

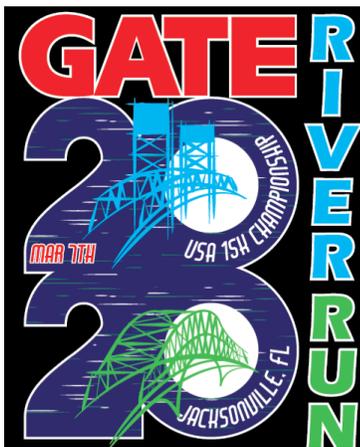


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THE
**STARTING
LINE**
NEWSLETTER



MARCH 7, 2020

The Starting Line

Letter from the Editor - Bob Fernee

As I write this, another year has passed and a new one is beginning. In fact, it is more than that, it is a decade ending and a new one sprinting out of the blocks. Where do all those years go? Should we be happy, sad, or worried about the pace? I'm not sure. I can remember when they said when the clocks change from 1999 to 2000 the world is going to come to an end.

There at our renowned newsletter, The Starting Line, we wish you all a healthy, happy and prosperous 2020. May this year be all that you want it to be.

To back up a bit, our 2019 race, The Last Gasp was a smashing success. It took place on Saturday, December 28 on the campus of Jacksonville University. We witnessed the largest crowd that we had seen in years. I believe it was the second-biggest turnout in the race's history, nearly eclipsing the record set in the early 1980s.

The day was nice, the course was in great shape, and the post-race bash was as wonderful as ever. On top of all that, I won a pair of the famous race award socks when I finished third in my age group, something that hasn't happened in I don't know how long. Thanks to race director Herb Taskett for putting together such a fine event. Herb completed his 32nd consecutive time as race director, a truly awesome accomplishment.

Not stopping there, JTC Running has already pulled off a track meet and our historic Winter Beach Run 10 and 5-mile races, both in January. Next is our blue-ribbon event, the Gate River Run. On March 7th the race takes place for the 43rd time. I know we are all focused on the main event, the 15k. I am taking my training seriously this time and hoping to put my best foot forward. Serious training is not something I have done in many years, so this is quite revolutionary as far as I am concerned.

This newsletter is also focused on the GRR and is serious about getting you ready for it. You will find The Starting Line jam-packed with articles about training, eating (fueling, I should say), and racing. There is history too. Jay Birmingham recalls when he measured and certified the first Gate River Run course, which, of course, was titled the River Run 15,000. The year was 1978 and it was a smaller event back then. Today we not only feature a 15k race but a 5k, a children's 1-mile, a special needs race, and the biggest crowd pleaser of them all – the Diaper Dash, for those who must do their racing on hands and knees. They win the award: Cutest of Them All.

In the beginning there was no runners' expo. It took five or so years for that to get going but once it did there was no stopping it. Today it is massive and takes up

the entire Jacksonville Fairgrounds building. This year's expo is sponsored by the TPC. When you collect your race packet be sure to look over the expo thoroughly, it is resplendent in great deals. Meaning that you can save a lot of money on running equipment that you would only buy later at a higher price.

In the old days there was no JTC Running hospitality tent. How did we do without it? At the tent you will find friends, food and drink, toiletry facilities and a safe place to stash your valuables. Best of all, when it is over, a place to just sit down.

Long-time club member, Everett Crum, has written a nice piece about not only our River Run "Streakers" but about streaking in general. In a way, I have continued that theme with an interview with one of our two remaining female Streakers, Anne Shumaker. I hope you enjoy those stories.

As far as distance running and track were concerned the 1980s were a special time. They were fast, very fast, and there were some great, memorable races. No one appreciates them more than our own Sean McCormack. He has written a very fine piece about the excitement and the excellence of the 1980s. You are going to love it.

One of the greats of track died in December, Peter Snell of New Zealand. He was a champion and a record-breaker and Jay Birmingham remembers him well. Jay's heartfelt writing about one of his running heroes is inside this issue.

Once again, nutritionist Jon Vredenburg has imparted some great advice. This time he looks at the advantages of a plant-based diet. Could this help you? Well, you better read and find out.

Our experts, Rob Coltman and Jeff Wight write about the differences of running on a flat terrain and running up and down hills. Just to make sure you get your money's worth in the Gate River Run you get to do all of that. To do it successfully you need to read both of their columns. Afterward, conquering the course and the Hart Bridge is all up to you. But yes, you can do it. I still remember that sign on the GRR course from a couple of years ago: "There will come a time when you won't be able to do this. But this is not that time." Run on, friends, run on.

We wish you luck. Have a great race in JTC Running's 2020 Gate River Run.

The Starting Line

President's Letter - Larry Roberts

Happy New Year!

We closed out 2019 with the best turnout for the Last Gasp Cross Country race that we've had in years- 299 registered! It was a warm day but great for a run and the course not too wet after recent rains. The awards ceremony was packed. We were in the chapel as the Kinne Center is being remodeled but a good time was had by all and we'll be back in the Kinne Center this year. We also had a good turnout for the Guana Trails Races in early December. If you enjoy running on something other than asphalt, keep these events in mind.

If you do like running on asphalt, the best race in the area, our Gate River Run, is just weeks away on March 7 this year. The Runners Expo on March 5 and 6 has a new sponsor this year, The Players Golf Tournament, which is the following week. The Club is bringing Dick Beardsley to town for the week. Watch our Facebook page for when he will be speaking and signing autographs. Be sure to drop by our booth at the Expo to pick up your wrist band for entry to the Club's awesome hospitality tent on race morning. As usual, we will be providing bag check, refreshments, and exclusive port-a-lets. For the race itself, Elite Runners Director Jim VanCleave, relates that we have an outstanding field vying for the USATF National 15k Championship.

Also, as usual, we will need volunteers to staff our booth and hospitality tent. Our booth will feature the Club's promotional video that debuted at the last awards banquet. Staffers will be explaining the benefits of club membership to Expo attendees and issuing hospitality tent wrist bands to members. For shifts and signup, go to JTCRunning.com/events or click [HERE](#) if you are reading the e-edition. At the tent volunteers will greet members at the entrance

and handle bag check. This is a good opportunity for students to earn volunteer hours. For tent shifts and signup go to JTCRunning.com/events or click [HERE](#) if you are reading the e-edition.

Plans have been made to shift the starting line to Duval Street to accommodate the Hart Bridge ramp demolition. The late word is that the project may not start until after race day, so it may be possible to stay with the traditional start on Gator Bowl Blvd. Stay tuned!

The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), which works for improved conditions for runners, walkers, and cyclists in the city has elected co-chairpersons for 2020. Chris Burns and Healy Dwyer will be leading the committee, which includes our Club Secretary, and sub-3-hour marathoner, Errol Daniels, Jr. as well as myself. At the City of Jacksonville Planning Department, Karissa Moffett is the new Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, and has really hit the ground running. We are fortunate to have her.

Prep work on the Emerald Trail first Model Project segment continues with the Trail Implementation Committee (on which I represent the Club) meeting monthly to detail final design criteria. Actual construction is scheduled to begin in October.

All in all, these are exciting times for running in Jacksonville and JTC Running and its members play a significant role!



