

Gate River Run 2021

JTC Race Team

3.20.21



Welcoming the 2021 Gate River Run



The Starting Line

President's Letter - Larry Roberts

Greetings!

Gate River Run 2021 is in the history books! All things considered, a great accomplishment by our Race Director Doug Alred and staff. A special shout out to Elites Director, Jim Van Cleave for an outstanding field. And "Thank you" to all the JTC Running members who worked on race day, and before and after, transporting Elite runners around town.

I am writing this the day after the race, and as I look out the window at the rain, I am reminded yet again of how fortunate we have been with the race in recent years. Last year's race was completed five days before COVID-19 shut down the country and all running events. This year's was run just as conditions improved enough to stage an eight-thousand-runner event. Race day was windy, but there was no rain, and the neighborhood spectators were out in force adding so much to the race experience.

That outstanding Elite field produced two first-time winners, female and male, as youth made it's mark! The two start lines and staggered waves made for a smooth start, and I like to think the wind blew away any lurking COVID germs!

No hospitality tents or pre- or post-race activities were allowed at this year's race, so we did not have ours. It was strange to look out at the empty field in front of the fairgrounds, but it was part of the COVID precautions, along with requiring masks be worn before crossing the start line mats and after finishing. It was heartening to see mask compliance on race day and at the Runners Expo.

Our efforts at Runners Expo booth were very successful, thanks to the hard work of our Club volunteers. We sold 158 new and renewing Club memberships, including 91 with three-year terms, which will go a long way to stabilize our membership level. Over the past year we have seen more memberships lapse than usual, as

COVID forced cancellation of races, socials, and track meets.

There is good news to report on the COVID front. Through the rest of this year, we will see a gradual return to normal Club activities. We are close to announcing a track meet series for 2021, and plan to offer summer high school cross-country scholarships.

June 2 will bring the return of another regular event, the Global Running Day fun run to support Marathon High.

Watch our website and Facebook page for the registration opening announcement and other details.



The Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run will be held on Saturday, August 28, at the Jacksonville Beach pavilion, complete with food and beverages at the post race awards ceremony. We also plan a kickoff fun run at Tijuana Flats Lakewood store in early August.

Sadly, there will be no Awards Banquet this June, but rest assured we will be back at Maggiano's next summer with a special edition.

Last but in no way least, on February 14, the Club made it possible for the Marathon High class to run their virtual Breast Cancer Half Marathon together, in person, with their coaches. JTC Running paid for timing, permits, and port-a-lets on a two-lap course from the Duval County Public Schools Administration Building across the river and back. Board member and 1st Place Sports timing expert, Stuart Toomey, organized the start/finish. Everyone at Marathon High was very grateful that JTC made this happen.

Letter from the Editor - Bob Fernee

Congratulations to all of you who participated in JTC Running's 2021 Gate River Run. Whether you did the 15k or the 5k your efforts are appreciated by this club. Given the year that we have all been through, and the restrictions involved in this year's event, you did us proud. I was unable to run the race in person due to complications that I write of in detail in my story, My Lame River Run, that appears in this issue.

JTC Running's events and functions were crippled during 2020 due to you know what. However, things are looking up and we plan and hope to resume most of our events from here on out. This brings me to our track meet series that has been running since 1975 when our club first began. As Mark Twain once famously said: "In this life, the only things you can count on are death and taxes. Oh, wait, I forgot one, you can also count on JTC Running's annual track meet series." Very erudite man, Mark Twain aka Samuel Clemons, good predictor of the future too, it seems.

Yes, our track meets, that are free and open to the public, are one of our finest creations. Last year our track meet director, coach Eric Frank, who did a wonderful job for many years, decided it was time to move on and hand the baton to someone else. Board member Doug Tillett has informed me that a new director has, well, pretty much been found, although perhaps at this time I should not reveal the name because it has not been completely confirmed. I am not trying to tease you, but I can tell you for sure that there are several very good candidates and one will agree to the position. Most importantly, the track meets will resume and flourish as they always have. As the season is upon us, it would be wise to check with JTC Running's Facebook for the most up to date information and news.

JTC Running hasn't done too badly during this miserable pandemic. With a couple of necessary changes, we pulled off our annual Winter Beach Run. We managed The Last Gasp and the Guana Ultra and Trail Races, and in case you hadn't noticed (time to blow my own horn here) the club's signature piece of communication, this newsletter, never missed a beat – so take that, Mr. Covid. This newsletter would not be possible without the fantastic regular contributors who have never let us down. And I cannot forget Amanda Mason, our graphic artist genius who whips it into shape and puts it all together. These people are an editor's best friends.

Our 15k race is inspirational, it seems. Jay has written a thought-provoking article about the runners of, shall we say? advanced years. Longtime club member, Tom

Zicafoose has also come up with a mind-bending piece about the Gate River Run attendances and performances since his first involvement in the race in 1985. The two stories are very interesting and doggone good reading, and both are inside.

When it comes to elite runners, the Gate River Run, and Streakers, only one name stands out – Pat Gaughan. He runs fast finish times consistently year after year. For many years he has spent much of his time in Cameroon, where he volunteers as a nurse. He once told me, "when I am in Cameroon, I can't run." Then, he returns to Jacksonville solely to race in the GRR and he crushes the competition. What gives, how does he do that? I conducted an interview with him for this issue.

You will also find another great training article written by our good friend, coach Sean McCormack. The Principle of Adaptation is Sean's latest masterpiece. It is packed with great advice, as usual, and I am sure you will love it.

Rob Coltmann has written a very timely and vital piece about returning to running safely after Covid-19. Of course, we all know that we are not yet rid of the danger of the Coronavirus, but many have been vaccinated and we are beginning to come out of our shells and enjoy running once again. Be sure you read Rob's piece titled, Safely Returning to Running After Covid-19, Not As Easy As You Might Think.

Like so many other events, the 2020 Boston Marathon was cancelled. Will you be going this year? Need any inspiration? You should read Jay Birmingham's review of 'The Book of Kel' in this issue. The two Kellys were iconic legends of the Boston Marathon and the book recaptures them in detail. After reading Jay's report, you can buy the book and read it before race day. Between the two of them you should have a great race.

When it comes to ultra and marathon runners there was no better than Ted Corbitt. His son, Gary, lives here and is a member of JTC Running. Gary is working tirelessly on his father's legacy and history. In New York City recently a pathway was dedicated in the name of Ted Corbitt, father of the Ultra and founder of the New York Roadrunners Club. Gary has supplied our newsletter with a news clip of the heartfelt moment.

Speed and strength, strength and speed, and what does it all mean to you? It may not be as confusing as it sounds. Well, not if you listen to our own Jeff Wight. His latest column puts the entire question into perspective. You will find his advice and knowledge inside.

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A few Advanced Weight/Strength Training Concepts for Runners

Bio: Jeff T. Wight, PhD

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In the last issue, I shared a few important basic strength training concepts for runners, with focus on health. You can check it out on the JTC Running website if you missed it.

This time, I focus more on using strength training to run faster races, and “PR”. I will try to help you understand some more advanced weight/strength training topics that I believe are most relevant for runners (who are interested in running faster times). I will discuss the importance of running physique, and using strength training to alter/optimize your physique (for running).

