

The Great Return!

56th Annual Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run
Saturday, August 28th



Letter from the Editor - Bob Fernee

The masks are coming off and the people are going out. We cannot say this entire Covid-19, pandemic thing is all over, but it is looking much better. Far as I am concerned, the scare began just a few days after our 2020 Gate River Run 15k. All else was cancelled and the world seemed to come to an abrupt halt.

Local running is finding its stride. Races and other events are resurfacing. It may take a good while longer before the casual runners and walkers, who bolstered those huge attendances will return. Once a habit is broken it can take time before it is rekindled. We will hope that they will be back in plentitude for our next big event, the Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run.

This promises to be a triumphant moment. Last year's race had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. The event began in 1965 and is Florida's oldest race and America's oldest beach race. Hurricanes have been unable to stop it, but for the first time it was interrupted. This year's race will be the 56th running, but for the pandemic it would have been the 57th. No matter, it will be great to get back to the beach and enjoy this historic, fun event.

JTC Running's 2021 Summer Beach Run will take place in Jacksonville Beach adjacent to the Seawalk Pavilion on Saturday, August 28. The main event, the 5-mile race (2.5 miles out, 2.5 miles back) starts at 6:30 PM. A kids' one-mile fun run will begin at 6:35. All finishers of the five-miler will receive a custom medallion and all finishers of the one-mile will get a fun run medal.

As always, the post-race party/awards presentation will be a blast. Included in your entry fee is food and drink provided by our generous title sponsor, Tijuana Flats. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the restaurant's foundation, Just In Queso, that aids the needy all over the USA.

Cash prizes of \$150, \$100 and \$50 will be awarded to the top three men and women. Custom beach towels will serve as age group awards for the first three men and women in a total of 32 age divisions.

The band Hard To Handle will provide the post-race party music from the Seawalk Pavilion stage. At 8 o'clock the awards will be presented. Jacksonville Transport Authority has a beaches trolley that runs up and down 3rd Street with stops about 20 minutes apart. It only costs a dollar each way, and runs until 2 AM, so that means you can stay and have fun for hours.

Entry fees: 5-mile, \$30; 1-mile \$12, until July 31. From

August 1st until August 27, \$35 and \$12, respectively. \$40 and \$15 on race day. That means save money and don't wait. Use code JTC21 and get a \$2 club discount (not available on race day). Enter now at jtcrunning.com or 1stplacesports.com.

Jay Birmingham is one of the most positive people I have ever known and when you read his latest piece titled, World Class – you, shall agree. He has written almost as many words about running and fitness as he has run miles, and that's not easy.

Sean McCormack provides you with more ways to improve your running. He extols the virtue and value of consistency but also reminds us about variety. If you don't want to go stale or get stuck on a plateau, then you must read his advice in this issue.

Sadly, I must tell you that one of our earliest club members has died. George Dorion was a man loved by many. He lived a long, happy, and highly accomplished life, and he will be missed. I have written a story about my old friend in this issue.

I have also written a report about a game that is out to send running back to the stone age. It is a game straight out of Hades, just like Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Greek mythology. (Cerberus ain't no myth, he is alive and living on Fleming Island!) You must take my alarming piece of nonsense seriously – before it is too late!

Stop the presses!! Yes, I always wanted to say that. This big news just in: JTC Running will have track this summer. In the name of our club, longtime member Jay Birmingham will host and direct what he calls the 'Return to the 1970s JTC Running Mile Run Festival.' The event takes place on Wednesday June 30 on the Bolles High School track beginning at 6:30 PM. Cost is free to all club members if they sign up online. Just \$5 to all non-members. Day of race entries permitted but at \$5 to everyone.

There are 14 mile races based on age, gender and ability, they are: Kids 1-mile aged 9 and under; boys 10-12; girls 10-12; senior males 60-up; senior females 60-up; masters men 40-59; masters women 40-59; men's mile 20-39; women's mile 20-39; high school boys; high school girls; championship women, any age, who can run sub 6:15 for a mile; championship men, any age, 5-minutes or less; Fun Run Mile, open to all. Register online at jtcrunning.com for your free entry. Or sign up on race day, June 30, but expect to pay \$5 cash.

President's Letter - Larry Roberts

Greetings!

This has been an exciting few weeks for runners, walkers, and cyclists in Jacksonville. It started with a proposal to increase the Duval County gas tax from \$.06 to the maximum allowed \$.12 per gallon to generate funds for transportation projects in Duval County. Half of the money raised over 30 years would go to the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), and most of their share would go to updating and expanding the Skyway with new technology, new cars, and expanded routes. Out of the debate on what to do with the Skyway came a movement to divert \$132,000,000 from the Skyway to towards funding the Emerald Trail. As of this writing the fate of that Emerald Trail funding and the gas tax increase are still up in the air. I certainly hope that Groundwork's Emerald Trail receives this dedicated funding so that the system can be completed as quickly as possible.

JTC Running spearheaded the way with funding \$50,000 for the Master Trails Plan for the city several years ago. Had that not happened, it is likely we would not be talking about the Emerald Trail today. Club members can be proud of playing a foundational role in getting the long discussed, but never acted on, concept of an urban trail system up and running in Jacksonville. Regardless of how the gas tax plays out, the visibility of Groundwork and the Emerald Trail has been lifted to a point of awareness (by the Mayor's Office, City Council, JTA, and citizens) that construction will proceed.

The construction of the first new mile, the LaVilla Link, will start this summer. The engineering design of the S-line Connector, for which the Club donated an additional \$50,000, will also start this summer. The inaugural Vystar Emerald Trail 5k last October raised both awareness of the Trail and \$15,000 for it. The Second VyStar Emerald Trail is planned for this October 23 and we will have more about it in the next Starting Line.