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Sheila	Novotny	Amber	Slimp		
Jon	Olson	Laura	Smith		
Jeniffer	Orzatty	Rodney	Smith		
Bobbie	Palmer	Nicholas	Soroka		
Jeff	Palmer	Michael	Sperry		
Kimberley	Parrott	Brittainy	Stalvey		
Tina	Pastor	Bobby	Stevens		
Sarah	Patterson	Janet	Swaim		
Kim	Pawelek Brantly	Ian	Swann		

Meat or Plants: Which is a Runner's Best Friend?

The popularity of plant-based eating is in full bloom. More plant-based options are available in grocery stores and restaurants now than ever before. A recent survey conducted by the Nutrition Business Journal revealed that 1 in 4 consumers have reduced the amount of meat they have eaten in the previous 12 months. Popular documentaries like Netflix's Game Changers are also sharing success stories from athletes who have switched to plant-based diets.

What does this mean for a performance-hungry runner? Like anything in the world of nutrition, it is important to tread carefully.

First of all, a plant-based approach to eating is not the same as a vegan diet. Plant-based diets may feature plants (obviously) as the centerpiece for meal-planning, but it does not mean all animal products are avoided, as is the case with a vegan diet. The research firm Nielsen showed that just six percent of Americans eat vegetarian, but close to 40 percent are making the effort to eat more plant-based foods overall.

In terms of performance improvement, a May 2019 study in the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition compared performance among vegans, vegetarians and omnivores (AKA meat-eaters) in a single exercise-capacity test. The results showed that despite the nutritional differences in the diets, exercise capacity was similar. Although the study did not control for different training levels, it does support the notion that people can succeed with a variety of nutritional approaches. The bottom-line is to get adequate energy and nutrients from a variety of foods.

The best nutrition advice is to practice with a variety of foods to see what your stomach can handle and how you feel during the run. Going into a race like the Gate River Run does not present much of a demand on glycogen stores since it is only 15K. Therefore, consuming large amounts of gels or other carbohydrate items is often not necessary. Fluids* are the part of your training diet that will need the most attention during the race. Most runners do well by having a small breakfast about three hours before the race starts. This meal also helps top off energy reserves in the liver after an overnight fast, and will keep you from feeling hungry when the race starts. Peanut butter and honey on toast or oatmeal with a banana are good examples of carb-rich foods to get you off the starting line.

*General hydration guidelines in moderate weather

Before: Drink 17–20 oz. about two hours before your run.

During: Drink about 5–10 oz. of water every 15–20 minutes while running.

After: For every pound lost while running, drink 16–24 oz. of water (beer does not count ☺)

Editor's note: If you are interested in, or perplexed by, this subject Jon suggests that you follow up on these two sites: <https://www.mysportscience.com/single-post/2019/11/06/ls-game-changers-game-changing-or-is-it-sensationalism> and <https://bit.ly/2R1meDI>

The Streakers

When a local runner sees the name streaker, they most likely think of the Gate River Run streakers. The non-runner probably thinks of singer Ray Stevens and his hit song, *The Streak*. That is, of course, if he can remember Ray Stevens at all. The first River Run 15,000 had over 2,000 participants. I'm sure that most of them returned the following year, so all that did were then RR streakers. I think when the name "River Run Streakers" was first used they were in the hundreds. It's now down to a few dozen and every year it becomes less. With each passing year, to be a RR streaker, it becomes more meaningful and significant. Thus, every year some travel many miles just to keep their streak going. I don't know who keeps record of this but the last published list that I saw, a few years back, showed 59 runners, including three women, that had done all of the River Runs. Looking over the list today, I see at least 5 or 6 names that are no longer RR streakers. Each year the list gets shorter. Who will be the last man standing? Or woman, we still have two girls running strong. I won't be around to find out, so I'll offer my congratulations now. I was kind of pulling for Anne Shumaker but I guess the last one will probably be the youngest. Anyway, congratulations to you, whoever you are, for quite an accomplishment. It was a long enduring streak. I'm sure JTC Running will honor your name for this achievement with at least a permanent plaque enshrined in the River Run's Hall of Fame.

Our River Run 15k, thanks to founder, Buck Fannin, long-time race director, Doug Alfred, our track club, the generous sponsor, Gate

Petroleum Co., and others, carries one of the most noted streaks in all of running, locally or elsewhere. But there are many other streaking records for different events, mileage, duration, ages etc. There are streaks per days, months, years, etc. There are so many different types of streaks that the *Runner's World* magazine recently devoted an entire issue to streakers. I'll mention only a few. One that I recall is a family that runs together every day. Their 6-year-old son had a record for being the youngest to run at least a mile every day for more than a year. However, his 4-year-old sister just broke his record. Now that's sibling rivalry. There's a 70-year-old guy that has run 8 miles on the beach every day for 45 years. He says different people come and join him on his daily runs. He estimates that over the years there have been about 4,000 different folks that have run with him. *Runner's World* also reports that there is a lady that ran 60 marathons in 60 days. It is documented as a world marathon streak. A couple other marathon streaks: The record for the most marathons won in a row is 30 and the most consecutive years of running the Boston marathon is 56. Then there's Ron Hill, the British runner that holds the record for the longest streak of running every day -- 52 years and 39 days without a miss. There's a guy who is the oldest to ever start a streak. He began at age 80 in 2015, and is still streaking. Usain Bolt has a streak of winning both the 100 and 200 meters in three consecutive Olympics. The list of different types of streaks goes on and on. *Runner's World* recommends setting a goal for a streak such as running between two significant dates, such as Memorial Day to the 4th of July. This is only 39 days, but knowing

The Streakers

your goal will keep you motivated and this can lead you to becoming a runner, or a better runner if you already are one. Runner's World tells of one lady that had many health problems and never had the motivation to run until she did a streak. Her streak got her into running. She says "I'm a Beast Now." The streak addition of RW tells many other stories of documented streaking records.

Besides the Gate River Run, there are also many other local streaks. I think it was club member Rodney Smith that once held the streak for the most consecutive days of running. The late naval captain and running coach, Chuck Cornett had a marathon streak of running a marathon a month for a year. I once had a streak for consecutive wins starting with an inaugural event. I won the

masters category or my age group for the first eleven Florida Striders' Twilight Run 5k races in Orange Park. There were twelve of those races and I missed the last one because of a death in the family. There are many other local runners with different types of streaks. I'm sure Jay Birmingham must have a few.

And finally, the first known genuine "streaker" to gain fame was Michael O'Brien who streaked across the field at a rugby match in 1974 at the University of Notre Dame completely nude. Maybe he was the inspiration for that Ray Stevens song, it was the same year. Therefore, streaking does have the potential to get you running and to keep you running, so keep on streaking and run well.

Wide World of Running: The Measure of a Course

Forty-five years ago in Northeast Florida, there were no certified courses. What we take for granted in the 21st Century, a 5 kilometer course that is 5,000 meters long, was yet to come. Courses were measured in cars, jeeps, or dead reckoning. In the pre-GPS era, we learned to accept crude measurements.