Last time, I tried to address the simple question: Should distance runners strength train/lift weights? I tried to make it clear that all distance runners should expect a weekly shot of 10-20 minutes of basic strength training to help their running. I described basic strength training as body weight movements (squats, lunges, sit-ups, planks), plyometrics (jumps, dynamic warmup exercises), and “sprints” (60-100m at 80%+ effort). This type of training is pretty “safe” for all and should not be expected to change your physique much.

The next question is: Should a distance runner complete more strength training than that? My answer to that is, it depends on the individual. For most recreational runners, my answer is “yes.” For probably 20% of recreational runners my answer is “no.”

My simple guideline for this question is: Can you run a relatively fast/impressive 100m? If the answer is “no,” then some more intense weight training would probably be quite beneficial for your distance running. If you want to run a 5k fast, then you need to first be able to run a relatively fast pace. Then, you focus on building up the endurance of that faster pace. My point is that being able to run a relatively fast pace is a prerequisite to running a relatively fast pace for 5K (or more)!



Elite runners. Michelle Howell (center), former JU 800m runner, and her elite professional teammates have no problem running fast!

Most people who can run a relatively fast 100m look like they can run fast—they look like lean machines who are athletic. If you don’t look fast, then you probably are not able to run very fast. For the record, that is not meant to be a negative statement! It is just a simple biomechanical concept. You may struggle to run fast if you 1) carry some extra weight or 2) are lean but not very strong. Ironically, more intense weight training can help both groups quite dramatically. Weight training can help the “not-so-lean machine” runner shed unwanted fat and become more of a lean machine. And weight training can help the “lean, non-machine” runner become more of a “machine.” For these runners, going to the gym and completing traditional full body weight training, or completing intense circuit style workouts, can have great benefits. To be clear, my point is that improving the physique, to become more of a lean machine, will likely do way more for your running times than running a bunch of miles with a physique that is not capable of running very fast.

Last time, I mentioned that runners with naturally athletic/muscular physiques typically don’t reap running benefits from weight training. If someone looks like a wide receiver, or college sprinter, they most certainly will not have any speed issues to address. These types of folks run faster 5Ks by running higher volumes and shedding

A few Advanced Weight/Strength Training Concepts for Runners

some muscle...

Once your physique is pretty “lean machine-ish”, your running behaviors matter most. You have probably noticed that the folks who win the age-group competitions tend to 1) look fast, 1) run lots of miles, 3) consistently complete challenging running workouts (long runs, tempo runs, track workouts, etc.).

What about aging? Aging will challenge your ability to remain a lean machine. For most people, this becomes a harsh reality around the age of 50. The strength research has shown that we typically begin to lose 5-10% of our strength/muscle each decade, once we hit 50. However, we can combat that (very well) with some strength training. So, for aging runners, weight training can become critical, to maintain running times. Again, the runner who maintains the physique with age and who runs 25 miles a week, will probably beat the aging runner who runs 50 miles per week, but loses the lean machine physique.

What if you already have a lean machine physique? Then, you probably need to be careful with weight training. I have a lot of first-hand experiences with this topic. About 10-12 years ago, I was training quite intensely for triathlons. At the time, I was very fit—I was swimming, biking, running, surfing, and lifting weights. I weighed about 160 pounds. I could run about 5:40 miles in a 5K. Then, I stopped all the triathlon training and only ran. My exercise volume was cut in half, and I shed about 10 pounds of “unnecessary” muscle. I shaved over a minute off my 5K. Runner Jeff was a total wimp compared to triathlon Jeff, but I looked much more like a distance runner. And then, I ran way faster, even though I was “less fit”. My arms were much lighter and free to swing, and I felt like I could “pop” off the track much easier.

I have another quick story from a few years ago. While out of town, I ran a 5K “fun run” with a local club. I ran with the lead pack, who was pushing about a 6:10 pace. There was a female up front who was in “beast-mode”. She was intense, focused, and tough as nails—clearly a tremendous athlete. Her natural build was very lean, but she was carrying about 10 “extra” pounds of muscle. She was a physical specimen and looked like she was right between an elite 800-400 runner. But that didn’t look like her “natural weight”—it clearly was a product of weight training. After the race, I had a beer with her, and her

boyfriend. I learned that they were about 22-years old and serious cross-fit style trainers. For about 20 minutes, they tried to convince me that developing weight-training/circuit style elite fitness was better for running than running. She only ran about 8 miles a week. Then, I tried to convince her that she could easily become an elite runner, if she just ran. I told her I couldn’t even imagine how fast she would run if she would stop the weight training and build up to 70 miles per week. They could not believe that elite runners ran that much, or more, and they were kind of appalled.

Whenever we think about the impact of strength training on running, it is important to always keep a simple biomechanical concept in mind. Your running speed is determined by:

- 1) Stride rate (or cadence) and
- 2) Stride length

Simply put, if you take more steps per minute, with the same stride length, you will run faster. Or, if you take a longer stride, and maintain your stride rate, you will run faster. To run faster, one of those two must increase. So, the big question is: Does weight training increase your stride length or stride rate?

As you probably know, elite runners have a very high stride rate (each foot takes 90-100 steps per minute) and a long stride length. Elite women distance runners stride 5+ feet and men 6.5+ feet.

Elite distance runners are able to run with these incredible biomechanics for two main reasons. First, they have elite running physiques—they are very lean, with “tight” bodies. They are gazelles. With bodies like these, the physics are in their favor—it is much easier to develop and maintain a super-fast stride-rate. Second, elite runners also have “natural speed.” When they were kids, and playing sports, they were one of the fastest kids on the field. With gazelle physiques, and natural speed, training is relatively simple: run lots of miles (for general fitness) and complete challenging workouts to prepare for races (long runs, tempo runs, track workouts, etc.). Since they already have great running physiques, and already have speed, there is not much room for improvement—weight training is not likely to help a lot.

A few Advanced Weight/Strength Training Concepts for Runners

Biomechanically, folks with elite running physiques have a huge advantage. The same physique concepts hold true for the other athletes I study: baseball pitchers. Physique is equally advantageous in the pitching world. A pitcher with a big core, who is tall, with a loose shoulder and long skinny arms has physics on their side. With that kind of physique, it is pretty easy to throw 85+ mph (with some training and decent mechanics). It is pretty tough/rare to throw that fast without that type of physique.

I think we all at least have a common sense understanding of this topic. My point here is that, as runners, if we long to run faster and “PR,” we need to consider our physique, because it has a huge impact on our running time. I’m not trying to urge anyone to try to slim down to 115 pounds, like Mr. Kipchoge. But I am trying to let you know that physique has a big impact in this game, and there are often simple ways you can change your physique to dramatically improve your running times.

What is also interesting about elite runners is that their physiques change little with training; most look the same whether they run 30 miles a week or 100 miles a week. At low fitness, and peak fitness, they look similar. Consequently, they put little attention into their physique. Similarly, they have natural speed that fluctuates little with training. Again, whether they run 30 miles a week or 100 miles a week, they can run a fast 100 meters. This is probably why I have yet to hear an elite distance runner say something like, “I ran for several years, with good results, and then I started weight training, and became elite.”

So, the big question is: For recreational runners, what will strength training do to the stride rate and stride length?

It is important to realize that strength/weight training can help or hurt your stride rate and stride length.