Our next JTC Running race is the Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run set for Saturday, August 28, at 6 pm at the Jacksonville Beach Pavilion. After cancelling the 2020 race because of COVID, we will be back with a great race on the beach and food and drink and socializing after courtesy of Tijuana Flats. Registration is open now at 1st Place Sports/sbr. Members receive \$2 off with code JTC21, so enter now, and bring your friends. We would like to have a big turnout to celebrate the return to open running. While you are at the pavilion, check out the water fountain there-- donated by the Club!

Lastly, communicating with JTC Running members is a vital function of the Club. In today's busy world we have newsletters (like the one you are reading now), our website, email blast, and social media. Your Board of Directors is reviewing how we can improve our communication to give you the information you want in the channels you use. To learn more, we will be doing some polling, so expect to receive an email request to participate soon. Please take the few minutes needed to tell us what you want so that we can make sure that we deliver!



Late Breaking News!

The Jacksonville City Council did approve the gas tax and the dedicated funding for the Emerald Trail! More details will be in the next newsletter issue.

The Starting Line
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New & Returning Members

Lisa	Adams	John	Gilman	David	Low
Jill	Benavides	Stephen	Harrison	Kristy	Obrecht
Jeff	Bertram	Randall	Hill	Brian	Pate
Cindy	Bohn	Ostra	Hutcheson	Patrick	Robertson
Paulette	Butler	Chris	Marciani	Alondra	Robles
Jerry	Caito	Mary Clare	Muhl	Jodee	Spring
Donna	Deegan	Jeremiah	Sulewski	Brendan	Steffen
Scott Allan	Flanders	Jeremy	Wenzel	Patty	Truax Stewart
Jim	French	Jeff	Wight		
Jay	Gardner	Jesse	Davis		
Keith	Gaston	Kyle	Kelley		

Upcoming Events

THE 56TH ANNUAL

TIJUANA FLATS SUMMER BEACH RUN

Saturday, August 28, 2021, 6:30PM

Cash prizes, awards, post-race party!

Enter at JTCRunning.com or 1stplacesports.com

RETURN TO THE 1970S

JTC RUNNING'S MILE RUN FESTIVAL

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 6:30 PM

ON THE BOLLES HIGH SCHOOL TRACK

14 SEPARATE MILE RACES

FREE TO OUR MEMBERS

Details & Register at JTCRunning.com

Running is Doomed

Brace yourselves; after all that we and our favorite friend –running -- have been through during the past year, including, Covid-19 deaths, the pandemic, the lockdown and quarantine, the cancelled races, the virtual races (which even yours truly had to do and it was a humiliating experience, I can tell you), we now have something that is potentially far more devastating. Yes, even worse than the pandemic. If this doesn't shove running into an early grave, I don't know what will.

Alas, poor running, I knew you well.

“OMG, Bob, what can it be?!” (Yes, that's right, I said OMG so I could sound modern. Pretty groovy, eh?)

Hold onto your haunches. This could hurt ...
Pickleball.

Yes, this pathetic, pukey, pastime is spreading worse than the Coronavirus. And it is serious, some are quitting running completely, just to become Pickleballsters, Pickleballbusters, well, I don't know what they call themselves. But they are shameful people. Those who give up the noble sport of running to sink into the abysmal abyss of Pickleballdom. It is an awful, alarming situation.

Pickleball; really, what the hell is it, and why didn't my mother warn me about it?

According to the most knowledgeable of all authorities (me), Pickleball is nothing more than a modern-day shuffleboard. What is shuffleboard? It is a game where you push this rubber puck sort of thing on a cement court and you get really excited (if you're about 90-years-old) when you slide the puck to a high number, or something like that. Anyway, it was invented as a “sport” for geriatrics. You can play it with a bad back, bad knees, bad hips, or even erectile dysfunction. Shuffleboard was a Godsend in retirement communities like Florida's 'Villages'. Well, not exactly, I understand that the Villages has the highest rate of STDs in the entire

state, those old fogies are doing a lot more than pushing the puck down there. Going out with a bang rather than a whimper, as poet TS Eliot would say. Enough of that, this is a family newsletter.

And now: Pickleball, what you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask.

According to legend, it all began in 1965 at the Bainbridge Island (Washington state) home of Joel Pritchard. Later in life he also served in Congress and as Lt. Governor. So, he was a politician, that's another stroke against him. One day he came home with his pals, Bill Bell and Barney McCallum, only to find their families bored with nothing to do (no imagination, the poor things). They suggested badminton but were unable to find the shuttlecock. Fortune struck, and it was the mother of all inventions – they cut some wooden paddles in Pritchard's garage and using a wiffleball, Pickleball came down from the heavens. Not since early man discovered fire has anything been quite so earth shattering.

So, there you have it, Pickleball was created to be a children's backyard game – nothing more. Kind of like baseball, which is but an offshoot of the English game Rounders, designed to be a girls' game. And don't get me started on the 'World Series' that has nothing to do with the world.

Things only got more pickly. In 1972, McCallum heroically founded Pickle-Ball Inc. and began manufacturing wooden paddles. It was joy to the world. Headquartered in Kent, Washington, it is still around.

But there is controversy. No, it is not performance-enhancing drugs, not yet, unless you consider Geritol one of them. (Arthur Godfrey, Geritol, anybody remember that? Okay, didn't think so.) The gut-wrenching question is about the name, Pickleball, and how it originated. Some say it derived from Pritchard's dog that was named Pickles.

Running is Doomed

But historians maintain that is impossible because Pickles didn't come on the scene for another two years after the pickled invention.

Editor's note: Well, I'm the editor and the author, but still. These could be the same "historians" who claim that due to a flimsy timeline the English polo player, James Hewitt, could not possibly be the true father of the trouble-maker Prince Harry. (Fact: Princess Diana was romantically involved with that guy and she even said so.) But I say he jolly well is, and the ginger-haired rebel Harry has no right to nobility. And why the heck didn't Oprah bring this up? He got off easy. A proper interview in The Starting Line would sort all this out, full stop.

Oh, I seem to have come off topic, where was I?

Another, more sensible, explanation is that the name came from rowing. There is a term in the sport of crew known as "pickle boat." This is when oarsmen are chosen from the leftovers of other boats.

