics were hovered around; the parents were frantic, and the baby was screaming its lungs out. I didn’t see the accident, but it must have been awful. When will people learn that running with babies in strollers in big races is not a good idea?

Then, it was over. I finished comfortably for a guy whose usual training runs are three or four miles. To me these days, a six-miler is a “long run,” and I do precious few of them. Thanks to the steady, albeit slow, pace and, also, the friendly “aid stations” I felt pretty good. Not accustomed to discovering all the booze along the course it was upsetting to learn that many others reported finding far more “water holes” along the way than the three of us did. We must do

better next time.

Gary Ledman commented: “Eager to stop at the ‘unofficial aid stations’ for the first time, I thought we’d never finally get to one. There seemed to be fewer than in recent years, but I probably partook in enough of them. The Midway Mimosa really hit the spot. The Rice Krispie Treat went down better than the strawberry. (Not sure I would have stopped there, but the beer and brat station on Belote Place was conspicuously absent.)

Our new (to us) “tactic” confirms that finding other, imaginative ways to tackle the Gate River Run could very well prolong this Streaker’s streak. Last year, I was convinced I would never do the Gate River Run again, but now, who knows?

Gary Ledman said: “I’ve never run a slower pace in a race than in training, so it took a few miles to adjust, but it was sound strategy. The areas that usually start hurting after about four or five miles didn’t flare up until the last mile or two and the aftermath was not bad at all. I don’t remember ever waking up Sunday without quad discomfort – or in other areas when your training runs are only three miles. I was contemplating retirement from the event, but not anymore. This was number 32, and now I’m really looking forward to more.”

Amen to that. It must have been good; I forgot all about the 60 bucks. A run well run, and money well spent. Bring on GRR number 42.

Jacksonville is “Gate” Again



The running gods were shining down on our fine River City March 10, 2018. The morning air had a cool, calm collectedness to it, intoxicating your senses with a buzz of freshly roasted Maxwell House Coffee. The temperatures were hovering in the mid-40s with less than 20% humidity and no wind, near perfect conditions by any standards. The mile marker flags were standing tall and proud in their 9 marked locations throughout the well-planned downtown race course, volunteers filling thousands of water cups for Olympians and weekend warriors alike and spectators were polishing off their finest plasticware and red Solo cups for their annual spring cheer-fest. The Green Monster lurked in the distance, arising from the depths of the St. Johns, his grated teeth hungry for fresh prey. Molly Huddle, Jordan Hasay and other renowned women of this lithe field were lacing up their feather-light racing flats and calming last minute-nerves. The highly sought-after top 10% finisher hats were waiting patiently in their boxes at the finish line for their valiant owners-to-be. The stage was set for the 41st annual Gate River Run National 15k Championship.

As someone who has had the privilege of lining up with the female elites for the past four years, I can't begin to express to you how unique the Gate River Run race is. I always tell my clients (who have no option but to run this race) that in no other sporting venue I'm aware of can you test your abilities on the starting line with Olympians and the best in the world in their craft, competing alongside them (albeit only briefly) in a USATF-sanctioned event. This year I aligned myself beside the future champion Molly Huddle and wished her well prior to the firing of the cannon, smiling to myself to be in the presence of

American distance running prodigies. For about one stride length, I ran with Leonard Korir and the likes of the elite men as they overcame their 6-minute deficit to pass all but two of the elite women (Molly and Jordan). Truly, while racing Gate, you are privileged to experience a fast, well-organized and world-class race right in your backyard.

This year, due to a difficult family situation I've been facing with a loved one battling cancer, I purposed to compete strong but also to really soak up the course along the way, enjoying each moment and mile and not wishing away too quickly for the final downhill-on-skates-mile into the finish chute. Here is what I observed:

1. National Anthem – Sadly I actually didn't get to observe this one this year as it started when I was nearing the one-mile marker of the race, but I heard how tremendously Michelle and Dean Krueger's young ones harmonized (future Gate River Run elite).