If you inject a dose of some basic strength training, like I mentioned in the beginning of the article, I would expect it to at least improve your stride length, because you will become a bit stronger. And it could potentially improve your stride rate, especially if you add in some sprints, where you will run with a faster stride-rate than normal.

If you lift weights, and it changes your body from not-so-lean machine to lean-machine, I would expect it to dramatically improve your stride-length and stride-rate.

Weight training can also really help those who have a “loose” body. Picture the skinny high-school kid whose elbows fly back and never seem to stop. Or the older runner who has lost his muscle tone. Muscles and tendons are like rubber bands—if you stretch them out, they will snap back or recoil. If your muscles are too loose, they will not snap back for you. Having tight rubber bands is advantageous in running—this is “free energy.” Weight training can help you become tighter. This is tough to measure in the lab, but the relevance of this concept is pretty obvious to me.

A lot of college runners, at smaller schools, have lean machine physiques but their muscles are a little “loose”. A little weight training can help them tighten up and improve their stride length and/or rate. But if they do too much, they will become bigger, and possibly too tight. The key is finding the “sweet spot” and it certainly is individually specific. At some point, the arms will become too big (and/or tight) and will begin to act like heavy anchors instead of rubber bands.

You have probably noticed that elite runners have skinny, tight arms. Big arms and shoulders are an anchor for the elite distance runner. They do not swing free and easy and the extra mass is not helpful. For the elite runner, they need to remain lean but find their optimal “stiffness”. Same is true for their legs. If the legs are too skinny, they may not be strong enough to run fast. If the legs are too big, it may become difficult to develop a really high stride rate. It’s all about finding the “sweet spot.” Again, that will be individually specific.

There is another topic to consider, and that is the balance between the upper body and lower body. This is also very difficult to measure in the lab, but it is easy to see. It is common for people to have a big upper body and lean lower body, or a “big lower body” and lean upper body. This can have a big impact on overall running biomechanics. When you run, you twist a bit. If there is an imbalance between your upper-body and lower-body, there can be consequences. The larger half of the body can dominate. Picture someone with a big/muscular upper-body and relatively skinny legs. For these runners, the upper-body swing dominates, and it is tough to keep the feet going forward in a straight line.

A few Advanced Weight/Strength Training Concepts for Runners

Their feet are typically thrown inward and their inside leg muscles (“groins”) are loaded heavily at impact. For these folks, it may be very helpful to balance the equation by lifting weights and adding mass to the lower body (or stop lifting weights for the upper body). Similarly, picture someone with a big/strong lower body and skinny upper body. These runners often twist their upper body to try to counterbalance the big torques generated by their dominant lower body. I often see these runners swing their arms across their midline. Also, I often see their feet “whip” outward after toe-off (opposite of the big upper body runner). For these folks, it may be helpful to balance the equation by lifting weights and adding mass/tightness to the upper-body (or stop lifting weights for the lower-body). These discrepancies can be very obvious at the recreational level and relatively subtle at the elite level. But they matter and are worth considering. This is another topic that can be very relevant to other athletes like baseball pitchers, golfers, etc.

Overall, it can be a little tough to understand and optimize our strength and flexibility. My most important advice is to gradually incorporate and experiment with strength training, stretching, etc. Doing too much, too soon, can lead to an injury. Use common sense. If you quickly incorporate weight training, you can wear your

body down a bit, and suffer a running injury. Similarly, you need to be careful with stretching and yoga type exercise. If you do a big yoga session, and then go run the next morning, your body may be looser than normal. This may cause your foot to land in a slightly different position than normal, and suddenly all your cells have a new loading experience. This would be equivalent to wearing a new pair of shoes on a big run before you were used to them. Runners need to ease into new loading patterns, whether it be lifting weights, stretching, new shoes, new surfaces, new speeds, etc.

I do urge you to experiment with strength/weight training to try to find your optimal physique and stiffness. As you experiment, remember to pay attention to your stride length and stride rate. If, at some point, you feel like you are getting too strong/big/tight you can simply back off the strength training a bit and drift back to your sweet spot. Finding your sweet spot will take some experimentation. Fortunately, results and feedback are quick and pretty obvious. You can learn a lot in a few weeks. If you begin some basic strength training, or some more serious weight training, you should be able to feel impacts on your stride rate and stride length after a couple sessions. Good luck with your health and speed!

Boulder Runner Describes Trauma of King Soopers Mass Murder

Written by: Jay Birmingham

Maggie Montoya, 25, was one of seven Boulder, Colorado runners in the March 20 Gate River Run. Maggie ran 50:25 and placed seventh among the Elite Women.

Two days later, while Maggie was registering grocery store co-workers for COVID vaccinations, gunfire erupted inside the Boulder King Soopers store. Maggie was interviewed by CNN's Anderson Cooper one day afterwards.

During the nearly ten-minute recording, the elite runner describes the fear she and pharmacy department colleagues felt while under cover. From the time first gunfire was heard in the store around 2:30 p.m. MDT until 3:30 p.m., Maggie hid beneath a desk in the pharmacy.

The shooter, who killed ten people just outside, then inside the grocery store, surrendered to police within earshot of Maggie. "I surrender; I'm naked," said the suspect. His weapons were found near the Pharmacy.

As police led the employees from the store, Maggie recognized the body of Rikki Olds, 25, a friend and co-worker.

JTC Running Member, Pat Gaughan, An Extraordinary Man

Pat Gaughan is a longtime club member and not only that, but he is a Gate River Run “Streaker.” Which means that he has run every Gate River Run and River Run 15,000 (its original name), since it began in April 1978. He is also the fastest GRR Streaker year after year. I should hate him for that, but I don’t. He is in my age group and I can’t run him down, looks like I never will. For 28 years he worked as a Human Services Grant Writer/Manager working primarily with problems faced by Jacksonville’s youth. Not one to sit idle, two weeks after retiring he began studying to become a nurse. He spends much of the year in the African nation of Cameroon helping anyone who needs help, and he has been doing it for 12 years – quite something. I am proud to help tell his amazing, altruistic story.

Bob Fernee: Let’s start at the beginning, how and when did you first become involved in running?

Pat Gaughan: My involvement in running began in 1978, a few months before the (Jacksonville Track Club’s) first River Run 15,000. My roommate came home with a pair of adidas cross country running shoes and was boasting how fast they made him run. I wasn’t into running, or any other exercise, but laced up my sneakers and challenged him to a short jaunt up the street. Well, he smoked me, and it provoked me, you might say it awoke me! A short time later a few guys from my church asked me to join them in a new race called the River Run 15,000, which would be my first road race. I had no idea that the invitation would pay dividends into at least the next 44 years.

BF: You are one of the famous River Run “Streakers,” what memorable experiences stand out from all those 43 races?

PG: Without a doubt, the most memorable River Run experience was “the storm of the century” year. I remember running the debris-filled race in gloves, stocking cap and sweatshirt, frosted particles of moisture dripping down my face, and waves from the St. Johns River sending unwanted showers from head to toe. Over the years other memories remain of teammates and friends reminiscing over the thrills of victory and agonies of defeat. Meeting distinguished runners like Bill Rodgers, Dick Beardsley, Joan Benoit-Samuels and Todd Williams.

Seeing and sharing with fellow “streakers” how we overcame obstacles to keep the streak alive.

BF: Have you won an age group award every time you competed in the race?