Rejects, leftovers, yep, sounds like Pickleball. So, the name Pickleball sounds stupid and makes no sense. Neither does this game – they are perfect for one another. Pickleball is exciting, it compares favorably to watching paint dry and grass grow. No one has seen anything like it since Tiddlywinks.

Let's get down to the sordid details. Pickleball is not a noble racquet sport like tennis or even badminton, it is a paddle sport. Reminds me of high school when I was summoned to the Dean of Boys office. He never liked my hairstyle that I thought made me look like one of The Beatles. So, it was bend over and take "swats" from that sadist's wooden paddle. The swine must have enjoyed himself and probably thought of it as "sport." Now I realize it was just an early form of Pickleball (I'm lucky to have fathered kids). I am surprised that bloodsucker didn't invent it himself.

Wow, that was an unwanted flashback. Another digression, sorry readers.

The ball is a plastic thing with 26 to 40 round holes in it, a lot like a whiffle ball. There is a net to hit the ball over that is 36 inches high at the sides and 34 inches high in the middle of the court. The dimensions and layout of the court are as for a badminton court, 20 feet by 44 feet, for singles and doubles. The main difference is that a non-volley line exists and extends seven feet deep from the net on both sides of the court. This part of the court is commonly referred to as "The Kitchen." Horror of horrors, volley a pickled ball inside the no-volley area and certain death is yours. Pickleballers take their rules seriously, rules that were updated in 2005 by the USA Pickleball Assn., and you don't want to mess around with those guys. I'd prefer to have the IRS on my back.

Pickleball has its own jargon, words that a non-pickled person would never understand. My favorite is "Nasty Nelson," which is a serve that intentionally hits the non-receiving opposing player closest to the net. This rewards the server with a point. Yep, that's nasty all right. There aren't very many men by the name of Nelson who play Pickleball, the stigma is just too heavy.

Of course, one cannot play Pickleball without all the accoutrements. There is perfect Pickleballing clothing and, naturally enough, Pickleball footwear. Don't be fooled, these shoes may look the same as running shoes or tennis shoes, but you can't pickle without them. They have been described as "like walking on cucumbers." There is little movement during a game so squashing around on veggies seems ideal. Pickleball specific shoes range in price from \$90 to \$200, depending on the amount of time they mature in the pickle jar, I suppose.

Running is Doomed

As I initially warned you, Pickleball is spreading worse than the Coronavirus.

The estimated number of active players was 3.3 million in 2019, up 10% from 2016. In the USA it increased 21.3% by 2020. How many of them are retired runners? I dread to think. In 2021, there are 45 international associations for Pickleball, in addition to the United States of America Pickleball Assn. (USAPA). National Championships were played in Arizona from 2009 to 2017 but were moved to Palm Springs, California in 2018. If that isn't enough, there is also the US Open Pickleball Championships played in Naples, Florida, one of God's waiting rooms.

So far, Pickleball is not in the Olympics or the Para Olympics. But how long can that last? After synchronized swimming and some of the other nonsense, Pickleball should be right at home. However, Pickleball was brought to the international

stage in 2002 when Glendolyn Sanchez-Vicario III represented the Kingdom of Spain in the Special Olympics. Jeez, what a hoity-toity guy. What a name, and when was the last time Espana was called the "Kingdom of Spain?"

I am a bit hard on Pickleball, it does have its uses. It is great for insomnia. Having trouble sleeping? Try watching a Pickleball game on the internet, you'll sleep like a baby.

I said to running legend Jay Birmingham, "Jay, if you ever look around one day and see yourself on a Pickleball court you will know that your life is soon going to be over."

He laughed, but it is a fact: Running is life, Pickleball is death. Long live running. (Just trying to have a little fun, folks. Not meaning to offend anyone, even Pickleballers. Frankly, I don't mind if Pickleball ends up ruling the world or not. We've seen worse things.

The Newsletter - a Retrospective

It was 1975, and a room full of Jacksonville-area runners gathered at the Riverside YMCA to create a new track club. Lamar Strother had his followers, many from the barely alive Club Jacksonville that held all-comers track meets at the Lackawana/Mallison Field cinder track. Gary Hogue, physical activities director at the "Y" had a large contingent in attendance, many of them fitness runners from the Dawn Patrol, men who jogged between 5 and 7 AM along Riverside Avenue or across the Acosta Bridge into San Marco. The third large group was from the Arlington neighborhoods east of the St. Johns River within a mile or two of Jacksonville University.

Rodney Smith ponied up his membership money first, one of seven people that night who were keen to start immediately.

The consensus for the group's name--the Jacksonville Track Club.

I was just 30 years old but my experience with running clubs was deep--I had run road races in Columbus, Ohio, before my 18th birthday, conducted by the Ohio Track Club. During my freshman year of college, I'd joined the Ohio Valley Track Club (Cincinnati) and competed for them in cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track meets. I also ran all-comers meets hosted by the Kettering Striders.

In 1965, I created and coached Wilmington College's cross-country team. By the time I graduated in 1968, I had helped organize the Ohio River Road Runner's Club and served as its president.

The Newsletter - a Retrospective

At Michigan State University from 1968-1969, I started the Mid-Michigan Track Club, initially a group of grad students but 30-members strong by the time I returned to Ohio to teach.

Why this painful introduction? Because I learned early that the key to holding a running club together was regular communication through a newsletter. So, on that night, at the Riverside YMCA, I pushed for the JTC to publish a monthly newsletter. As Secretary of our fledgling club, I assumed the job of keeping our members informed with race results, an events calendar, and stories about training, racing, and other running news.

The Starting Line was born!

Over the past four decades, The Starting Line has seen many changes in format, distribution, and production. In the early years, club members got together and wrote names and addresses, then hauled the newsletters, sorted by zip codes, to the Post Office to take advantage of "bulk mail" rates. Gradually, typed labels, then computer-generated labels eased this burden.