2. San Marco Saints – best scenery along the course in my opinion, first 5k of the race, inviting and festive yard parties (I hear that some runners like to make a few special “hydration” stops here).

3. Doughnut Hole Man – his usual post on River Road was cut out of the course this year due to construction but I heard he was still present. ... For some reason, he doesn't throw his sugary DD morsels to the elites.

4. Orange Slice Alley – youth offering fresh sliced Florida oranges for replenishment.

5. Bodacious Bands – strategically placed along the course, offering upbeat entertainment.

6. Banana Suit Boys – always on the corner providing a laugh just past the cemetery, dressed up every year, sometimes they'll even chase after you (good luck keeping my pace in that attire).

7. Rice Krispie Bites – replaced the former Doughnut Hole Man whose usual course post was cut out this year due to construction (we hope he's back next year, though).

8. Maple Street Biscuit Co. – I never saw them, but I caught a waft of their maple-buttery incense.

9. Beers and Brats – M.I.A. in St. Nicholas this year but I recall this boisterous station from years past and hope they return next year (hint, hint).

10. St. Nich Spectators – You love them but know that the Green Monster is looming around the corner.

11. Bridge Angel – She will run up the bridge with you offering encouragement and probably runs the bridge 20 times throughout the course of the race (no, she will not run it FOR you).

12. Marathon High – cheerful high school volunteers and future River-Run hopefuls providing much needed nourishment along the route

13. Sprinkler Hose Heaven – not needed this year, fortunately, because of the cooler temps, but most years they are a life-saver.

14. 904 Fitness – Anthony Duran and his crew always ready to capture your perfect stride and smile (grimace?).

15. Doug and Jane Alred (and their professional 1st Place Sports staff) – last but certainly not least, the race directors, for so many continuous years, always welcoming you at the finish line with a pat on the back or high-five and providing each of us with the opportunity to test the limits of our human spirit every weekend.

Whether this year's outcome resulted in a PR effort or a coveted hat or it was your first or 41st time running the Gate (Carroll Sharp), I encourage you to pen it on your 2019 calendar now. It's the road race highlighting

the best our city has to offer, with world class organization, support and competition. Let's make Jacksonville Gate again for as long as our feet allow.



About the Autor:

Julie is most proud this year that her 40 athletes racing Gate all had a personal best (from 4-20 minutes), many earning the prized-possession hats for their sweaty efforts. She coaches athletes of all ages and skill levels to achieve their best, with personal and small group training plans designed to fit the needs of even the busiest parent or business person. Please look for her at the next race and stop to say hi or ask how you can run "Gate" again next year! For more information, please visit www.getstackednow.com

Mark Your Calendars

JTC Running's Annual Awards Banquet
June 21, at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant
Midtown Pkwy., St. John's Town Center

Hips Don't Lie

Runners experience lower extremity injuries at a high frequency. About 65% of runners experience a running injury over the course of any given year of training. Out of all the running injuries that occur, the two most common injuries are patello-femoral pain or front knee pain and IT band syndrome.

So, what can you do to help recover from these injuries? If you have ever spent time talking with anyone in our clinic you will hear the common refrain of "it depends." However, I am going to break from our common response and give a concrete answer! And the answer is ... strengthen your hips. Why am I able to confidently give such a straightforward answer? Simply put, because the research is clear. There is a strong relationship between the top two running injuries and weak hips.

One of the main reasons that hip muscles are so important for runners is because the lateral hip muscles control the position of the femur which affects both hip and knee kinematics or movements.

This is one of the chief reasons weak hips are so strongly related to patello-femoral pain and IT band syndrome.

In studies of runners that compared those with patello-femoral pain and those without patello-femoral pain, there was a significant amount of hip weakness in injured runners compared to the runners who had no knee pain.

There was also another study that looked at injured runners with patello-femoral pain, but instead of comparing hip strength to uninjured runners, their hip strength was compared to their uninjured side. Not surprising, they found similar results.

There were abnormal hip mechanics and decreased hip strength on the injured leg compared to the uninjured leg.