PG: In the early days of the River Run I was much faster, finishing 20 River Runs in under one hour, but never placed in my age group. As the pack thinned out due to the natural aging process my times slowed but not as much as others and for the past number of years I have managed to place in my age division. What I am more proud of is I’ve been in the top 10% of my age group for 43 straight years.

BF: What is your fastest River Run finish time?

PG: My fastest River Run was 52:12. This was before chip timing so probably a little faster than that, a 5:35 (per mile) average. I look back on that time now and think, “the older I get, the faster I was.”

BF: Have you ever run another 15k and broken your fastest GRR time? If so, what race was it and what was your time?

PG: 15km races are hard to find, I like this distance because it is a combination of speed and endurance without breaking you down in the process. The only other 15km I’ve run was Gasparilla in Tampa. I ran well and placed, but never in a pace faster than the River Run. The last time I ran it, about fifteen years ago, they had less than fifteen “streakers” and the River Run had over 40. I attribute that to the honor JTC Running and race director Doug Alred bestowed on us.

BF: What is your favorite race distance? What is your favorite race?

PG: My favorite race distance is 15km, but my favorite races were marathons, including Boston, my favorite.



JTC Running Member, Pat Gaughan, An Extraordinary Man

Big Sur, the most beautiful, Marine Corps, the most inspirational, and Mt. Cameroon, the most difficult. The highlight of my running career was organizing, directing and participating in the Race for Hope and Development in Etoko, Cameroon, and standing along with the Village Chief handing out the awards (priceless).

BF: The thing that is amazing is that you are now a nurse and spend much of the year in Cameroon doing volunteer work. Are you able to train there?

PG: I try to be in Cameroon six months out of the year but the “year of Covid” has really crimped my style. When I am in West Africa I cannot train. I live in a large, overpopulated city with extremely poor air quality, shoddy roads, no sidewalks, poorly maintained vehicles, and deplorable drivers. I also read that more people who do what I do, Medical Mission work, are maimed or killed by motor vehicles than all the tropical diseases they fear. When I am in the villages and hinterland I do not run. Too often I meet old ladies doing a 5km, or more, along the pathway. They are carrying 50 pounds of bananas or plantains they’ve gotten from the farm on their backs. Running by them in your running gear, not cool, it puts life in perspective real quick.

BF: You always run so fast at the GRR, how do you do it?

PG: Some of my training success involves genetics. Thankfully, God has given me a body that responds to my physical requests. Some is muscle and mental memory, it’s easier to go back if you’ve been there before. I keep logs of where I was the previous years. I follow the rule, one speed work, one tempo run, one long run per week, with rest or an alternate sport in between. I like to swim, kayak, or bike on rest days.

BF: How was your 2021 Gate River Run?

PG: My GRR this year was disappointing; I ran three minutes slower than I wanted. I don’t even have a real excuse, maybe it was the wind, maybe the old man is catching up to me. I was fortunate to get third in my age group and managed to stay ahead of the vultures that were circling over me.

BF: Putting the Coronavirus aside, what do you think of today’s local racing scene?

PG: The running community in Jacksonville is changing but vibrant. Running has become more of a social event than “racing.” Like most things it will run its course, but

I see new life being infused into it by youth groups like Marathon High. More minorities are becoming involved. There were only a handful of women in the first River Run, now they outnumber the men. Jacksonville has plenty of races, good running clubs, running groups, and a wide variety of workout places like the Emerald Trail and the River Walk.

BF: In your opinion, will running events return to what they once were when the pandemic is over?

PG: After Covid-19 there will be a “new normal.” People find new things to occupy the space that has been removed. For instance, I have seen many more using the River Walk, biking, walking, running, and riding scooters. Most people I know don’t like the restrictions placed upon them at races, while others do not want to put themselves in harms way and may never again trust large gatherings. I personally believe the race organizers have handled the situation between getting back to normal and being cautious, like in this year’s Gate River Run, and should be commended.

BF: Do you ever get injured (these days)?

PG: I have been amazingly healthy over my running career. Running is a high impact sport, so I get periodic joint discomfort but try to listen to my body and rest before it develops into something chronic.

BF: What was your worst injury and how long did it keep you out?

PG: I had a stress fracture of my third metatarsal that put me out of running for three weeks.

BF: I might have left something out and/or you may have something to express, please do that now.

PG: Looking back at my life and the physical choices I’ve made, running has overwhelmingly been good for me. It governs how I eat, how I take care of my body, and even how I handle pain, anxiety and adversity. All the little “sprints” I’ve made in the past 44 years have turned into a “marathon,” that’s for sure! Hopefully, my life can be summed up in my favorite Bible verse: Isaiah 40:31, But those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will mount up with wings as eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Safely Returning to Running after COVID-19: It's Not as Simple as You Might Think

I am very thankful to have just been able to race in the 2021 Gate River Run. It was incredible to finally get to race with so many of you again in our amazing local 15K!

Although we have been able to return to some racing lately, it has continued to be a tough time overall for running and racing due to COVID-19. Multiple races are still being canceled, modified, postponed or turned into virtual races, making it tough to stay focused on, and motivated for, steady and consistent training. The races and group training runs that are now finally beginning to return, have been modified, sometimes at great lengths, to make sure that folks do not get and/or spread COVID-19. In fact, it seems like almost all we hear about lately is how to prevent getting and spreading COVID, through mask wearing, sanitizing everything, vaccines, etc. The great thing is that because of all of this, we all have learned quite a bit about what to do to keep us as safe as possible during training and racing during this pandemic.

But what we may not know much about is what happens if, as a runner, you actually get COVID-19. We now know that for some the symptoms of the infection can be very minor, and for others the symptoms can be very severe. But if symptoms are relatively minor, does this mean that one can move on and safely return to running normally immediately once the symptoms are gone? In short, not exactly.

COVID-19 is now thought of more and more as a vascular disease that spreads through respiratory pathways. That means it primarily affects not just the nose, throat and lungs but also blood vessels, kidneys, gastrointestinal tract and heart. When COVID-19 causes heart damage, it becomes particularly scary.

Myocarditis, in simple terms, is inflammation of the heart. This inflammation enlarges and weakens the heart. It can also create scar tissue which restricts the heart's ability to pump blood and circulate oxygen. 38% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients suffer from myocarditis to some degree. Looking at athletes specifically, a recent Ohio State study found that out of the two dozen plus athletes who tested positive for COVID-19, 30% had cellular heart damage and 15% showed signs of myocarditis, this is specifically for college athletes. Based on the increased incidence of certain forms of

cardiac issues (arrhythmia, atrial fibrillation, tachycardia, etc.) in older endurance athletes, these athletes may be even more susceptible to myocarditis after COVID-19 infection. (Mills, 2001, para. 3,4)

What this means is that for runners who have suffered from COVID-19, even if they are completely asymptomatic, it is very important to be patient in returning to running, as well as to watch for symptoms of myocarditis.