The Summer Beaches Run, a 5-miler from Hannah Park to the Lifeguard Station in Jacksonville Beach, was representative. Lamar Strother had sunk a cement block high in the dunes just south of a rickety wooden staircase at the park. The lifeguard station didn't move. So the SBR was at least standardized. We ran the same course, year after year.

But when Buck Fannin introduced the idea of a long

race through various neighborhoods and across some of Jacksonville bridges, we knew it was a good idea. The resulting event, of course, was the River Run. We thought first of a 10 kilometer event, then a 10-miler. The less frequently run 15 km distance was agreed on. But how to measure it?

Happily, I had moved south from the Dayton, Ohio area where virtually all our courses were accurately measured and certified. My good friend, Steve Price, was cutting edge in the sport of road racing. His metric road race series in Monroe attracted runners from a 200 mile radius. But how did he do it? Contact Ted Corbitt in New York, he told me. So I did.

Corbitt, the premier ultramarathoner in the country at the time, was also head of RRCA's standards

Wide World of Running: The Measure of a Course

committee. For a few bucks, he sent me a Clain-Jones counter for my bicycle and instructions on how to certify a road race course.

Some fundamentals: Using a steel tape, measure an absolutely straight road for ½ mile, 1 kilometer, or 1 mile. Re-measure the course with the steel tape, marking each 100 foot section with nails for accuracy. Repeat until two measurements are within a couple of inches.

That becomes your calibration course. Attach the counter to the front wheel of the bicycle. The tires must be fully inflated on a moderate day. If the temperature or tire pressure changes substantially, one must start over. Ride the course four times, recording the number of clicks. Repeat until validity is established. Now your bike is certified.

The River Run 15,000 (the original name) started and finished one block east of the Main Street Bridge. I measured the course from the start to the base of the Hart Bridge several times, one foot from every curb (per Corbitt's instructions), coming to within ten meters each time.

But how does one measure the Hart Bridge? Instead of measuring the course on the sly (it would have been difficult with the toll booths on the south side), we asked the city permission to measure the bridge. No soap. We were stymied.

At the time I worked for Tompkins-Beckwith, a mechanical contracting firm. Through connections at work, we secured copies of the blueprints of the Hart Bridge. With the assistance of experts at T-B, we measured the bridge with engineer's precision.

The rest, past the Gator Bowl and back to the

start, was completed with the calibrated bike. The course was done and we sent our paperwork to TAC. A few weeks later—hooray! The River Run course was certified.

The running boom continued, races proliferated like rabbits, but most of them continued to be measured by cars.

Our acid test was in the race's second year. Kim Merritt won the women's division and (Gasp!) set a new American Record. The paperwork was submitted and we got word that a team from TAC would come to Jacksonville to check the accuracy of our course. We were apprehensive, to say the least.

Long story short, they biked the course (with police escort across the Hart) and pronounced the course accurate, in fact, a respectable 27 meters long. Whew!

Years pass and most of the races in the area are certified. No more running a five kilometer PR that will never be approached because the course is less than 3 miles long.

Should you wear your GPS and record your mileage to the hundredths and your times to the tenths of seconds? Go ahead if you are compulsive, obsessive, or just nuts. I'm all for accuracy but equally happy to run without a watch on a course of unknown length.

But if I pay the entry fee and fill out the form, give me an accurate course every time. Our hard training deserves not just a fair race, but an accurate one.

Jay Birmingham has mis-measured some courses in his life but all of them measured with a calibrated bicycle are accurate.

Tips for successful Gate Run and Hart Bridge Biomechanics



Bio: **Jeff T. Wight, PhD**

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Director, JU Running Laboratory at 1st Place Sports

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The Gate River Run is just around the corner! As always, the Hart Bridge will be ready, willing, and able to gobble us up at mile eight. However, with preparation, we can tame, and even defeat the beast. In this article, I will provide a few simple biomechanical tips for the Gate River Run with particular focus on the Hart Bridge.

Overall Goal: Establish and maintain a nice rhythm (for the entire race)

This is a good goal for any race. Unfortunately, as we all know, keeping your rhythm is easier said than done! Most runners have several humorous stories about losing focus, losing mechanics, losing confidence, and/or “blowing up” during races. Achieving Gate River Run rhythm is particularly challenging—it requires some extra attention and preparation.

The greatest threat, of course, is the monster Hart Bridge. Additional threats worth preparing for include:

- tendency to start too fast (thanks to the high energy of the event)
- running in a large crowd
- some sharp turns and minor changes in elevation and terrain
- the length of the race (9.3 miles!)

Here are some general biomechanical tips to focus on while preparing for the Gate River Run:

Tip #1: Focus much attention on your cadence during training and while racing.

In the JU Running Biomechanics Laboratory, I continually notice that the most elite runners always run with a similar cadence; their “drum beat” is similar at slower and fast paces. Their feet look quick, lively, and rhythmic (at all paces).

When you begin a run, immediately focus on your cadence. Avoid taking slow steps (and waiting for your legs to loosen up). Instead, immediately begin running with a high cadence. Take short quick steps. This will immediately focus your brain and get in a rhythm. As you loosen up, your stride length will increase, but your cadence will remain the same. This approach simplifies running... Any time you run, no matter the day, the pace, the surface, play that one drum beat in your head. This consistent and quick cadence is the key to establishing and maintaining rhythm when you run.

Similarly, when you complete turns, keep that same drum beat. To do this, you will have to shorten your stride a bit and keep your feet moving at the same quick cadence. Shortening your stride a bit is a good approach; short quick steps will keep your brain in its rhythm and prevent your leg muscles from fatiguing while dealing with these minor challenges.

Tip #2: Develop versatile legs.

If you can, try completing a trail run once per week as you prepare for the Gate River Run. Ideally, it would be a relatively challenging trail with some roots, turns, hills, etc. When running on challenging terrain like this, each step will be slightly different, and your legs will be loaded in many different ways. This will make your legs more “versatile”.

Tips for successful Gate Run and Hart Bridge Biomechanics

Having versatile legs can be important when “running with the masses” in a large race like the Gate River Run. For example, when running in a pack, quite often you will need to shift laterally and accelerate to pass slower runners. Having versatile legs will help you maintain your rhythm and confidence while you navigate through and around others. Similarly, you will be less susceptible to losing your rhythm to changing race surfaces (bricks, metal bridge, angled road, etc.), turns, and changing elevation. Trails runs are another great way to make your “easy runs” productive and enjoyable.

Tip #3: Train faster than your Gate River Run pace.

A great strategy for the Gate River Run confidence is to “over-prepare” for your Gate River Run pace. Probably the easiest/most enjoyable way to do this is to run two or more shorter races in the weeks leading up to the Gate River Run. The classic preparatory race for the Gate River Run is the 5-mile Ortega River Run (two weeks before). Having 5k to 5-mile races “fresh on your mind” certainly can be advantageous; this can minimize the intimidation of your Gate River Run pace (knowing you recently have trained at paces that are faster than your target pace). This can help you to relax and establishing a rhythm.

Tip #4: Train longer than the Gate River Run distance.