But many things have NOT changed:

- 1) JTC (Running) members and other volunteers generate the copy that goes into the newsletter
- 2) Newsletter editors compile the contributions, often after much cajoling
- 3) It is still the "glue" that gives our hundreds of runners something in common, an essential membership benefit

This article has been motivated by a strong push by some members of our Board of Directors to cease publication of "hard copy" Starting Line newsletters. The Orange Park based Florida Striders abandoned its paper newsletter several years back. I no longer contribute articles nor do I read its on-line newsletter.

I understand the purported reasons for going digital but there is no substitute for a magazine on my coffee table that I can flip through without logging on, enjoy a photograph, check a race date, and share it with everyone who comes by.

PARTIAL LIST OF EDITORS OF THE STARTING LINE 1975-2021

Jay Birmingham 1975-1978

Butch and Diane Hornung 1979-1982

Becky Motley 1983-1986

Norman Fernee 1987-1994

Richard Fannin 1995-1999

Gary Ledman 1999-2004

Chris Twigg 2004-2010

Bob Fernee 2010-present

Please send additions and corrections to
bobfernee@aol.com

Upcoming Events

TIJUANA FLATS SUMMER BEACH

RUN KICKOFF FUN RUN

MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 6:00 PM

AT THE TIJUANA FLATS LAKEWOOD STORE

The Unforgettable, George Dorion



A runner, a friend, and a longtime club member is gone. George Dorion died on April 14; he was two days shy of his 92nd birthday. He died of prostate cancer that metastasized. It touched a delicate nerve in me. That was the same exact thing that took my father in 1991.

I first met George in 1978, and, of course, it was through running. I think he was running every day and competing in all the weekend races. He was easy to get to know. He was friendly to everyone and always joking around. Seems to me that he never took anything very seriously. From the start, we got along very well. But I feel sure that everyone who knew him would say the same thing.

His wife, Dottie, was more like his sidekick than his wife. He played all his laugh lines off her and she took them all in her stride, often giving back as much as she took. He was famous for his quick, dry humor and as he said himself: "If you lose your sense of humor, you've really lost everything."

Born in New York City on April 16, 1929, George received a master's degree in chemistry at Williams College in Williamstown, Ma. in 1951. While there, he was captain of the cross-country and track teams. He served in the Air Force and later earned a PhD in chemistry from Yale. He met Dottie in 1956 and they married in 1957. It was a 63-year-long match made in heaven.

She was always there for him, right until the end. "He was holding onto my arm, looked me in the eye, gave me a little smile, and he was gone," she said. "We had wonderful times; I couldn't have picked a better mate."

The Bacardi rum corporation was begun by George's great grandfather and in 1969 he joined the company as a chemist.

He worked both the Puerto Rico and Jacksonville locations.

George and Dottie were fixtures at all the local races for years and years. Both were into road, cross-country, and track racing. Dottie later became a successful triathlete. The Dorions joined The Jacksonville Track Club (now JTC Running) in its infancy and were instrumental in founding and organizing the club's first River Run 15,000 (now the Gate River Run 15k).

Those of us around at the time will remember the wonderful post-race party they organized in the backyard of their Deerwood home. Not only was it great fun but we got to rub shoulders with some of the top athletes of the day, those who came to our proud moment – the inaugural 1978 River Run 15,00.

Rodney Smith was the first person to sign up for the fledgling Jacksonville Track Club in 1975, he knew George Dorion well: "George was a longtime member of the Jacksonville Track Club and volunteered many hours helping with the River Run 15,000 in the early years. He and his wife Dottie and son Mark were very active in the club and participated in many local running events. George was always encouraging runners with sound advice and was one of the most positive, upbeat people around. He had a dry sense of humor and was a quick wit. He would make an off-the-cuff comment and give you a wry look to see if you caught the humor in his retort.

"I recall going to his house many times to run with his son, Mark, and George would keep encouraging us to continue our educations with post bachelors' degrees. We both eventually did, and both went into coaching high school athletes. George and Dottie were active supporters of the UNF track and cross-country programs in the formative years, with mentoring and financial support. "George will be missed by friends and family alike."

The Starting Line / Written by Bob Fernee

The Unforgettable, George Dorion

Personally, I fondly remember George for his amazing wit and intelligence and for one moment particularly. My wife and I were invited to their house for dinner and George insisted that we get there early so that the two of us could go for a run in the undeveloped woods and trails near the house (part of the huge Skinner property, I think, and probably is all houses and cement now). We set off on this run, and George was as excited as a kid. We were running along a trail, talking all the time (him the jokester, me the straight man), when suddenly I looked over my left shoulder and George was airborne. He went straight up, fully three feet in the air! I thought, “what’s he doing,

practicing for the high-hurdles?”

Then I looked down and underneath the spot where he was about to step was a diamondback rattlesnake a good three feet long. He hit the ground and took off like Carl Lewis.

“I didn’t know you could move like that, George,” I said.

“Neither did I and I hope I never have to again,” he breathlessly replied.

Yep, things like that you never forget.

Just like my old pal. I will never forget you, George, and neither will anyone who ever knew you. We will do

Upcoming Events

RETURN TO THE 1970S JTC RUNNING’S MILE RUN FESTIVAL

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 6:30 PM

ON THE BOLLES HIGH SCHOOL TRACK

14 SEPARATE MILE RACES

FREE TO OUR MEMBERS

Details & Register at JTCRunning.com

The Starting Line / Written by Bob Fernee

Covid, Pfizer, Achilles & Me

There I was, training diligently for the 2021 Gate River Run. Just like in 2020, I was under the wing of my coach, Jay Birmingham, a fellow who knows more about running than anyone you and I can think of. Although I kid him and call him a sadist, he is actually a very benevolent, conservative taskmaster.

I started from a better place than I did in 2020.

This time around I was far more fit and much more accustomed to the workload.

I began at about 35-miles a week, which was comfortable for me and nothing that I had not done before. The plan was to gradually boost me up to 50-miles a week and I was looking forward to it. Surely this would be my best River Run in years.