Because of these safety concerns, the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK has published Graduated Return to Play Guidance following COVID-19 infection. The general recommendations following mild to moderate COVID-19 infection recommend that there is at least a 10-day complete rest from the time of onset of COVID-19 symptoms, with no exercise, plus an additional 7 days of being completely symptom-free prior to beginning training. He/she must also be off all medication/treatment for COVID-19. The athlete can then begin progressing through the GRTP protocol, under medical supervision, which takes a minimum of 7 days to return to normal training. (Elliott, N. 2021)

When added up, this is a MINIMUM of 24 days prior to full return to normal training progression for mild-moderate COVID-19 infection. Additionally, during these 24 days and beyond, runners should be keenly aware of the signs and symptoms of myocarditis. The following is a series of questions that highlight these signs and symptoms. If you answer yes to any of these, it is important to stop running/training and follow up with your physician.

Since enduring a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection, have you experienced any of the following:

1. Fainting or sudden loss of consciousness?
2. Chest pain, chest pressure, sharp pain in the heart or lungs when breathing or lying down?
3. Shortness of breath at rest or with exertion?
4. Increase in resting heart rate by more than 20 beats per minute?
5. Palpitations (heart racing, heart skipping, or dropping beats)?
6. Marked reduction in fitness?

Safely Returning to Running after COVID-19: It's Not as Simple as You Might Think

I have taken the time to highlight these concepts to show the high importance of having patience in return to running following COVID-19 infection, as well as continuing to monitor the signs and symptoms associated with myocarditis that may occur following infection. Understand that the information here is not complete and truly requires further research by the athlete as well as discussions with your physician if you have had COVID-19 infection. The repercussions of not following a plan can be extremely serious, and perhaps fatal, even if COVID-19 symptoms were relatively minor initially.

The Starting Line

Press Release from the NYC Parks Website

IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH NYC PARKS NAMES 6-MILE CENTRAL PARK LOOP FOR STORIED BLACK OLYMPIAN RUNNER, TED CORBITT

Monday, February 22, 2021
www.nyc.gov/parks

First Black American Olympian and training pioneer Theodore 'Ted' Corbitt honored in Central Park--Ted Corbitt Loop

Next phase of park namings to include public suggestions--Parks encourages New Yorkers to submit names in honor of prominent Black Americans

NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, last week joined New York City Council Member Peter Koo, Central Park Conservancy President Elizabeth W. Smith, New York Road Runners Chairman George Hirsch and Vice President of Events Ted Metellus, USATF Road Running Technical Council Chairperson David Katz, friends of the Corbitt Family, and running groups and runners from across the city to celebrate the naming of the Central Park loop in honor of the first African American Olympian Ted Corbitt, who was a pioneer in long distance running and ran in the first New York City Marathon wearing the "No. 1" bib. To commemorate the naming, Parks will install six scenic landmark street signs donning 'Ted Corbitt Loop' along the 6-mile route, and a Parks

Of course, none of this information here substitutes for what your physician recommends during and following COVID-19 infection. All who return to running following COVID-19 should also be closely monitored by their physician.

1. Elliott, N. et. al. (2021). Infographic: Graduated Return to Play guidance following COVID-19 infection. Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK. <https://www.fsem.ac.uk/infographic-grtp-covid-19/>

2. Mills, A. (2021). Returning to Training and Racing after COVID-19. Training Peaks. <https://www.trainingpeaks.com/coach-blog/returning-to-training-and-racing-after-covid-19/>

branded routed sign at the base of Harlem Hill at 110th St. and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. in Harlem.

"As an avid runner, I am incredibly proud to commemorate the contributions of a man that inspired me and countless others to push through boundaries and live more abundantly," said Commissioner Silver. "It is an honor to celebrate Black History Month this year by shining light on Ted Corbitt's influence and advocacy for underrepresented groups in running and beyond. May his legacy and pioneering spirit live on to inspire the next generation of runners to strive for greatness, progress, and peace."

"My father and other men and women volunteers worked tireless hours to help invent the modern day sport of long distance running," said Corbitt's son Gary Corbitt. "Many of the innovations in the sport were started in New York during the 1960s and early 1970s. This naming tribute celebrates all these pioneers."

"This is a fitting honor for Ted, who made a home for runners in Central Park," said Elizabeth W. Smith, President & CEO of Central Park Conservancy. "He saw in the Park, the promise for running to build a community as diverse as the City itself."

"Among his many contributions, Ted Corbitt was our trusted and dedicated leader. I became a runner back in the late 1960's when there were not many of us runners. (Mills, 2001, para. 9)

Press Release from the NYC Parks Website

We were an offbeat group and Ted Corbitt was our leader. Not because he wanted to be or ever sought attention, but because of his passion to make a positive impact, as well as being a champion, Olympian, and a student of the sport. We always looked to Ted to see what he was he doing. And then, we did it as well,” said George Hirsch, Chairman of the Board, NYRR.

“Today is a fitting tribute and we are proud to be part of NYC Parks, Central Park Conservancy, and the City of New York’s recognition of pioneering force Ted Corbitt. As an African American man, and alongside an African American NYC Parks Commissioner, this recognition is monumental,” said Ted Metellus, Vice President of Events, NYRR. “Ted’s lasting legacy continues to inspire and impact generations every day, every runner, and every single step taken in this park.”

“In 2006, my grandson Christopher, who was a three-year-old toddler at the time, ran in a NY Road Runners’ youth marathon here in Central Park. I was so proud of him as he focused his little self and ran in earnest. He was so adorable. Little did I know that we were standing on the phenomenally broad shoulders of Mr. Ted Corbitt, the ‘father of long distance running’,” said Community Board 10 Parks Committee Chair Karen Horry. “On behalf of Manhattan Community Board 10, I would like to extend sincere gratitude and congratulations to the Corbitt family, the New York Road Runners and marathon runners around the world on this auspicious occasion, as NYC Parks, under the leadership of Commissioner Silver, commemorates the longest loop in Central Park to the astounding legacy of Ted Corbitt.”

Born in South Carolina, Theodore ‘Ted’ Corbitt was an ultramarathon pioneer, author, and physiotherapist. Throughout his illustrious 50-year career, he ran 199 marathons and ultramarathons’, which are typically races of 50 or 100 miles or 24 hours. In 1952, Corbitt became the first Black American to represent the United States at the Olympic Marathon which was held in Helsinki, Finland. He was the founding President of New York Road Runners, a member of the inaugural class of inductees

into the National Distance Running Hall of Fame in Utica, and a pioneer of race course measurement. Corbitt is noted to have run up to 312.5 miles a week and is widely credited as a source of inspiration to runners around the world.

Corbitt will join Mayor John Lindsay, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux who have roads in Central Park named for them. Most recently, the lower loop was named John V. Lindsay Dr. in 2013, and the 72nd Street Cross Drive, that runs past Bethesda Terrace, was named Olmsted Vaux Way in 2008. Ted Corbitt Loop encompasses the 6 miles he and runners world-wide have run for more than a century.

NYC Parks is committed to supporting the fight to end systematic racism locally, nationally, and throughout the world. In June 2020, the agency declared solidarity with the Black community when it created Juneteenth Grove in Brooklyn’s Cadman Plaza Park. In addition, on Black Solidarity Day 2020, Parks also announced the first tranche of namings for prominent Black Americans in an effort to foster effective and equitable changes within the City’s parks system. In preparation for the second phase of namings, New Yorkers now have an opportunity to submit name recommendations to further highlight the Black experience in New York City. For more details and to submit suggestions, please visit our website. Parks will accept suggestions for the next two weeks. Those interested in submitting names of other protected class peoples can do so as well—for later consideration.