Similarly, it certainly feels great to enter the Gate River Run with a well-established long run. Our top local marathoners typically establish 20-mile long runs. For the Gate River Run, for safety and confidence, you should establish a long-run of at least 10 miles. Ideally, your long run is well-beyond the length of the race, such as 16 miles. That will do wonders for your fitness and confidence. Eliminate the threat of the race distance and you will be able to relax and focus on your race rhythm.

Tip #5: Practice uphill biomechanics.

It's great to have serious game plan for the Hart Bridge. Do not rely on “mental toughness”; instead rely on sound technique. The key is to maintain your race rhythm as you climb the bridge. Keep that same exact drum beat in your head that you have been using the entire race. Keep your feet moving quickly and maintain your high cadence. The only way you will be able to do this is by shortening your stride some. You should lean forward slightly and take “short and choppy” steps. This approach will keep the muscular effort “moderate” for your leg muscles. Use this approach to prevent your legs from “burning out”. If your legs do start burning then shorten your stride more. Ideally, when climbing the bridge, your lungs are the limiting factor, not your legs.

Tip #6: Practice uphill biomechanics.

Training uphill will pay big dividends. Practice the technique of short and choppy steps at your normal cadence. After 3-4 practice sessions, your legs will adapt. Then, your uphill stride length and running speed will become closer to your flat surface running. The key is to gradually build up your bridge running biomechanics (just like you gradually build up your speed training and distance training).

Tip #7: Practice downhill running biomechanics.

The absolute “no-no” for downhill running is to land with your foot too far out in front of your body. This will “put the brakes” on your downward momentum and place massive loads on your quadriceps and knee. The key, when running downhill, is to land with your foot “under” your body instead of out front.

To accomplish this safe and effective foot landing, focus on running with “high knees”. Once your knee is elevated, avoid “reaching out front” with your foot. Instead, let your foot fall and land gently below your body.

Once your foot lands, you will not need to focus

Tips for successful Gate Run and Hart Bridge Biomechanics

on “pushing” yourself forward much at all (since you are running downhill). Instead, you will need to focus on keeping your feet moving quickly.

Once again, focus on maintaining that same drum beat in your head; the goal is to keep your cadence high and similar to your flat running cadence. Maintain that race rhythm down the bridge just like you did up the bridge...

Tip #8: Develop bridge confidence.

In the Gate River Run, you will run up and over the Hart Bridge—one repetition up and one repetition down. An obvious way to develop bridge confidence is to complete multiple repetitions of bridges during training. Also, it would be ideal if you could incorporate bridges (or uphill repeats) into the second half of your long run, when you are fatigued (just like you will be in the race).

ADVANCED TIPS

I will close by sharing some more advanced workout options from three of our great local coaches/runners.

Paul McRae

<http://prsrunningclub.com/>

Paul coaches hundreds of local runners. Here are

a couple more advanced workouts Paul shared for Gate River Run preparation.

1) Sprint 8-10 X 100 meters uphill with a slow jog down as recovery.

- Exaggerate your arm swing
- Lean into the hill
- Focus on pushing off with the balls of your feet

2) Run 4-8 X 200-400 meters.

- Run the first half at your goal race pace effort
- Accelerate the last 50 meters of the hill
- Jog back down as recovery

Julie Stackhouse

Julie is one of the top female runners in NE Florida. She wrote this article for 904 Fitness that shares stair climbing and cross training for runners.

<http://www.904fitness.com/time-to-step-it-up/>

Ron Grigg

At JU, Coach Ron Grigg regularly uses these two approaches with the CC runners

- Incorporate campus hills into tempo runs
- Complete a few hard 200 meter uphill repeats

Special Thanks!

CONGRATULATIONS!

WINNERS OF JTC RUNNING'S GUANA TRAIL RACES

50K: PATRICK BALLWEG & KELLY POURCIAU

12K: NICHOLAS HOLIAN & DARIEN ANDREU

AND THANKS! TO ALL GUANA VOLUNTEERS & WORKERS

Wild World of Running: Peter Snell and the New Zealand Olympians

Peter Snell, knight of the British Empire, won three Olympic gold medals, two in the 800 meters (1960, 1964) and the 1500 meters (1964). His races in Tokyo were dominant; he held both world records. Snell died in December 2019, just a few days short of his 81st birthday.

I was a high school freshman in 1979-1980, a half-miler. Like everyone else in the world, I thought Roger Moens of Belgium, the world record holder in the 800, would win in Rome. Jamaica's George Kerr was a threat, and I was rooting for Americans Murphy, Cunliffe and Siebert. Snell, as pundits would say now, was completely off the radar.

Just 21 years old, Snell was large for a distance runner, about 5-feet-10, 170 pounds. He was only the third fastest New Zealander in 1959 but ran a few strong races that earned him Olympic selection. Many countries' Olympic teams were (and are still) picked by committees of old bureaucrats rather than through Olympic Trials races.

Snell ran stronger in each heat and semi-final at the 1960 Rome Olympics: Prelims--1:48.1 (a PR), Quarter-finals 1:48.5 later the same day (second behind Moens). The next day, Semi-final in 1:47.1 to win; and the next day, first place in the Olympic Final, 1:46.3. Four races in three days, three PRs, one gold medal and an Olympic Games record.

One hour later, one of Snell's training mates, Murray Halberg, dashed to victory in the 5,000 meters, boldly surging with three laps to go and tenaciously holding on. A few days later, Barry Magee, another training partner, captured the bronze medal in the marathon.

New Zealand suddenly was on the world distance running map. Snell, Halberg, and Magee were coached by a stocky middle-aged marathon runner named Arthur Lydiard, a milkman and shoe maker. Snell and Lydiard affected my own running and coaching since then.

Lydiard, an unpaid coach, encouraged and advised anyone who came to him, from neighborhood joggers to Olympic hopefuls. Visited after the 1960 Olympics by the University of Oregon's Bill Bowerman, inventor of waffle-soled shoes, Lydiard was so inspiring that Bowerman returned to Oregon and started jogging programs in Eugene.

Snell, Halberg, Magee, Bill Bailee, and John Davies, all Olympians, followed Lydiard's philosophy that for all runners (and other sportsmen), endurance is the missing element, not speed. By spending large portions of the year building a high mileage base, the athlete could then absorb strength training (hills) and speed work without injury or fatigue.

Snell was often asked about his "speed work" and he credited the 100-mile weeks for most of his improvement. Snell was usually the slowest "sprinter" in most of his world-class races, but he could force the pace and destroy his competition over the final 300 meters with a sustained surge. The deep endurance allowed him to find his leg speed when tired.

By 1964, Snell had set eight world records including the mile (3:54.1) and the half-mile (1:45.1). He enjoyed successful tours in the United States and Europe, most of the time beating the best runners of that era. He arrived at the Tokyo Games a favorite to medal in both the 800 meters and the 1500.

Snell did not disappoint; he ran four 800 meter races in three days, and won the 800 gold medal, breaking his 1960 Olympic record. Next day, Snell placed fourth place in his 1500 meter heat to advance to the semi-finals. Then he finally got a day off. He jogged an easy hour.