Then something happened. Suddenly I came down with a bad case of Achilles tendinitis in, not one, but both feet. Curiously, both ankles hurt equally as bad. The stiffness was so extreme that there were times

Covid, Pfizer, Achilles & Me

when even just walking was nearly impossible.

Now let me tell you, Achilles problems are not new to me. During my 40-year history as a runner, I have had all types of lower leg troubles, Achilles one of them. I always knew what to do and how to get myself out of them. But this was strangely different. All my old cures failed; the massaging, the ice, the heat, the stretching, all were a no-go.

“What gives?” I wondered.

During a night of painful complaining, my wife enquired: “Didn’t all this happen at the same time you got your first Pfizer Covid vaccination?”

I was stopped in my tracks. I pondered. Then I replied that yes, it all happened at that time.

The vaccine was the only thing I did differently over all those months. Keep in mind that during 2020, while being more unfit and unused to running so much, I had absolutely no injury problems whatsoever. Now, I was hobbled, and my Gate River Run hopes seemingly scuttled.

I suffered on for a month or so, then did the modern thing -- I googled it. Mr. Google said: “Muscle aches have been reported, but these go away in a few days.”

Of course, the Achilles is not a muscle, it is a tendon, and what the heck, this was far more than three days. Then again, what does anyone really know about this “novel virus?” Meanwhile, despite everything, including rest and inactivity, my two Achilles tendons were screaming at me.

As I chronicled in my painful story, My Lane River Run, that appeared in the last newsletter, I managed to do a poor “virtual” jog/walk GRR and kept my River Run ‘Streaker’ status alive. It was lame; I did the distance but didn’t do the race. Lane, third rate.

I have had my second vaccination and I have tried to baby my tendons back into order – to no great effect. I don’t even need to run, if I stay on my feet

for more than two hours my tendons are nailing me to a cross.

After unloading my woeful tale in a most unvarnished manner someone asked me, “why did you get the vaccine in the first place?”

“Because I thought it could save my life,” I said.

“Besides, I wanted to be free to walk outside and go into places and meet people without so much fear. I wanted to feel free again.”

All this happened about mid-February and it is now mid-May. My legs are still gimpy. Admittedly, it has lessened; I can now run fairly well (though slower and more carefully) every other day, and my Achilles on the right side is much better and certainly better than his brother on the left. But still, the pain and stiffness are noticeable.

I wonder if I will ever be the same, or if those antibodies will forever be at war with my tendons. True, I cannot be 100% sure that it was the vaccine that did this, but I cannot attribute this lingering malady to anything else. Certainly not to me or my training, we are perfect and faultless.

Is there anyone else out there who has had a similar bad reaction to the vaccine? I would like to know.

I went to the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) website and submitted my report. I have not heard back. Would I have taken the vaccine if I knew what it might do to me? Well, probably not. I would have continued doing what I was doing – staying mostly inside, using my mask, having goods delivered, washing hands frequently, all that and more. Even during the worst days of the pandemic, I was running, and doing much better at it than I am now. Seems very unfair, yes?

Then again, given the choice of two good Achilles tendons or being dead. Well ... I don’t have to think about that one for very long.

Training Theory 101...The Balance of Consistency & Variety

Distance running is a sport that requires focus and dedication. Fitness is easily lost and certainly not easily gained. I always describe distance running as a “what have you done for me lately?” sport. This article will build on my previous writings on interval training, the training effect and others as I address two critical principles of training theory... being consistent...yet incorporating variety into your training plan.

Every training plan should have a goal or goals in mind to be effective. Without goals its next to impossible to build structure around a schedule. This is true no matter if you're an elite athlete with a very specific goal such as winning a competition, or just someone who has a more general goal in mind like finishing JTC Running's Gate River Run 15k for example. In both situations, a plan can be crafted although the specifics of the plan may be vastly different. What they do have in common is both will require consistency and variety to reach goal attainment.

Consistency is simply putting the work in every week. And I am a believer in breaking down a plan to a weekly schedule. Depending on your goal and your situation, a week may have 2-3 days off or 1-2, or in some cases zero days off. I don't recommend more than three days off to be consistent, and I also am usually not in favor of zero unless you are elite. Bottom line is you must find your sweet spot that works for you and what you can handle. Start with whatever your goal is and work backwards from that event to the present time. How much time do you have to reach your goal? If it's a particular race then you know exactly how many months you have to build your plan, or if it's a more general goal like “someday I want to run a marathon,” well you have much more time to develop your plan.

Once you have that solved you can start building your training plan. The beginning of a plan is usually referred to as the “preparatory phase” and is

designed to build fitness over a designated period. I always enjoyed this phase of training as progress can be easily measured over a time span of 3-4 weeks at a time. So, to be consistent your training plan should stay constant for 3-4-week blocks of time. For example, every Monday may be an easy 4-5 miles, Tuesdays may be 400's on the track, and Sundays a long run. You should also have some cross-training built into your plan like yoga and core strength. And this should remain constant for 3-4 weeks. That's what consistency looks like, and after approximately a month you should look back and be able to measure some progress. So, at the end of 3-4 weeks things need to be adjusted while at the same time remaining consistent. That's where variety comes into the equation.