The Gate River Run, Comparing 1985 to 2021

1985 was my first River Run, this year was my 37th in a row. I found my copy of the 1985 results, but 1st Place Sports now has all years online.

Here are some nuggets:

In 1985 there was one woman in the '60-and-up' age group. This year there were a total of 244 women in the various age groups over 60.

There were 38 men in the '60-and-up' age group. This year there were 314, including 6 in the '80-plus' age group.

In 1985, women made up less than 25% of finishers. This year, women were almost 54% of all finishers.

However, we are getting slower. In 1985, out of less than 5,000 finishers, over 400 men and women (total) were sub-60 minutes. This year, out of over 6,700 finishers, there were fewer than 200.

In 1985, the men's and women's 30-34 age groups were both the largest with 21.6% and 23.6% of their gender's finishers. This year, it was the 35-39 age groups, but a much smaller percentage, 13.4% and 15.9%, respectively.

1985 was also the last year that only finishers got t-shirts. The finish chute funneled you into the old Wolfson baseball stadium, and you got your shirt before you headed for the beer.

I arrived in Jacksonville to start a new job in early March 1984, and I remember seeing news of the River Run

15,000 on the local sports report a few days later. The team I was on at work generally took a break to get breakfast together, and we usually took the stairs down, but the following Monday, one of my new, good friends, Joe Fournier, wanted to take the elevator. I gently ribbed him about being lazy, and he told me he had run 9.3 miles on Saturday, which shut me right up.

At that time, I had no idea I would be joining the masses at the next River Run. Over the summer, I was gaining weight because I wasn't playing sports like I had back in the DC area, so I started jogging to lose weight. Some friends told me about a 10k race in the fall of 1984, and after my first race I was hooked.

I remember that back then, the Gator Bowl was just a big, hulking aluminum and steel structure, and I think it was Bay Street that was close to it on the south side, I think there was a Benjamin Moore factory on the other side of Bay Street. That was definitely the shady side, and the north side of the Gator Bowl, between it and Wolfson Park, was the other start line. I remember one starting line was for women and "old men" (was it 40+?), and the other one was for all younger men; and we merged at the Main Street Bridge. This was way before chip timing, so there were multiple finish chutes, with one open at a time, and you gave the tear-off on the bottom of your bib number to a volunteer, who threaded it onto a stringer.

Editor's note: Tom's statistics are highly interesting, amazing, in fact. Almost as interesting as his personal remembrances of 1985, a year gone by. Thanks, Tom.

Upcoming Events

JTC RUNNING TRACK MEET SERIES

Coming soon!

Check our Facebook page & website for details

The (Not So) Frail Elderly

Forty-four years ago, April 1, 1978, the first River Run 15,000 was conducted. Inspired by Atlanta's Peachtree Road Race and the New York City Marathon, the Jacksonville Track Club's premier event attracted a national-class field and ran through several Jacksonville neighborhoods, and across the Alsop (Main Street) Bridge and the Hart Bridge. Those eight miles between the two bridges remains mostly unchanged today.

Much debate at organizational meetings in 1978 involved River Run age groups. Should grade school kids compete against high school runners? College kids? How about those over 40?

The early days of age-group competition saw highly-variable turnout in older age divisions. Some clubs set up five-year divisions. Many trophies went unclaimed in the oldest age groups; some winners were uncontested.

Those discussions led to the following age groups for the inaugural River Run 15,000, now known (since 1984) as the GATE River Run:

Men: 0-13, 14-17, 18-21, 22-25, 26-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-59, 60 & over.

Women: 0-13, 14-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50 & over.

That's right, kids, all male 50-year-olds were lumped together. And anyone over 60 competed for honors with men more than ten years their junior. And all women's age groups above 19-year-olds were 10-year spans.

So how did things work out in 1978? And how does that compare to 2021?

1978 Male finishers	1978 Female finishers
(50-59) 57	(40-49) 11
(60+) 12	(50+) 5
2021 Male finishers	2021 Female finishers
(50-54) 341	(40-44) 523
(55-59) 245	(45-49) 432
(60-64) 164	(50-54) 337

(65-69) 95	(55-59)234
(70-74) 54	(60-64) 137
(75-79) 22	(65-69) 78
(80+) 6	(70+) 29

Take a closer look at the 1978 comparison to this year's River Run (2021): Some numbers are shockingly different. First, the number of 2021 women finishers (3,626) is half-a-thousand greater than men finishers (3,103).

But I want you to look at the geriatric set of runners featured in the chart above. In 1978, only 69 men over the age of sixty finished. On the distaff side, only five women over 50 ran.

Forgive me, ladies, for calling fifty-year-old women, in the prime of life, elderly. But in 1978, there just weren't many women willing to compete over 15 kilometers. My, how things have changed!

In 1978, the oldest finisher was 53-year-old Emily G. Miller. She finished third of five in the 50-and over age group in 1:48:55. Every one of the women won trophies, which were awarded six deep in all age groups.

The oldest male finisher forty-four years ago was 74-year-old Jerome Staggenborg. His finishing time was 1:23:30. The 60-and-over age division was won by R.S. Boal, 66, in 1:04:41.

Boal's time would have placed him second among this year's 95 old fellows age 65-69!

What to make of all these "over-the-hill" runners?

First, it is a testament to the current belief that a runner can continue to run well past the age of collecting Social Security, with no ill effects.

Second, women runners who are past fifty are capable (as they no doubt were four decades ago) of running as well as many/most men their age. Reluctance to train and compete head-to-head has completely vanished.

Third, although the number of competitors in all divisions

The Starting Line / Written by Jay Birmingham

The (Not So) Frail Elderly

over 64 years see a dramatic drop, if current trends continue, the GATE River Run must soon introduce age-groups for ladies 70-74, 75-79, and 80-over. And the old

guys, defying outdated beliefs that 70 is elderly, may see competition for men 80-84, 85-89, and 90-over in the near future!

The Starting Line / Review by Jay Birmingham

The Book of Kel, Legendary Runner & Friend to All

Edited by Amby Burfoot and Gail Kislevitz, *The Book of Kel* is the life story of John J. Kelley. Unlike most biographical works, however, chapters are written by Kelley and many others who admired him. Thirty-two stand-alone chapters comprise this book, published in 2020 by Y42K Publishing Services.

John Joseph Kelley (1930-2011), often referred to in the press as Johnny "The Younger" Kelley, of New London and Mystic, Connecticut, was the 1957 Boston Marathon champion. "The Younger" moniker was because "Old John" A. Kelley of Massachusetts, won Boston twice and finished the race 58 times.

Kelley ran the fastest mile in the United States as a senior in high school in 1950, clocking 4:21.8. He entered Boston University and began winning cross country and road races, placed fifth in his first Boston Marathon in 1953, placed second at Boston in 1956, and a month later, won his first of eight straight AAU National Marathon Championships on the hilly Yonkers (NY) course.

Kelley twice represented the USA in the Olympic Marathon, placing 21st in Melbourne in 1956 (after leading through the first 10 kilometers), and 19th in Rome in 1960. Throughout his life, Kelley taught English and coached cross country, mostly at Fitch High School.

The Book of Kel includes several touching accounts of the man's transformative influence on his students, plus male and female runners alike. Burfoot's tribute chapter was first published in *Runner's World* magazine in 2007, "The Man Who Taught Me Everything."