In a similarly designed study, runners with IT band syndrome had weaker hip abduction strength in the injured leg compared to the uninjured leg. However,

this study also showed not only a problem, but a solution. The study showed that an improvement in symptoms and return to preinjury running levels paralleled an improvement in hip abductor strength.

The evidence is clear that hip strength has a significant influence on the two most common running injuries. Working on hip strength is a great starting point for dealing with these common running injuries. However, it is only one piece of the puzzle and not a magic bullet to cure all running injuries. Make sure you get your running injuries evaluated by a qualified health care provider. But when you do, expect to get some hip exercises as part of your rehabilitation!

Mark Baughman DPT, ATC, OCS

1 Dierks, Tracy A., et al. "Proximal and distal influences on hip and knee kinematics in runners with patellofemoral pain during a prolonged run." *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy* 38.8 (2008): 448-456.

2 Souza, Richard B., and Christopher M. Powers. "Predictors of hip internal rotation during running: an evaluation of hip strength and femoral structure in women with and without patellofemoral pain." *The American journal of sports medicine* 37.3 (2009): 579-587.

3 Fredericson, Michael, et al. "Hip abductor weakness in distance runners with iliotibial band syndrome." *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine* 10.3 (2000): 169-175.



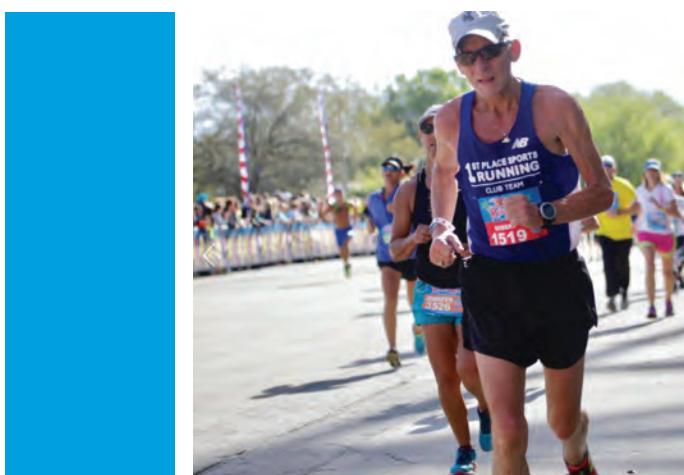


Photo Credit: 1st Place Sports & Amanda Mason

Where There's Smoke There's Fire

I've got a lot to say about doping in the sport, but I'll attempt to keep this brief and to the point. I basically grew up in the sport. Right out of college at the age of 22, I was fortunate to have secured an agent and sponsor. Throughout nearly three decades of national-class competition, I've directly witnessed and suffered the impacts of performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) in the sport. I've been drug-tested several times at the collegiate and professional level. I've raced against alleged cheats who had yet to be caught; and just as infuriating, I've had to race against cheats who served their ban, only to return to competition in races that don't drug-test. I've been well educated on the topic, mandated to attend anti-doping meetings, sign anti-doping waivers, and strongly encouraged to speak up and champion a PED-free field of competition.

So here's what I have to say: Athletes are the first to know when other athletes are dirty. When you race often enough in the same circles, you know your competitors.

We're usually a tight-knit group of friends who fully support and respectfully challenge each other. Consequently, we're also the first to become suspicious when we believe our competitors have turned to drugs to enhance performance.

If an athlete who competes at a consistent level for years suddenly begins dominating the field in dramatic fashion, it's only natural for those who know anything about training and racing to become suspicious. This is true at the national, regional and yes, even the local and age-group levels.

While it's a shame we can expect doping at the national level, it's pathetic to think it may be increasing on the local scene, too. The drivers of increased PED use on the local scene are twofold: lack of deterrent due to the absence of in- and out-of-competition PED testing and the potential for monetary and social rewards. In a world where social media reigns and public affirmation motivates more than ever, the allure of success presents

yet another opportunity for attention and self-promotion. Furthermore, local money can be quite lucrative when racing week after week. So not only are they cheats, they're thieves. To make matters worse, doping defecates on the spirit of competition and good sportsmanship, which in turn threatens opportunities for upcoming young athletes.