You may ask “what's the secret behind 3-4 weeks?” If you recall from a previous article, adaptation in the body occurs approximately every 28 days. That means your body will adapt to that training load, and if you want to continue to improve your fitness you must “shock” the body and adjust your training schedule. In my situation, I usually was pointing for a marathon 8-9 months in advance. Early in my training schedule prep phase, every 3-4 weeks I would tweak either the volume and/or intensity of my training. It must be a gradual increase to avoid injury. If I was doing 8x400-meters in 65 seconds, initially I may go to 10x400 at the same pace for 3 weeks. Then I may keep the reps at 10 but try to go either a little faster or more likely REDUCE the rest interval between the 400s. If I was resting 2 minutes between reps, I would bring it down to 1:45 for the next 3 weeks. Then 1:30 rest the subsequent 3 weeks. Do you see the pattern? This is what effective variety looks like. If this workout was on Tuesday, then perhaps Saturday was a threshold training day at 95% of VO2Max. (Which is that level of work where you are at the maximum of your body's utilization of oxygen before you go

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into oxygen debt.) This is best estimated at the pace you can run a 5k at race pace. On that day I may start out doing 2 miles at threshold pace. The next 3 weeks I would increase to 3 miles, followed by 4 miles 4 weeks later. I usually liked to get that workout up to 10k at threshold pace building over time. Then deeper into the training plan, the 400s may transition to 800s following the same pattern of adjusting every 3-4 weeks. See the pattern? Sometimes the challenge with runners is injecting variety into our training. I think the reason is we tend to be extremely dedicated and focused and get comfortable with the same routine. Usually, being consistent is not the issue, but variety is normally the problem I see with the runners I know. But remember, if you don't change things up eventually your fitness will plateau, and improvements will cease.

If your goals are more recreational and perhaps you just want to complete the Gate River Run or your first 10k, you need not be concerned with concepts for now like VO2Max and intervals or threshold runs, but you still need to be consistent and occasionally add variety into your training. If you are running just 4 days per week, make one of them different. Perhaps you go to the track and experiment with running 400 meters at a faster pace than you are accustomed to and jog for 800 meters. Eventually, as you get stronger, you may want to gradually increase your weekly mileage.

If your runs are 3 miles in duration four times per week, increase one day to 4 miles, then 3-4 weeks later bump up another of your weekly runs. The concept is the same no matter what your level of competition is, or the specificity of your goals.

Last issue I wrote about the training effect, and please don't forget about that important principle. Make sure your easy days are in fact easy as this is when the body absorbs the hard workouts and fitness increases. Remember, fitness decreases initially from a hard workout, and as the body recovers and adapts on the easy days, fitness increases. If correctly done the increase in fitness will surpass your previous level in a process called "supercompensation". Viewed graphically this theory of the body's response to exercise stimulus is called Matveyev's Model.

Good running, and if you have any questions don't hesitate to shoot me a message at seanmichaelmccormack@gmail.com. Always glad to help

Sean is a USTAF certified coach and former cross-country coach at Georgia Southern University. He has won the Jacksonville Bank Marathon 3 times as well as 3-time winner of the U.S. Navy Marathon Championship

Upcoming Events

THE 56TH ANNUAL

TIJUANA FLATS SUMMER BEACH RUN

Saturday, August 28, 2021, 6:30PM

Cash prizes, awards, post-race party!

Enter at JTCRunning.com or 1stplacesports.com

World Class - You

Note: This essay is approximately my one-thousandth opus for running publications--newsletters, pre-season/post-season reports, and research papers--since 1961.

I am not just a runner; indeed, like you, I have many other interests in life--education, career, family and friends, hobbies, and more.

My professional life as a teacher of science has worked its way from studying the whole organism and its various systems, through the functions of organs and tissues (think muscles), down to life at the molecular level. How do we--and all other life forms--stay alive? What must enter our cells and what must leave our cells to keep us viable? The only way we can run is for thousands of chemical reactions to proceed smoothly, mostly error-free.

A philosophical question sometimes posed is "What book would you like to have if you were stranded on a desert island?" For me, it is *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, a graduate-level text with many authors including DNA-Nobel laureate, James D. Watson.

One of the two Laws of Thermodynamics is Entropy--the movement of complex systems toward simpler systems. Put simply, everything is winding down: the universe, the sun, mountains, complex molecules. But one thing temporarily defies Entropy: Life. Biological systems run uphill, constantly putting energy in (sunlight, food) for their entire lifespan. When those uphill reactions (anabolic processes) cease, the cell--and the organism--dies.

You are World Class. There, we finally got to it! Since humans developed, and all life that came before us, we have temporarily (but without interruption) defied Entropy. From the moment of your conception, when you were but a single cell with 3.1 billion base pairs of DNA, you started absorbing energy from your mother, and you grew

and developed, and--became a runner!

For you to be alive, most of the genetic material expressed by genes, sequences of DNA that are the blueprints for manufacturing proteins. It's those 19,000 or more proteins that build cells, convert food and oxygen to energy, and keep you alive.

Almost flawlessly.

The owls and frogs that I hear on my pre-dawn run do not worry about any of this. Yet they are equally blessed by mostly flawless execution of all the metabolic processes that keep them alive, help them grow and develop, and if they're fortunate, reproduce.

But humans, having figured much of this out, and with our talent for speech, writing, learning, and communicating, have devolved to the point of harping much of the time on what's wrong. Watch TV, read posts on the Internet, read magazines, even listen to runners before and after races: Much of the talk is negative. Illness, disease, injury, malaise--the litany is vast and endless.

But I am writing this to tell you: You are World Class. You are exceptional in every way. We all reach the zenith of our performances some day and eventually, Entropy will claim some of our functions until our bodies slow, falter, and die.

But, as Bob Fernee shared with us in his 2021 River Run essay:

One day, you will not be able to do this. Today is NOT that day.

Revel in your good health, your capable body, and your positive attitude toward life. Realize that to simply be alive, you are the endpoint of trillions of biological success stories. In every way possible, You Are World Class.

The remarkable story of Harry Edward: Britain's first black Olympian

V11 N 27 from the *Once Upon A Time In The Vest* blog

Reprinted from the *Once Upon A Time In the Vest* blog - they are beginning their 11th year with more than 900 postings. It is a blog for athletes and fans of 20th century Track and Field culled from various articles in sports journals of the day, original articles, book reviews, and commentaries from readers who lived and ran and coached in that era. They are the equivalent of an American Legion post of Track and Field but without cheap beer. You may contact them directly at irathermediate@gmail.com or write a comment at the end of a given posting on their blog. This is an edited story extracted from *The Fastest Men On Earth*, a book published by Welbeck Press on May 27th.