Burfoot became the next American winner of the Boston Marathon in 1968.

The longest chapter in the book was written by Hal Higdon and appeared as a feature article in *Sports Illustrated* in 1966. Laced with humor, it describes the New England road running scene where Johnny Kelley was so iconic, he is automatically entered in every local race, just in case he shows up. Its title: "Has Anybody Here Seen Kelley?"

Kelley's wife, Jessie, whom he married when they were still in college, supported Kelley's running lifestyle for 50 years, welcoming an endless flow of students and runners into their home in Mystic. Along with their three daughters, the Kelley family always included cats and dogs. One chapter is called *John Kelley, Friend to All*.

Ted Corbitt, a 1952 Olympian and the "Father of Ultramarathoning" talked frequently with his friend Kelley. Indeed, he phoned Kelley in the late spring of 1988 as I paused at his home in New York City en route to the New England states. He arranged for me to meet Johnny Kelley when I passed through Mystic. We enjoyed a pleasant hour chatting about running. Kelley was 57, short, muscular, tan and fit, with a thick shock of sun-bleached hair. My most vivid memory of him was his deep smile wrinkles that were permanently on his face.

Four years later, Johnny Kelley finished his 31st and last Boston Marathon in 4:07:32.

The Book of Kel is an intimate look at the life and continuing influence of this runner on the Boston Marathon, New England running, and on the hundreds of people he touched.

The Principle of Adaptation...and the Training Effect

We all have heard the cliché in life...“You learn from your mistakes”...and certainly most of us would agree that if we look back over our running history there are at least a few things we may do differently. For those that have read my previous articles I have tried to be transparent about my early mistakes, mainly from lack of knowledge. From not having a coach, and thus not an adequate plan, to lack of flexibility training, to running a marathon as my first race, I have checked many boxes you really don't want to check. Fortunately, my perseverance kept me improving and ultimately led to me getting connected with seasoned and knowledgeable runners and coaches. Looking back over the years in my running logs, I have come to the conclusion that the last mistake that I corrected later in my career was to fully appreciate the concept of adaptation and the training effect...Let me explain further...but before I do I need to provide some context.

I moved to the Jacksonville area in 1988 as a newly trained Naval Flight Officer. My running had been rapidly improving. (I had corrected most of my early mistakes!) I was looking for a place to train and perhaps find a group to run with, and at one of the Jax races I was pointed to the group that met every early evening at 1st Place Sports (In those days there was only the Baymeadows location). I was excited to train with a fast group with a vast amount of experience. This group consisted of about 6-8 athletes that usually finished at the top in all the local races. So, we were not only training partners, but competitors...and fierce at that! Our typical non-quality day was various loops that were all approximately 9 miles. Most of the courses we trained on usually deposited us a few miles north of Baymeadows on San Jose so that we finished heading due south back to the 1st Place Sports store. This was usually my second workout of the day, and a few mornings I was doing intense quality training, mostly on my own. My total daily miles were usually 16-17 with a long run on Sunday. The typical routine for the group on the easy recovery days was meet at the store 15 minutes before go time...stretch...and off we went. The plan and conversation almost always sounded like this...”easy day today

guys”...”legs are tired from interval training yesterday” etc. etc. etc. You get the point. And we set off with the best of intentions....However, someone always felt good! (sound familiar?) and 3-5 miles into this planned recovery run, the pace would start to click down. After all, you didn't want to be the wimp that couldn't keep up...would you? We were too competitive. So, 7:00 miles became 6:30 miles...became 6:15 miles...became 6:00 miles. tick...tick...tick and down it spiraled, so when we came to that point on San Jose with a few miles to go the pace only accelerated as we headed south. Reviewing my handwritten logs (yes, we did that in the old days!) 6:00 miles became 5:30s and you didn't want to drop from the group. And that my friends were my typical EASY RECOVERY days. Now you have the context that provides the backdrop to the main subject at hand...the principle of adaptation and the training effect. And as I provide the details you will understand that the above approach to easy days was the last of my major mistakes...and quite frankly probably cost me in some of my race performances.

When I became certified as a USTAF coach at a weekend training in Orlando, one of the concepts that got my attention was what the training effect truly is. I must surmise if I didn't really understand it...how many other runners didn't either? Key Principle: The Training Effect occurs on your easy recovery days after the body has been stressed with more intense work. You see intense quality workouts break the body down, and to reach a higher level of fitness over time, you must allow the body to recover and absorb the hard workouts. If you don't, you will stay in a constant state of breaking down and this will lead to fatigue, injury risk, and sub-par race performances. Now you understand why I told my story. If I could go back in time, I would have had the knowledge to step on the brakes and not let my ego get in the way. (Although it would have been difficult to do!) Okay, now that I have covered the main theme of the article...here is a little more theory for those of you that like the details.

The principle of adaptation means that the body will adapt in a manner that enables it to better cope with

The Principle of Adaptation...and the Training Effect

similar stress in the future. Make sense? In the last issue of The Starting Line, I essentially wrote about this principle without mentioning it. That is, if you want to race fast...you must train faster. If you are used to a certain pace but over time can train shorter distances at a faster pace and cadence, your neuromuscular system will adapt to this new stress. Thus, your original pace will now feel relatively easy and you will improve your performance dramatically. A useful analogy is if you do any weight training. If, for example, you are doing bicep curls with 10 lbs. but elevate to initially less reps with 15 lbs., initially it will be difficult. But after 3-4 weeks if you returned to the 10 lbs. curls it should feel incredibly easy compared to your baseline. I think most of us understand this principle, however a key component of the adaption principle is the training effect. And many of us may not fully understand the necessity to allow the body to recover to absorb the benefits of the intense training which is necessary to improve. Remember, the training effect can only occur during active recovery, it does not happen during the intense sessions. Intense training breaks you down in the immediate term, and if you don't allow for recovery, the next intense training will only break you down further. Scientifically, (for those of you that are smart!) this principle correlates with the metabolic processes of catabolism and anabolism. Catabolism occurs during intense workouts and uses energy to break down. Anabolism occurs during recovery

and energy is utilized to grow and build. (Whew! got the science out of the way!) Adaptation has been documented to occur in approximately 4-6 weeks. So, if you do nothing different to stress the body (and recover to grow) after this period, your body has adapted to the level of stress. Hence, if you want to improve you must explore ways to induce different stress in your training. And that my friends is the principle of adaptation.

One last tip...what pace you may ask should I be targeting for my recovery days? Excellent question!!! A good rule is to first know your VO2Max pace. (Oh God... more science!) This is easy to estimate, don't worry. Its essentially the pace you can run for 5k race all out. So, if your 5k race pace is 8:00 per mile, a true recovery day should be a pace at 65-75% of VO2Max. Probably closer to 65% the day after an intense workout. In this example that would be approximately 10:48 per mile at 65% and 10:00 at 75% of VO2Max. Perhaps this is slower than your typical recovery day. But the science suggests if you really want to benefit from the principle of adaptation and the training effect this is a good range to target. Only after realistic recovery will you be able to really benefit from the hard work of your more intense work. Hope this was a helpful read.