So is it impossible for an age-grouper to suddenly dominate the podium? No, but when you've been in the sport for years, especially with the same coach, you chip away at PRs by seconds, not minutes.

Clean athletes have absolutely no tolerance for cheating. So let's make one thing crystal clear. It's not a crime to voice our opinions or suspicions. The irony is that these unreasonable feats create much louder talk than our suspicions and often, "where there's smoke there's fire." Some believe we should remain silent until there's proof but my answer to that narrative is summed up in one name... Lance Armstrong. We owe it to ourselves and to the sport to remain vigilant and demand the highest ethics among professionals and amateurs alike. Our future generations deserve a clean sport.

Yes, I've got a lot to say about the subject of doping in our sport. Much like this column, I've read countless similar articles on PEDs and doping with the goal of informing and inciting the conscience of those doping or considering it. So if you're reading this and it resonates with you, I hope it's because you're another clean athlete mad as hell at those who cheat and not the other way around.

New JU Running Lab Options for Beginner and Advanced Runners at 1st Place Sports Beaches Store

Jeff T. Wight, PhD

Assistant Professor of Kinesiology, Jacksonville University

Director, JU Running Laboratory at 1st Place Sports

Member, First Place Sports Racing Team

As you likely know, JTC is a primary sponsor of the JU Running Lab at 1st Place Sports. Because of this, JTC members receive ½ price analyses. We just updated our webpage with 1st Place Sports so I would like to share some of our latest information for JTC runners.

We are just finishing up our spring data collections for our two research studies. We learned a lot completing these studies over the winter months. Through our research, we have developed some new analyses for runners and have fine-tuned/improved the analyses, reports, and data that we can provide runners.

Below I present an overview of the latest. Visit our website for the full details:

www.1stplacesports.com/runninglab

The biomechanics analysis is an excellent option for both beginner and experienced runners.

For all runners, we identify and present 2-3 biomechanical factors (we believe the runner should focus on to help optimize their running biomechanics). Topics include running posture, torso rotation, arm swing, cadence, time in stance, foot landing style, position at weight acceptance, swing mechanics, stance mechanics, consistency of mechanics, symmetry of mechanics, etc.

BEGINNERS

For most beginners, we are able to identify 2-3 “basic” areas that can often be dramatically improved. Ideally, we help the runner establish sound biomechanics so that running feels smooth, safe, and enjoyable.

EXPERIENCED RUNNERS

For more experienced runners, we are typically able to identify 2-3 more “subtle” factors that may help the runner to further improve their biomechanics. We have assessed over 50 experienced runners. Approximately 90% have had clear potential to further optimize their biomechanics. Making a

subtle improvement in biomechanics can have a profound impact on “wear and tear” and/or performance. Our reports and videos have great potential to help the experienced runner fine-tune.



Visit lab for data collection (about 1 hour)

Return to the lab one week later (receive extensive biomechanical report and 20-minute consultation)

New JU Running Lab Options for Beginner and Advanced Runners at 1st Place Sports Beaches Store

THE BIOMECHANICAL ANALYSIS

EQUIPMENT

- State-of-the-art Parvo Metabolic Cart



The Running Economy/VO₂ testing is a great option for more “serious” runners who are interested in scientifically monitoring their fitness and metabolic measures. This type of testing is particularly valuable when repeated over the course of a season/year. If the runner is tested with the same protocol, the measures can be compared from one visit to the next (to monitor fitness and training).

THE MEASURES

For each running speed, a full metabolic assessment is completed:

1. Fuel Utilization (RER, % Fat, % Carbohydrate)
2. Economy (Energy Expenditure kcal·min⁻¹)
3. Intensity (HR, RPE)
4. Maximal data (VO₂, HR)

At the consultation, the runner is educated about the details in the report.