Wild World of Running: Peter Snell and the New Zealand Olympians

He won his semifinal of the 1500, a race that was very fast and "sounded the death knell for most of the others who got through," Snell wrote in his autobiography, *No Bugles, No Drums*.

Nine runners contested the Olympic 1500 final; only Snell was still strong. He jogged an hour the morning of the race. In the race, teammate John Davies took over with 800 meters to go, to ensure a fast pace. Davies knew his medal chances rested on stamina, not kicking.

Snell took the lead with 250 meters to go and quickly opened a 15-meter gap. His final 300 was 38.6 seconds, a 400-meter pace of 51.5. Davies held on for the bronze medal.

* * * * *

In 1979, I hosted Arthur Lydiard at my home in Jacksonville. He spoke at our Phidippides Running Center in Arlington and at a dinner I held at The Tree steak house. Each of his three speeches hammered the concept of consistent training and high mileage. "A runner who takes a day or two off each week gets in 50 to 100 fewer days of training than his competition." And, "Everyone has plenty of leg speed to succeed; most simply lack endurance."

Lydiard and his athletes were masters of peaking for championship races. Lydiard composed a list of The 21 Factors that affect an athlete's racing. The number one factor? The date of the race.

In 1996, I drove from Nebraska, where I was teaching and coaching at Dana College, to Memphis to attend a professional seminar for physiologists and coaches. The topic: Overtraining in Sport. Peter Snell was the keynote speaker all three days.

In 1975, Snell had won \$21,000 in the ABC Sports "Superstars" competition. He used his winnings to study at the University of Texas and earn his doctorate in exercise physiology. His research: why high volume, (relatively) low speed training, (like

Lydiard's) worked. Snell said that when his training group began speed work, most of them could not run 10 x 220 yards in 30 seconds. But by three or four weeks, most had regained all their speed and 20 x 220 yards in 25 seconds with jogging rest was "easy".

Snell's muscle cell research revealed that not only do slow-twitch muscle fibers develop more capillaries and more mitochondria; fast-twitch muscle fibers are recruited on all runs beyond one hour, even at slow speeds. Those "speed" muscles also developed more capillaries and mitochondria. Recovery from hard training sessions was also far more rapid.

Snell competed in an era of amateur track and field athletics. Officials strictly controlled travel, out-of-country competition, and compensation. Sports Illustrated magazine featured Snell in a pre-Olympic edition in 1964. I was a freshman in college, still believing that the half-mile was my best event. Snell was described as "a Sherman tank with overdrive." I wanted to be like him.

It was ten years before I ran my first 100-mile training week.

But the principles that made Snell successful have been part of my coaching philosophy for life.



Is the Green Monster Gonna Get Ya?

It's just about that time of the year again for JAX-area runners' annual face-off with the Green Monster! The Green Monster is the nickname of the iconic, green-colored, Hart Bridge on the 15K (9.3-miles) Gate River Run course. What makes this race so special, and difficult, is that the Hart Bridge is situated in the last 2 miles of the course. This makes race strategy, AND specific hill training, very important for a successful, injury-free race.

This bridge truly is a unique challenge for a runner who typically runs on flat terrain. The incline of the bridge is 6%, it's approximately 1/2 mile up, 1/2+ mile down, and it's just over 140 feet high. This amount of incline, and length of the bridge/spans, makes the effort over the bridge challenging to the body, both going up, AND going down...especially after running so many hard miles first.

Although there are many runners who understand the benefits of hill training and include it as a regular part of their training, some runners begin training for the Gate River Run by just making sure to run a few bridge repeats, or by raising the incline on a treadmill, to get ready for the bridge.

Although including hill training on a more regular basis is ideal, adding in hill training pre-event is still beneficial both for performance at the race, as well as for being more injury resilient on race day, as the bridge effort is gradually prepared for versus the risky strategy of running the bridge as the first and only hill of the year.

The reason that this strategy is risky for the Gate River Run, as well as any race with a hilly course, is because the biomechanics of up and downhill running are significantly different than that of running on flat terrain, and one needs to be prepared properly to avoid injury, and to have an optimal performance.

When running uphill versus running flat, it's intuitive that we see a significant 75% increase in overall propulsive force, meaning an increase in the muscular effort required of most of the muscles of the lower extremities to go up the hill. We see the most significant increases in the use of the gluteal and hip flexor muscle groups, as well as the gastrocnemius and soleus (posterior calf muscles). We also see a smaller, but significant increase in the use of the quad and hamstring groups. Additionally, the muscles contract more predominantly concentrically than when running on the flat, which means that they are contracting

and shortening at the same time, which is actually an easier type of muscular contraction. When running uphill versus flat we also see a significant reduction in ground reaction or impact forces through the lower extremity.

Additionally, we observe an increase in step rate, or cadence, heading up the hill.

When we go down the hill, ground reaction, or impact forces, significantly increase compared to the flat, to the tune of 52%. Braking forces (opposite of propulsive forces above) increase even more to 73%. Propulsive forces significantly drop compared to uphill and even flat. Muscular contraction shifts to becoming more eccentric, which means that the muscle is contracting and lengthening at the same time, which is associated with more muscular effort, delayed onset muscle soreness and injury, and is a response to the increase in impact forces as well as having to control the runner as she/he heads down the hill. Step rate tends to decrease compared to flat and up hill running.

Whew! That is a lot of variation in what happens on hills compared to flat running! And we didn't even mention the specific differences in which muscles activate more with downhill running. My point here is NOT to exhaustively review the biomechanics of uphill and downhill running, but to show that the physiologic requirements of running hills are VERY different than what is required on flat terrain, and that specific hill training is necessary for the best performance possible, as well as to avoid injury, especially with the huge increase in effort and impact that occurs when facing a long downhill in a race like the Gate River Run. The addition of hill training safely can be tricky, so if you have any questions about it, reach out to one of our Jacksonville area coaches, or to one of us at the clinic.

Slay the 'Green Monster' this year safely, with some progressive hill training moving up to the event!

Rob Coltman, PT, MPT, OCS, MTC

Board Certified Orthopedic Specialist

Physical Therapist/Owner

Coltman & Baughman Physical Therapy

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JTC Running's Anne Shumaker: Runner & Fighter

During the 1970s and 1980s she was a common sight in every local race. She showed prominently in every one of them, including the Jacksonville Track Club's exclusive 'Women's Run 5k' (very rare in those days, a "women-only" race), which she won. Anne Shumaker ran the first River Run 15,000 in 1978 and has run every one of them ever since. Sadly, she has had some very serious health troubles during the past several years and her participation in this year's race is touch-and-go, as they say. It is only fitting that The Starting Line feature her as another River Run approaches.

Bob Fernee: Might as well start at the beginning; how, when and where did you start running?

Anne Shumaker: I saw the movie "See How She Runs" about a woman deciding to train for a marathon. This was 1977. Then a TV ad for the 1st River Run got me interested.

BF: What were your earliest impressions of running?

AS: I enjoyed all sports so running was a nice outlet for me. Jay Birmingham sold me a pair of shoes and off I went!

BF: Did you have any early mentors or influences?