Good running,

Sean

Thank you so much!
TO ALL GATE RIVER RUN VOLUNTEERS
DESPITE ADVERSITY

YOU MADE OUR EVENT A MEMORABLE AND SUCCESSFUL ONE!

My Lame River Run

March 16, 2021, as I begin to write this it is just a scant few days until the 44th running of our great race, the Gate River Run 15k. It is going to be a bizarre one, for sure. As we know, thanks to the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic our race field has been reduced to 8,000 participants. Normally, nearly 20,000 would enter and 16 to 18,000 would finish. A big difference, but due to the dangers of congregating, a necessary one. Of course, to be totally honest, we are extremely fortunate to be able to stage the race at all. That makes us doubly lucky because last year we pulled off the event only days before everything came to a screeching halt. Remember the many cancelled events? The TPC, the NBA season, the Boston Marathon, the Tokyo Olympics, soccer's European Championships, to name just a few. In the diabolical year 2020, they didn't happen. Nor did a lot of other things.

Not everything has changed since then, but some have. We now have vaccines and so we all feel a bit more safe and secure. I have had both of my Pfizer shots and I feel not exactly invulnerable but protected, so I still wear my mask. I have attended a few running events and even gone to a couple of restaurants.

That is neither here nor there, my purpose is to discuss my 2021 Gate River Run, my "streak," and my great disappointment. I had an awful GRR in 2019. My running was poor, and I was under-trained for a 15k. When my right hip flexor became extremely painful at about four miles, I spent the rest of the race limping every excruciating step of the way. When the flexor finally fixed itself later in the year, I asked Jay Birmingham if he would coach me for the 2020 race. It was the smartest thing I could have done. Jay helped me a lot and I had a good race. I was supposed to run 10-minute miles but managed to run 9:30s. Sounds slow, yes, I know, but for me, it was good.

Jay agreed to coach me again for the 2021 race and knowing that I was beginning the training regime at a higher fitness level than the previous year we both expected greater things. What we didn't expect was Achilles tendonitis. So, eight weeks into my 12-week training plan I was hobbled. It had been going well, and

we both thought that I was on the road to another good performance. I tried to continue, but even easy, short runs were no use. What could I do? I would never make 9.3 miles and I knew it.

It seems odd, I have run all 43 River Run 15ks and in all those years I never missed a race due to injury. What were the chances of running every race since 1978 and never being hurt? Had my luck finally run out? Was I to surrender my streak without even a fight? Pondering such capitulation was painful, but so was my tendonitis, that inflicted not one, but both of my legs.

Suddenly an unexpected option arrived, all the Streakers were offered the possibility of doing the GRR "virtually." No need to show up downtown at 8 A.M., no drive to get there, no crowd, no parking hassle, and no Hart Bridge. Of course, no race atmosphere, no old friends to rub shoulders with, and no competition. "Hmm, doesn't sound like a race at all," I said to myself. But, yes, an easier way to keep a 44-year-long streak alive. For a man with two gimpy legs, it was very tempting. I tossed the idea around in my fevered brain for about two weeks. A decision had to be reached by March 14 or else the opportunity would be gone. What to do, what to do?

My wife, Nancy, offered to walk 9.3 miles with me in and around our neighborhood. I thought, "No, that won't do, I want to at least run as much of it as I can." She tried to persuade me to attend the actual race. I had been pushing myself in that direction but thought of the pain and suffering if I came up lame after three or four miles. It could be even worse than my 2019 experience and I didn't want a repeat of that one.

"It's no use," I said to myself, "I will just have to do a fake, lame Gate River Run, whether I like it or not."

Anyone who has read my writings in our esteemed newsletter knows what I think of the virtual race phenomenon. I think it is nonsense, a sham, and makes a mockery of our noble sport. Now, here I was, about to be a part of it. Talk about eating humble pie and swallowing pride, how humiliating! They say, "never say never," and I wish I had never said it. I was reminded of the times when I derisively referred to the walk/jog Jeff

My Lame River Run

Galloway devotees as “Gallowalkers,” only to find myself doing it occasionally. Ultimately, it is the karma that gets us. The good old, “what goes around, comes around.” So cruel.

On March 13, I confirmed that I would do the race virtually. For the first time I would not be there in the flesh. I would do my own Lame River Run. Lame is more ways than one, lame due to my legs and lame thanks to virtual. I shouldn't say that; it was thanks to virtual that I was doing it at all. But still, it seemed lame, so terribly lame.

The weather looked better on Friday, March 19 than on the real race day, March 20, so I set off at 8 A.M. My course would be a winding, boring, flat thing within my neighborhood. I knew that if I had to abort, I would not be more than 1.5-miles from home and I could limp or crawl back. It was a beautiful, cool day with little wind, very much like the perfect conditions of the 2020 GRR. I began at a half-decent pace and thought, “it would be great if I could keep this up all the way, and my Achilles aren't even hurting much.” I ran the first 5k, felt okay, and imagined myself in the real GRR at the 5k point along River Road in San Marco. I saw the St. Johns River, the crowd along the street, the doughnuts, the mimosas. I wondered if the pandemic had killed all that atmosphere and revelry. That would be a pity, but it has been a pitiful year, hasn't it?

At five miles I was more than half-way and I knew that I could finish – I had to. I hit 6.2 miles and thought of the St. Nicholas area, the band, track club member, Jeff Pruitt's house, and the ancient cemetery. From years before, I remembered the signs that spectators held up, and my all-time favorite one that read: One Day You Won't Be Able To Do This, But This Is Not That Day. “Yeah,” I said to myself, “this is not that day either.” If nothing else, I had resolve.

I must confess that at around seven miles things were not looking so peachy. My Achilles were acting up, my left one was screaming at me. My pace slackened. I told myself that this was not about a finish time, it was only about a finish itself. If I had been in the true race, I would

be struggling up Atlantic Blvd. on the way to the entrance ramp of the dreaded Hart Bridge. That stretch was never one of my favorite bits of the course and if I were on it now, I would be cursing the womb that bore me. By eight miles it would have only gotten worse.

Two bad Achilles, one tired old man, and one huge, green monster. I understand that on the 20th the Hart Bridge was hell on earth. That would have really done me in. On my pancake flat course, I limped along knowing that it was nearly over. I was thankful that for me this time around there would be no Hart Bridge. My final straight was the street where I live, and although no one was there to hand me a honking, heavy GRR medallion, finishing the 9.3 miles (I completed 9.4 just to be sure) was reward enough.

“Have you done it, did you already finish it?!” my wife exclaimed as I came through the front door.

“Yes,” I panted, “all of it. It's over.”

The following day the genuine Gate River Run 15k took place. Conditions were not so perfect. People have asked me, “How much longer will you try to keep your streak alive?” I too have asked myself that question. I think one more; 45 is a good number and after that I can leave it all to Pat Gaughan. (Who is the subject of a story in this issue, by the way.)

Upcoming Events

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Coming soon!

Check our Facebook page
& website for details

Welcoming the 2021 Gate River Run



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

Tuesday 5:35 am, San Marco: Southside United Methodist Church 5-6 miles. Different pace groups from 7 to 9 minutes. Contact: Kelli Howard; 904-333-9208 text or cell

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).
Contact: 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

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

Thursday 6:30 pm, Springfield: Hyperion Brewery, 3-4 miles. Good beer at Hyperion after each run. Historic neighborhood. Worth the trip!
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.