TESTING OPTIONS

Here is our “go-to” protocol:

1. JU Running Economy/Fatigue Test

- Complete 4 minutes at “marathon pace” (collect baseline data)
- 5 minute break
- Complete 16 minute progression run that ends at marathon pace (collect fatigue data)

This is a great protocol because we can learn a lot about the runner’s fitness and it is “easy” for the runner (do not have to run to exhaustion/failure). For this protocol, we collect the runner at “marathon” pace twice (baseline and fatigue). We compare the data (before and after the progression run) to determine how much the runner fatigued. At repeat visits, we are able to determine if the runner has improved fitness at baseline (and if he/she fatigues less during the progression run). We also complete a running economy analysis for the entire progression run. Also, if the runner is interested in obtaining their VO₂ max, he/she can run to “failure” during testing (instead of stopping at 16 minutes).

For this protocol, we can also analyze the runner’s biomechanics to determine if the runner was able to maintain their biomechanics throughout the fatigue run (or if mechanics changed with fatigue).

2. Traditional Running Economy/VO₂ Testing

We are also happy to provide traditional running economy and VO₂ testing.

- Submaximal running economy testing (progression run, increase pace ½ mph every 2-4 minutes)
- Running max VO₂ testing (progression run until exhaustion)
- Uphill walking VO₂ testing (Bruce protocol)

New JU Running Lab Options

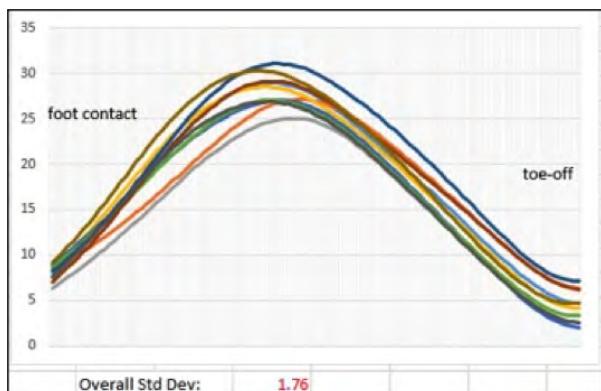
for Beginner and Advanced Runners at 1st Place Sports Beaches Store

SIMULTANEOUS ANALYSIS (Biomechanics and Running Economy)

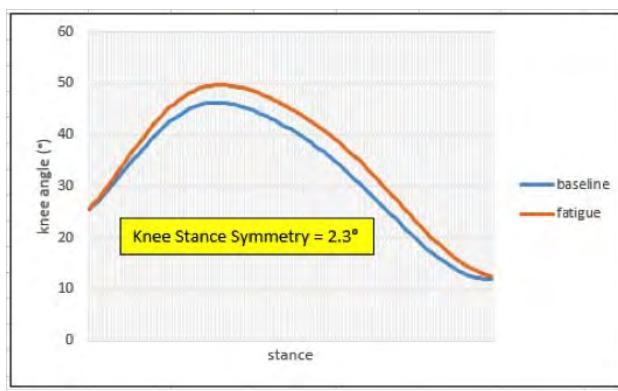
- Biomechanics and Running Economy are collected simultaneously (during the progression run).
- Complete preferred warm-up run with the mask on (familiarization period)
- Complete 4 minutes at “marathon pace” (baseline data)
- 5 minute break
- Complete 16 minute progression run that ends at marathon pace
- Runner can continue (until fatigue) if he/she wishes to reach VO₂ Max
- Full metabolic analysis completed
- Baseline data compared to fatigue

For the Simultaneous analysis, we take an in-depth look at:

- 1) How consistent the runners mechanics are (at baseline and fatigue) and
- 2) How much their biomechanics change (from baseline to fatigue)



Analyze how consistent runner's mechanics are across 10+ strides.



Determine how much the runner's mechanics change at the ankle, knee, and hip (compare baseline to fatigue).



Thanks!

To all **Gate River Run Volunteers**.
Once again you made this great event happen.
Without your help it would be impossible.
JTC Running cannot thank you enough.