AS: Jay Birmingham and his wife at the time Anita, Rodney Smith, and Buck Fannin, and Pat Sher.

BF: Was there something that made you say to yourself, "this is something I really want to do"?

AS: It was great because there was no set time to train and you did not need to be on a team so I could just jog whenever.

BF: When did you first join the Jacksonville Track Club and why?

AS: 1st Place Sports and Doug Alred got me interested in joining probably in 1978.

BF: Can you recall any of your early races and your accomplishments?

AS: Every race was a new adventure, so I got hooked fast! I did well, I thought, so I wanted to improve each race. River Run and the Ortega River Run 5-miler have always been my favorites.

BF: You were one of the best in the area, do you remember any of your personal records (PRs)?

AS: Run to the Sun 5k 18:03, River Run 57:52, and the Jax. Marathon 3 hrs. 2 min

BF: What was your training like back in the day?

AS: I ran around 24-32 miles a week. Maybe 3 or 4 miles during the week and 5 or 6 on the weekend.

BF: What do you remember about the first River Run 15,000 in 1978, and what was your finish like?

AS: It was a beautiful, sunny day and with my green shorts and New Balance 320s I thought I was soooo cool! It was exhilarating! I had never run that far, and I stayed at an 8-minute mile pace, which I couldn't believe!

BF: You are one of the exalted "Streakers" of the River Run, you have run them all. There are only two female Streakers, you and Carol Newby. What is it like to be a Streaker? Do you ever feel that it is a monkey on your back?

AS: It's not a monkey on my back and I have been proud to keep the streak alive!

BF: Were there any moments when you thought you were going to lose your streak?

AS: In 1980 when I was 5 months pregnant and then after liver surgery in 2015.

BF: Besides the name, you've seen a lot of changes in the GRR over the years, what do you



JTC Running's Anne Shumaker: Runner & Fighter

think?

AS: I liked the original course the best, but every year has been exciting...it has never gotten old.

BF: Which was your favorite River Run and your most unfavorable River Run and why?

AS: The first River Run 15,000 was my favorite and my least favorite was in 2019 because I felt like I was getting "old" and I lost that loving feeling

BF: Other than the Gate River Run, what are your favorite local races?

AS: Ortega River Run 5-mile

BF: You have had a very bad time over the years with cancer, I know this is difficult, but could you tell us about it?

AS: I was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2015 and had major liver surgery in October of that year. I

went through CT scans and MRI's for the next four years until the latest discovery that the cancer had metastasized to my lungs this past Sept. 2019. I had my left lobe removed and part of lower lobe and have just completed 20 some treatments of radiation for the right lung, I am currently undergoing chemotherapy, which has been a real challenge, ugh!

BF: Will you be there on March 7 for this year's Gate River Run?

AS: Today I would say, "NO" but come March 7th I could just jump in and walk!... never know (:

BF: In conclusion, is there anything else that you would like to say? Now's your chance.

AS: Jogging/running has been such an important part of my life. I think the friends and people I have met along the way, the best part.

Special Thanks!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF JTC RUNNING'S
THE LAST GASP**

ANDREW MCGONIGLE AND KAYLEY DELAY

CONGRATULATIONS!

WINNERS OF JTC RUNNING'S GUANA TRAIL RACES

50K: PATRICK BALLWEG & KELLY POURCIAU

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Running Rewind...Back to the Golden Age of the 80's

Recently, as I started to lose more and more performance, and realized that I was looking at my running & racing mortality in the mirror, I started reflecting on what I, and many from my generation, considered the golden days of distance running in the U.S. Yes, the same decade that brought us perhaps the worst fashion statements of all time... those wonderful 1980s. Since I started my running career at the beginning of the decade in 1981, it's easy to look back and reflect on how profound the decade was on shaping the sport. So, in my humble opinion, here are the main factors that defined the 80s

The 1980s was truly the decade of the "international runner".

- Network TV carried many of these premier races from start to finish, giving rise to iconic and recognizable role models that inspired thousands.
- The number of elite distance-running athletes exploded, and records fell in droves.
- Training was intense, not only for the elite, but for those that aspired to be, leading to races where dozens, if not hundreds, of runners were running very fast.

Unlike the fashion disaster, the 80s were perhaps the most significant decade in the history of distance running. Stars were easily recognizable, as unlike today, many of the premier races were broadcast live on network TV preceding the cable days of hundreds of channels. Perhaps Frank Shorter, with his gold medal marathon performance in 1972 laid the foundation on what was to come. Certainly, certain pockets of the country began to embrace the sport, and the legendary duels that followed throughout the 1970s between Shorter and Bill Rodgers began to captivate a growing cult of aspiring runners. Add to that the iconic legend of Steve Prefontaine, and America had a trifecta that

launched the popularity of distance running into the decade of the 80s.

On the women's side, the emergence of the great Grete Waitz from Norway, Allison Roe and Anne Audain from New Zealand, as well as America's Patti Catalano and the amazing Joan Benoit. Little did we know that their influence would go far beyond the United States, and create a worldwide explosion far beyond our shores, producing some of the greatest middle and distance runners we have ever seen. Elite runners at the turn of the 1980s began to emerge from Mexico, England and the British Isles, Ireland, Australia, Japan, and of course the seeds were being sowed for the awakening of the North Africans. In fact, our very own River Run was experiencing significant growth and stature, and the winners of our local national treasure became a mirror image of international influence for what was seen at other premier races.

On the men's side, Bill Rodgers won in 1978, launching the stage for the 80s, and he was followed by some of the sport's greats, such as Nick Rose in 1983 from England, Arturo Barrios from Mexico in 1986 and 87. On the women's side Joan Benoit in 1979 shot us into the 1980s to be followed by Patti Catalano from the U.S. in 1981, and then the awesome Grete Waitz from Norway in 1986 and 87. These stars helped define the decade, and below I will highlight some of the performances that captivated and influenced my running motivation. I wish I could write in greater detail, but literally a novel could easily be penned on such an extraordinary 10 years.

Luckily for me, I was caught up in the fever, and began running in 1981. I was inspired by Bill Rodgers and his dominance at Boston and New



Running Rewind...Back to the Golden Age of the 80's

York Marathons. Four-time winner of both races, he was the world's best and lived close by in my home state of Massachusetts. And then the torch was passed to another local who grew up in Wayland, the town next to me...the incomparable Alberto Salazar, whose brashness and confidence, that he backed up with record performances, made him larger than life. The back-to-back duels in the New York Marathon with Rodolfo Gomez from Mexico in the early 1980s I will never forget. And the famous 1982 Duel in the Sun with Dick Beardsley at Boston is an all-time classic. Who could forget Salazar, completely dehydrated and on the verge of collapse the last few miles, ten days after setting the American 10k record of 27:25 on the track in Eugene, Oregon. But he refused to yield to Beardsley, clinging to the fact that if it came down to the last 200-meters he had the leg speed to win. Only champions could persevere through that agony of dehydration and hypothermia, and indeed he mustered the will to outkick Beardsley 2:08:51 to 2:08:53 in an epic duel in which he collapsed at the finish.