Harry Edward took a deep breath, pushed his spikes into the holes he'd just dug in the sodden cinder track and dropped his head.

A vos marques.

It was the biggest race of his life. The 100 metres final at the 1920 Olympic Games, in Antwerp.

Preparez vous.

As he waited for the gun to blast, a Belgian official shouted at the American champion Charley Paddock to pull his hands back behind the line. The instruction broke Edward's focus and concentration and he relaxed a little, expecting a delay or even a call to stand up.

Partez.

Instead, the pistol fired and he was left trailing as the small crowd roared and the world's fastest men disappeared in front of him. With his fluid, eight-foot stride, he managed to catch almost all of them as he blasted down the outside lane, but as the six men hit the tape it was Paddock first, his fellow American Morris Kirksey second and, incredibly, the fast-finishing Edward was judged to have pipped Jackson Scholz on the line for third.

In those early Olympic years a British bronze medal was greeted amiably enough – he even got another in the 200 metres – but his exploits did not trouble the front pages. In truth they hardly troubled the sports pages. It was, however, a genuinely significant moment.

As he climbed down from the podium after receiving his medal, a watching black American athlete ambled shyly across the in-field to talk to him. "Do you know that you are the first man of colour to stand on the platform of Olympic winners?" he explained.

Harry Edward was indeed Britain's first black Olympian, also its first black Olympic medal winner, and he enjoyed an extraordinary running career – once winning the 100-, 220- and 440-yard titles at the AAA championships inside a single hour – and being personally congratulated by King George V.

Thanks to the Amistad Center, a research and museum facility in New Orleans devoted to the United States's racial and ethnic history, Edward's remarkable life can be remembered in all its glory. His papers, photographs and memorabilia, including an unpublished memoir, have been sitting there gathering dust for nearly 50 years.

The 257-page typewritten memoir – entitled "When I Passed the Statue of Liberty I Became Black" and sub-titled "The Autobiography of an Ex-European" – is no standard sporting opus. It is an eye-opening piece of work that traces his

The remarkable story of Harry Edward: Britain's first black Olympian

V11 N 27 from the [Once Upon A Time In The Vest](#) blog

globe-trotting adventures as a kind-hearted, self-effacing, smart, liberal-minded evangelist for human rights, a man way ahead of his time, as he moved through some of the 20th century's most seismic events – from the misery of a Great War internment camp, through the Depression and the struggle for civil rights in America, to the internecine politics of Vietnam. The last paragraph of his memoir reads: "I hope that the story of my economic struggles in the face of racial obstacles may provide similar encouragement and inspiration and contribute in some constructive ways to urgently needed reforms and changes."

By his teens Edward could speak fluent German, French and English and was showing both academic and athletic promise. His speed was first noticed at a track meet in Berlin, at the city's new stadium built to stage 1916 Olympics, where, at only 16, he placed second in the 100m to the German champion and won the 200m. It was 28 June 1914. A few hours earlier Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been shot dead in Sarajevo, an event that foreshadowed a chilling chain reaction among European governments.

The war would change his life. As a British subject resident in Germany, the secret police soon came calling and after six months of forced curfew he was arrested and, completely alone, whisked off to Spandau, on the outskirts of Berlin, where he was interned in the grim POW camp at Ruhleben – literal translation "Life of Rest".

Edward's account of his time in the camp, almost four years of it, is depressing and entertaining in equal measure. He won the camp sports day races, joined the dramatic society, made lasting friendships, while also witnessing daily torture, brutality and death. He existed on meagre rations, augmented by wood shavings, and slept in a freezing old stable block. "The quality of the

food grew progressively worse; black bread was adulterated with sawdust, potato peelings and powdered bones. Horsemeat of animals killed at the front was pickled in brine and sent to prison camps. Turnips were served as the only vegetable every day for four to five weeks."

Ruhleben was among the first camps to be liberated at the end of the war and in the winter of 1918 he found himself in London, where he learned he had passed the exams he had taken in the camp and secured a job as a teacher of German and French. "In this post-war period it was sports again which provided me with an opportunity to emerge as an individual and to express my philosophy." In his first track meet in Britain, at Stamford Bridge, he won two prizes. He swept the sprint events at the 1920 AAAs and was selected for the 100m, 200m and sprint relay team at the Antwerp Games, alongside a young Abrahams. Harry battled his way through to the final of the 100m before falling victim to the calamitously bungled start.

"I put tremendous effort into my strides, found myself about four feet behind the leaders at half distance, regained an improved forward-leaning position and ended with a tremendous burst, passing everybody at the end. Alas, I passed them about three feet behind the finishing line. The judges gave me third place. There was a great delay before the results were announced. Every participant sensed or knew that the start had been a doubtful one. Scholz, a US finalist, said to me at the end of the race that it had been a false start. He had been left on his knee at the start."

The following year Edward defended his sprint titles at the AAAs, but it was 1922 that would go down as the zenith of his athletic career, with Edward winning countless titles, handicaps and invitationals – though in those strict amateur days the biggest prize he could earn was seven guineas – culminating with the AAAs where, inside one hour,

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he placed first in the 100-, 220- and 440-yard finals, a record that has never been beaten.

In 1923, inspired by an invitation to run at New York's Yankee Stadium, he emigrated to the US. "Upon my setting foot on the soil of the United States of America I learned very soon that among all the classifications given me, the designation 'Negro' was the most significant," he wrote later. Edward's performances on the US tracks were disappointing and he continued his extraordinary life story away from the track, odd-jobbing around New York, then moving to Philadelphia. In the 1930s he returned to New York, divorced and remarried, and became the administrative director of the Negro Theatre, working with the likes of John Houseman and Orson Welles, and staging the first version of Macbeth with a black cast. He spent the second world war heading an uptown rationing operation for the Office of Price Administration, and when hostilities came to an end, he volunteered to join the newly formed UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. They sent him to Greece.