Should JTC Running Revive "The Couples Run"?

These days it seems like for a race to be highly successful it needs a gimmick, a hook, or something special to set it apart and make people want to attend. The old crowd favorite, the 5k, seems especially affected. The ones that do really well all have that little bit extra: The Festival of Lights, The Run For The Pies, The Gator Bowl Run. Only the Matanzas Run bucks the trend but it has history and St. Augustine going for it, two sharp hooks.

I'd like to introduce you to a race with history and a built-in hook: JTC Running's The Couples Run 5k.

It all began when Jacksonville's legendary long-distance runner, Jay Birmingham, decided to go for a really, really, long one. It was an unassisted (meaning solo without any support crew or vehicle) run across the entire United States from Los Angeles to New York City, a scant 3,000-plus miles. It was also an attempt to break the unassisted finish time record. Birmingham knew what he had to do, the number of miles covered in a single day, how much rest, what to eat, that sort of thing. Most of the time he never knew where he would sleep at night. To quote a well-known line from a famous Tennessee Williams play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, he had to "rely on the kindness of strangers."

Birmingham never had a huge pot of cash to see his LA-NY dream come true. Running was his forte, not finances. It wasn't long before his money got as thin as the soles of his shoes. Something had to be done and it was up to the folks back home.

"We came up with the idea that we could hold a race to make money to help Jay out financially," said Rodney Smith, who was a friend as well as an employee at Birmingham's specialty running store, Phidippides.

The plan was broached to the Jacksonville Track Club and the club got behind the effort. Smith was pushed into the driver's seat and became the race director. The race was titled, The Jay Birmingham Trans Am Twosome.

It was the summer of 1980, the Olympics were going on in Moscow and everyone was there – except America. President Jimmy Carter decided to boycott the games due to, ironically enough, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Seemingly, all the unbeatable American marathoner Bill Rodgers had to do was lace up his Onitsuka Tigers and the gold medal

would certainly be his, but alas, Boston Bill never got the chance. Meanwhile we Jacksonvillians got the Olympics and more as we watched Jay try to conquer the entire continental USA.

Money was raised, Jay was victorious, set an unassisted record, and a new race was born. Using the same format, a 2x5k male/female relay, The Trans-Am Twosome soon became The Couples Run. The rules were simple: The women began the race by running their 5k leg, then handed off to their male teammate as they finished. Then the men duked it out. To score it, the ages of the couples were added together. So, a man of 30 years with a woman of 28 years would compete in the 55-59 age group. The "couples" did not have to be married, engaged, dating or even know each other. I wonder how many romances blossomed due to Couples Runs, and this was decades before *The Bachelor* TV "reality" nonsense.

A few Couples Runs took place in the early 1980s although the details are sketchy and have mostly been forgotten. It is believed that club founding member John TenBroeck race-directed Couples Runs in 1981 and 1982. Rodney Smith organized a Couples Run in 1983 for club member Ginger Fannin the mother of Richard Fannin. She was in a hospital fighting cancer and running out of money to do so.

Smith recalled: "We raised a thousand dollars, which doesn't seem like a lot, but I guess it was in those days. We brought the money to her hospital bed and she broke down in tears, saying, 'you shouldn't have done all that just for me.'" In 1984, she died.

The Trans-Am Twosome and the early Couples Runs took place at the now-legendary Charter Point course, a place with a history of its own. In the 1970s, a developer carved some two-lane roads through the woods at the very northern end of University Boulevard but never built any houses. He dubbed it Charter Point. Consequently, the quiet area was perfect for road races. Knowing this, Jay Birmingham laid out a 5k course and used it for his Metric Series races. It also became the course for The Couples Runs and The Trans-Am Twosome.