At the same time, we had the British invasion as well as the emergence of iconic champions from Australia and Japan. In January 1982 I signed up for a running excursion through a running travel agency in Boston to run the Bermuda Marathon. Sounded fun...and flat...but boy was I mistaken. Bermuda is a volcanic eruption of diverse topography that is anything but flat. (Wish I had done my homework.) The marathon was on Sunday, but the day before was an international world class 10k. I was extremely excited to watch that race and rub elbows with some of the best in the world that I had followed closely. The defending champion was Geoff Smith from England, who at the time was an unknown student at Providence College. New to the running scene, Geoff was a firefighter in Liverpool who took up running at age 21 to get in shape for soccer. Little did the running

world know what was coming...Geoff demolished the course record by over a full minute in 28:14 and won by an astounding 44 seconds. Geoff was only 17 seconds off the world record on the roads at the time, and he did this on a course that can only be described as running on a roller coaster at Coney Island. At the evening reception, the best runners in the world were speechless...that someone could run that fast on that course. It was the greatest performance I ever saw up close and personal. Simply put, you are not supposed to win a world class 10k by 44 seconds. Of course, Geoff went on to be ranked #1 in the world in 10K in 1983 and twice won the Boston Marathon.

Then, was the emergence of Steve Jones from Wales. Perhaps turning in two of the most dominating marathon performances ever, breaking the world record in Chicago in back-to-back years in 1984 and 1985. His 2:07:12 in 1985 was breathtaking as he ran alone dominating the world #1 Rob DeCastella of Australia and 1984 Olympic gold medalist Carlos Lopes of Portugal. (it's a great performance on YouTube.)

At the same time, the North African athletes began to emerge on the world scene. My clearest memory was Miruts Yifter, who took gold in both the 5,000 and 10,000-meter gold medals at the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Known for his devastating kick, he was known as "Yifter the Shifter," and became an inspirational role model for the running youth in Ethiopia, eventually resulting in the arrival in the 1990s of what some consider a pair of the greatest distance runners of all time, Haile Gebresalassie and his countryman Kenenisa Bekele.

On the women's side, I loved watching "Grete the Great" as Grete Waitz, who between 1978 and 1988 won nine New York City Marathons and became the icon for many women to aspire to. Not only a great runner, but a wonderful person who I had the pleasure of meeting while I was in

Running Rewind...Back to the Golden Age of the 80's

Bermuda. But without a doubt, my favorite memory from the women's side was watching Joan Benoit win the 1984 Olympic Marathon in dominant fashion. Taking the lead from the start she ran boldly and alone never letting the pre-race favorites of Grete Waitz or Ingrid Christensen, both from Norway, challenge her. It was a great example of how the best from the 80s ran...without fear...determined to break records and compete against each other. As I previously mentioned, what I loved about the decade was many of these races were covered from start to finish on network TV, only adding to these athlete's popularity, stature, and influence. Unfortunately, today we don't have the same level of popular media coverage, making some of today's best less recognizable to the public.

The 80s were defined by a deep number of incredibly fast, elite runners who competed with each other ferociously. And they influenced a large group of runners, like me, who were not quite elite, to train just as intensely. Looking back at some of the race results, it truly is impressive. As I mentioned in a previous article, at the 1983 Boston Marathon, I ran 2:24:36 and finished 155th. You just don't see that quality of depth anymore. I also came across the results of the Runner's World 1981 New Year's Eve 5-miler in Los Altos, won by Alberto Salazar in 22:04...and 38th place finished in 23:59...for 5 miles! Talk about some deep fields!

Related, was the intensity of the training. The 80s were defined by records falling at a record clip due to the increase in elite runners, and their focused desire to set world records. As an example of this intensity, last November I joined Geoff Smith on a casual 7-mile run at his home near Cape Cod Massachusetts. As we ran along the beautiful coastline, I asked him despite all his incredible accomplishments, what was his biggest regret. Honestly, I expected him to remember the famous 1983 NYC Marathon, which was his first, where

he exploded mid-way through the race (4:27 17th mile) to a large lead on world record pace only to tire and be passed by Rod Dixon with about 200 meters to go. (One of the greatest marathon finishes ever, and if you have not watched, YouTube it!) I figured his answer was if he only waited a bit longer, he would have probably cruised to a world record victory. But his answer surprised me...he said it was his prep for the 1982 Boston Marathon, which was going to be his first the year before New York. Yes, the same Duel in the Sun between Salazar and Beardsley. He was coming off that amazing 10k performance in January in Bermuda, and his 20-mile training runs in February/March leading up to Boston he was running the first 10-mile loop in 49 minutes and the second loop in 50 minutes. As a training run!!! Fittest he had ever been...but unfortunately the week before 1982 Boston he came down with bronchitis and never made it to the race. Could you imagine if Geoff was healthy? Certainly, the complexion and outcome of that famous race may have looked completely different. Salazar was also legendary for his extreme workouts. When I was in Bermuda, his coach, Bill Dellinger spoke at the expo and told of 6-mile repeats in 4:25 with a RESTING mile of 5:20 between each of them. That type of work ethic cascaded down to the next level of runners, who attempted to work just as hard...resulting in the fastest and deepest group of finishers we have ever seen.

Finally, I would be remiss if I also did not mention one of the best U.S. distance runners who came on the scene in the middle of that decade, a local, and a good friend...Keith Brantly. Keith was All American at University of Florida, 4-time USA 10km road racing champion (1985,87,89 & 95), 2-time USA Marathon Champion (1995, 98), 1996 Olympic Marathoner, and successful coach. I personally remember Keith banging out a 13:45 5k at the invitational Run for the Pies. One of the best U.S.

Running Rewind...Back to the Golden Age of the 80's

distance runners ever and another example of what the 1980s produced both locally and across the globe.

Ahhh...those 80s...the greatest generation of distance running

Sean was 3 time winner of the Jacksonville Marathon and 3 time U.S. Navy Marathon Champion with a PR of 2:22:10. He can be reached at seanmichaelmccormack@gmail.com

(The picture accompanying this article was taken at the finish area of the 2019 Boston Marathon. Sean is in the middle flanked on his right by 2-time marathon world record holder Steve Jones, and on his left by 2-time Boston Marathon Champion and world 10k #1 Geoff Smith)

Marathoner Dick Beardsley To Speak

There are some great stories about people loving life's highs and enduring its lows, overcoming adversity and pure bad luck. But the story of one of the world's finest marathoners, Dick Beardsley, is one that makes you stop in your tracks.

It isn't easy to catch up to Beardsley, a man who travels the world doing speaking engagements for his foundation that raises funds for those addicted to drugs and cannot afford to get professional medical help. However, via telephone, I was able to conduct an interview.

In the 1980s, Bill Rogers, Alberto Salazar and Minnesota's Dick Beardsley shared America's marathon center stage. Even now, Beardsley remains the third-fastest American born marathoner and has the fifth-fastest US men's time, although he is not as easily remembered as the other two. But his accomplishments are many and his life nothing less than a classic Greek drama.