En route and accompanied on a bumpy seaplane ride by a collection of snooty British civil servants, he returned to London for the first time and wondered how he would be treated. "After disembarkation at Poole all passengers had to pass through British security. The supervising officer of that service looked at my American passport then bestowed a long look upon me ending in the query: 'Ain't you Harry Edward of the Poly Harriers, the former British champion?'"

After the war he returned to the US and took another grey clerical job, this time at the New York Employment Office, a role he continued until retirement in the late 60s. But he continued to work abroad and travelled to Vietnam to set up a US sponsored foster-kids programme and worked at the UN and the New York mayor's office, greeting

foreign dignitaries.

Edward ought to be revered as a legend of British sport, mentioned in the same breath as Abrahams and Eric Liddell. But he isn't. When he died, after a heart attack on a trip to visit his sister Irene in Germany in 1973, the New York Times printed a five-paragraph obituary, while the black New York Amsterdam News printed a larger article, alongside a picture of Edward with King George V back in 1922. Not a single line was printed in the British press.

It was scant recognition for a true sporting pioneer and a man who lived his life on the coalface of so much 20th century political change, but proof positive, were it needed, that his racing career and the wonderful, eclectic life that followed, had been essentially air brushed from history. Today, nearly 50 years after his death, and in the heat of the Black Lives Matter campaign, he would surely be crestfallen to learn that the struggles he endured daily have not materially changed?

His fascinating autobiography demands to be published and wheels are in motion to get it done in time to mark the centenary of his marvellous AAAs exploits in 1922. Despite its vintage, Edward's story remains as valuable, instructive, and sobering as it did when he wrote it more than 50 years ago.

The Myth of Supplementation

Readers of running literature, whether print or online, are bombarded with messages touting nutritional supplements. Even in the pages of *The Starting Line*, assorted coaches, trainers, health professionals, and nutritionists tell you that you are deficient in something.

Are you getting enough selenium and zinc? Cytochrome C, fatty acids that promote brain health, antioxidants can't hurt. Are you getting enough B12 and folic acid?

Perhaps you'd be a better runner if you infused your body with vitamins; knocked down a few trace minerals; ingested a co-enzyme or two—just in case.

Poppycock!

(Don't know what that means, but I am beyond skeptical.)

First, a little evolutionary biology, then a modern observation, then some hard science.

You, and every other natural-born *Homo sapiens*, is made of top-quality DNA. The three billion pairs of nucleotides code for about 19,000 proteins. Each of those proteins plays (or has played) a role in getting our species to this point, well into 20,000 years of dealing with nature and a thousand environmental challenges. You are the endpoint of several thousand success stories. YOU are a success story. Otherwise, you and your DNA would be gone.

It is only over the past two hundred years that science has elucidated what is in our food; only since 1953 that we began to understand DNA and protein synthesis. And only in the past forty years that physiologists began to care about sports nutrition. My point? We became a pretty tough species, capable of living hard by eating pretty much anything we could get our hands on—seeds, grains, eggs, figs, carrion . . . without knowing the science involved.

Even in this era of sophisticated research by biochemists, we notice that many of the best running performances in the world are by unsophisticated athletes from “developing countries”—whose daily caloric

intakes hover around 1000 kilocalories, whose limited diets lack half the variety of the American elites. It's been this way for the past 20 Olympiads.

Why all the ink devoted to supplements?

First and foremost, money. Selling vitamins and minerals in pill, powder, and injectable form is a multi-billion dollar business. Besides Dr. Cade at U of F, and Bill Gookin in California in the 1960s, who really cares about your well-being? Performance enhancement by swallowing—how easy is that? Into the 21st Century, we can drink vitamin-enriched water, boost energy and mood with expensive shots of mild stimulants, and if we can afford it, go to a store devoted to supplements and lay down hundreds of dollars for whey protein and coenzyme Q.

Not only are the pill-sellers into it—one after another personal trainers, chiropractors, nutritionists, and coaches are on board. What can it hurt? Sounds logical, based on our expanding knowledge of cell biology. But step back and think about it.

I've been watching this for over 50 years and the same pattern recurs: A “discovery” leads to a supplement (in my HS days, it was Vitamin E). Wheat germ oil and wheat germ cereal (sprinkle it on everything, went the advertising). “E is for endurance.” Turns out that Vit. E deficiency is virtually impossible.

“No one eats a truly balanced diet,” the saying goes. “I take vitamins as insurance, just in case I'm lacking something.” “Modern food processing destroys nutrients.” Etc, etc. Sales pitches, all. No different from the patent medicine salesmen at the County Fair.

Just a month ago, the former American Dietetic Association (now called the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics) debunked the promotion of supplemental calcium for osteoporosis prevention. A year ago, the official position on 3-Omega fatty acids was that they had no positive health benefits as a supplement. The American College of Sports Medicine, the gold standard of science in the world of physical performance,

The Myth of Supplementation

continues to disparage supplement use by any but the malnourished or biologically handicapped.

1968 Olympian Ron Daws said it best. He was flying from Minneapolis to Boston for the marathon when a vitamin salesman began his pitch. Daws asked the guy, “Why don’t you promote good eating instead of supplementing junk food with pills?”

Getting adequate food in America, whether you are a hard-working runner or average sedentary office worker, is not a problem. The soaring obesity rate proves that few are hungry, and none are malnourished.

I opine that the pursuit of finding a nutritional “edge” is tantamount to looking for a shortcut on a race course. If I take this pill, the thinking goes, and my opponent does not, perhaps I can beat him.

Year after year, hearty eating and heavy training have kept me, and hundreds like me, healthy and fit. Perhaps less hearty eating would lead me to faster races. But the real scientists—those without a financial agenda—agree: You don’t need the pills.

Get outdoors and run. It is what your body was designed to do.

Upcoming Events

RETURN TO THE 1970S JTC RUNNING’S MILE RUN FESTIVAL

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 6:30 PM

ON THE BOLLES HIGH SCHOOL TRACK

14 SEPARATE MILE RACES

FREE TO OUR MEMBERS

Details & Register at JTCRunning.com



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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.