In honor of his mother, in 2000, Richard Fannin brought back the event for five years as the Ginger Fannin-King Couples Run. Charter Point had become

Should JTC Running Revive "The Couples Run"?

an entirely different place by then, so Fannin moved the race to the sands of Jacksonville Beach. The race benefitted Hospice and the post-race parties at the Sun Dog Diner were very memorable. It remained a 2x5k relay and was enjoyed by many until its demise in 2005. Fittingly, in 2003 the race was won by Rodney Smith and his wife, Patty. Fair enough, justice served. In 2004 the event even included a wife-carrying contest. No, it wasn't a 5k, it was more like 50 yards. (5k would have been so terribly cruel.)

Why bring back The Couples Run? There are more than enough races as it is. True, but it was a good concept, unique, and very popular. There has been talk about rearranging JTC Running's Winter Beach Run, changing it from a 10 mile/5 mile to a 10k/5k. Fact is, the original WBR 10-miler has been declining for some years now. More people are signing up for the

5-mile race. Lowering both distances could be a good thing for its turnout. That means a new Couples Run could be incorporated into the WBR 5k – a race within the race. Altogether, not a bad idea, right?

Richard Fannin has been working tirelessly and continuously to create a new running venue at the Cecil multi-use sports complex. He has organized several school and open cross-country events and has plans for much more. Soon he will install permanent markers to set out measured 5k and 10k courses. He intends to have dunes races over the Cecil sand dunes. Fannin has been thinking of reviving The Couples Run as a cross-country relay at Cecil. He is a man of action and if he's thinking it, then more than likely it will be brought to fruition. So, The Couples Run could make a comeback one way or the other. This is a nice prospect for runners as well as our club.

Nuts about Nuts

Americans are going nuts over nuts. No other snack food has enjoyed such a meteoric rise in popularity since the introduction of the potato chip. Spirited marketing campaigns, shifts in dietary patterns and a revised thinking on healthy eating have all fueled our collective appetite for nuts. Before you reach for that next handful, though, chew on some knowledge first.

We know that nuts feature an array of nutrients that are synonymous with heart health. However, when it comes to identifying these actual nutrients, a review is necessary. First of all, nuts are high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. These are the types of dietary fats that have been shown to lower bad cholesterol levels (LDL) in the body. In addition, nuts provide a good source of soluble fiber which helps to mop up cholesterol in our bloodstream by binding directly to LDL particles and eliminating them from the body. Nuts are also a terrific source of arginine, which is an amino acid that helps to make nitric oxide, which relaxes blood vessels and improves the health of artery walls.

Food marketing professionals have capitalized on the health aspects of nuts, but almost to a fault. Nuts have been shown to reduce cardiovascular disease, but only in a diet that is already considered heart-healthy. This means adding nuts to your hot fudge sundae is not

going to make that choice heart-healthy. One of the reasons people avoided nuts in the past was due to their high fat content, but since we know them now as "good fats," the true calorie cost gets lost in the shuffle, but not in our waistline. One ounce of most nuts, which is about the size of a golf ball, provides 170 calories. Those calories can add up quickly and can erase the health benefits if it promotes weight gain. Use small pre-portioned packages to help keep the calorie amounts in check. Check nutrition labels carefully since even small snack-size bags sold in grocery stores can have 250 calories.

An increase in demand for plant-based sources of protein is another factor that has helped raise per capita consumption of nuts from 2.6 pounds in 2000, to 4.8 pounds in 2017. However, picking the best overall nutritional choice proves to be a tough nut to crack. On average, almonds, peanuts and pistachios have the highest concentration of protein, at 6 to 7 grams per ounce, while walnuts provide the highest concentration of the healthy omega-three fat, alpha-linolenic acid. Each nut choice offers a slightly different arrangement of nutrients, but their ascension into the health halo may be simply due to their portability. They are non-perishable and typically won't get crushed in your gym bag. If they do, add them to a salad instead of a dish of ice cream.

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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 billkrause615@gmail.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, Tapestry Park: 1st Place Sports, Bottlenose Brewing, 3-6 miles. Contact: 620-9991

***NEW* Thursday 6:30 pm, Springfield:** Hyperion Brewery, 3-4 miles. Contact: Bill Dunn, wmdunn222@gmail.com

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.