In high school, Beardsley thought more of girls than sports. Trouble was the guys with the girls all wore letterman jackets that they won through sports. He had to have one. Beardsley took his 130-pound body to football practice and that was all it took. The skinny kid needed another sport; he discovered

running. His high school exploits were less than sterling, but he got the jacket, if not the girls.

He ran in college, got a degree in agriculture and went into dairy farming. In 1977, he ran his first marathon, the Paavo Nurmi, in Hurley, Wisconsin, in two hours and 47-minutes. He soon lowered his time to 2:31.

In the 1980 Olympic Trials he ran 2:16, good for 16th place but hardly good enough. During the next 46 months, he ran 13 marathons and in each one of them he lowered his personal best time. One day a friend told him that his streak of 13 personal records in a row had put him in the Guinness Book of World Records.

"I wasn't aware of it at the time, I was just running every marathon as hard and fast as I could," he said. "If I had known anything about a record, I probably could never have done it."

The London Marathon made its debut in 1981 and Beardsley was there. He tied for first in 2:11 and



Marathoner Dick Beardsley To Speak

three months later won the Duluth, Mn. Grandma's Marathon in 2:09.

In his prime, Beardsley was a beast. Running 140 miles a week in the winter, focusing on strength rather than speed. In the summer he took it "easy," running "only" 120 miles a week; "but with more intensity," he said.

The infamous and hellish Minnesota winter seemed to have no effect on him. He recalled: "In 1981 I did my coldest training run at 60-degrees below zero."

He never tapered before a race and hardly even slowed down. "Now I kind of wonder what I might have done if I had," he mused. "Maybe I could have run even better."

Beardsley's defining moment came at the Boston Marathon in 1982. He was in great shape and he knew it, but ...

"I had a feeling that Alberto Salazar was the one to beat and, of course, Bill Rogers was in there too," he remembered.

"Where I lived in Minnesota it was flat and I knew I had to train for the hills. I moved to Atlanta and spent the winter there."

Just before the April race he moved to Boston and routinely ran the course, paying particular attention to the hills and working them hard.

During the race, between 17 and 21 miles, where the course is hilliest, he said: "My legs went numb, I couldn't feel them anymore. But I kept thinking; if it's hurting me, it has to be hurting him. Alberto fell back behind my left shoulder, and it wasn't like him to be behind, so I knew he felt it too."

"With five miles to go, I just took it one mile at a time, telling myself to keep pushing and pushing."

Then he recalled: "We were surrounded by about 75 cyclists, it was in the days before they secured the course, there was a Greyhound bus behind us

and about eight to twelve policemen on motorcycles all around us and with about 900 meters to go I got cramps in my legs."



Beardsley kept running, there was a left-hand turn and with 150 meters remaining, "I took a deep breath and sprinted with all I had."

It wasn't enough. "I was out sprinted, that's about all there was to it," he said.

But what about the motorcycle that seemed to cut him off and give Salazar the edge?

"I've never used it as an excuse," he said modestly. In that marathon, known as The Duel in the Sun, both runners broke the course record and the American record. Beardsley ran 2:08:53, two seconds behind Salazar.

The next day a sportswriter from Minnesota called and asked him how it felt to be a loser.

"I was dumbfounded," he said. "I had run the race of my life and lost to a great runner. I didn't feel like I had lost at all."

He was, and sometimes still is, referred to as 'The World's Most Famous Loser,' a title that continues to make him laugh. "I wouldn't trade that race for anything. If they offered me a win at a slower time in some other race, I wouldn't want it," he said.

"You know, I was 26-years old and Alberto was 24, and I think we gave that race everything we had. Neither one of us would ever be that good again."

In 1988, Beardsley retired from competitive running. A year later his entire life began to unravel. While working with an auger on the back of a tractor lift, he somehow became entangled in the auger and it virtually ripped him apart. Before losing consciousness, he managed to stop the machine,

Marathoner Dick Beardsley To Speak

this saved his life. But all his ribs on the right side of his body were smashed, his right arm was broken, and his left leg mangled. He also had head injuries.

He eventually recovered and started to run again. Then, in 1992, he was involved in a car accident that involved back and neck injuries and 15 days in a hospital. A year later in Fargo, North Dakota, while on a run in a snowstorm, he was hit by a truck and spent two more weeks in a hospital. A month later, during another snowstorm, he had a car accident that resulted in more back and neck injuries.

In 1994, he underwent three back surgeries, one that lasted 11 hours. A year later he had knee surgery. And each surgery, every hospital stay, meant more pain pills. As his tolerance to the pills grew stronger, he was given even more. He became addicted.

“I was taking 80 or 90 pain pills a day. They were eating my stomach and I was drinking bottles of Maalox to relieve it. I had terrific headaches and the headaches make me take more pills,” he said.

He was also forging prescriptions, a criminal offense, and was caught. Yet getting caught turned out to be the best thing that could have happened. “If I hadn’t been caught, I would have been dead,” he admitted.

While undergoing treatment to rid himself of the addiction, he received a phone call from a newspaper reporter who enquired: “Are you the Richard Beardsley who’s being done on drug charges?”

News of his life on prescription drugs was written in the papers: The pills, the forged prescriptions, the rehab. “Worst of all is what it did to my family. My son, Andrew, was only about 10 at the time and heard about it all the time at school,” he said.

Beardsley’s life was at an all-time low and one dark

night while driving down a lonely road – “I never thought of doing myself in,” he said, “but I thought, ‘if a semi came along and hit me right now, it wouldn’t be the worst thing’.”

After five months of treatment he emerged a new, drug-free man.

Thanks to the strength and loyalty of his family and friends, “the people who really knew me,” he overcame it all. New Balance, the shoe company that signed him 32 years before, steadfastly remained beside him through thick and thin.

In 2000, he was running again, “60 to 70 miles a week,” and completed the Napa Valley Marathon in 3:23. In 2001, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of his victory in the Grandma’s Marathon, he entered the race and ran 2:55. In 2004, he again ran Napa and finished in 2:43, his best marathon since his farm accident.

Despite his banged-up body, that now includes two artificial knees, Beardsley is back to running. He lives in Austin, Texas with his wife, Jill, and no longer has to do training runs in sub-freezing temperatures or go out in unlucky snowstorms. He runs 20 to 25 miles a week. He is a natural runner and like I said, a beast.

He is also a natural public speaker. In 2011, JTC Running brought Dick Beardsley to Jacksonville during Gate River Run week. He spoke at one of our pre-race gatherings and was very moving, revealing, effective and insightful. Our club is bringing Beardsley to town during Gate River Run week once again. At the time of writing I cannot say precisely when he will speak. Our Facebook page will alert you and believe me, you should not miss this opportunity to see and hear a very fine speaker.

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Weekly Training Runs

Sunday 6:30 am, Mandarin: Various locations and distance. See Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pg/JaxSundayRun/posts/ NO Facebook account necessary

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 6:30 pm, Baymeadows: Wicked Barley on Baymeadows. Close to 1st Place Sports, 3.5 and 5 mile routes. Enjoy great food and beer afterwards. (The Wicked Road Warriors). Steve Sassa (904) 860-0053

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

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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

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: Paul Smith, smithfccj@hotmail.com, 982-3730

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.