

January 2019



Reading, Pennsylvania

FROM THE PRESIDENT

And so the journey begins. As we embark on this first letter from the incoming new President, I thought where best than Webster's dictionary to capture what is the essence of a "club." Well, Webster's explanation as a noun set the bar low: "something resembling a club." We don't fit well as a noun so how about the verb "to unite or combine for common cause."

We captured in some of the recent survey data that over 60% of the members came from Friends, Family, and Coworkers. Maybe there is something here about this "unite" thing. The Pacers as a club have been organized since 1980 which means as the new President I take the advice given to me by one of our more colorful and respected senior members seriously. Roughly quoted as "Don't #\$\$^ it up."

You see as we enter 2019 this organization continues to evolve and adapt both from a participant level but also within the landscape and expectations for its members. Last year ended with a variety of members posting on Social Media various highlights of races, social runs, distances, elevations, and injuries. Along with that were the variety of questions on gear, future races, how to's, and what if's. These are all easy examples of the "commons cause." (Find these on the Pacers Discussion Group Facebook page)

Therefore, what brings us the 500 plus members as a collective to "to unite"? The accolades are few and competitive, the logo is foreign, and the membership will not get you a table at a restaurant. Maybe it is intrinsic? Could it be something we get when we give? The outcome is impressive when this club executes as the unsung heroes that volunteer at races, handle logistics, registration, cars, aid, and awards, all while radiating encouragement. Possibly, it is a friendship, encouragement, or stress parachute.

To the 600 plus runners at the Kris Kringle race however we are also a service provider. To each of the runners, many not from the club, there is an expectation and there creates a quandary of priorities. Larry noted in the last newsletter some of the evolution to the structure of the club and processes that have been updated. Many of these are to address insurance, financials, and communication, which are keystones to continue our mission to the community.

As we enter into the next few monthly meetings we will be discussing a Trailer as a possible asset to ease the work of Race Directors and volunteers; the advisory board is compressing the survey data to present at a future meeting; processes are being developed to capture common information from events; and committee positions will go through their annual refresh. Look towards levity and brevity at the meetings as we respect the time, efforts, and opinions of the many that give their time.

I will conclude with thanking the members for the opportunity and will do my best and ask that we all participate in ways that "unite" the club whether it be social events, participative runs, or simply to join in the memorable antics that emulate the club's history. Remember I have a responsibility. "Don't #\$\$^ it up."

Steve Maguire

WELCOME NEW PACER MEMBERS!

Becky Andersen
Preston Sleppy
Joe Veppert
Kristin Schimp
Jessica Batdorf
Katelyn Miller
Lisa Domeshek
Amy Bird
Tara Townsley
Justin Langston
Andrew Fetter

RACE RESULTS

Email Results to Race Results Coordinator Karen Rule at raceresults@pagodapacers.com

Cape May New Jersey Hallowed Half Marathon

Andy Styer	1:44:55	2nd M45-49
Beth Styer	2:41:08	

Oley Ten Miler (previously omitted)

53	Shelby Brett	1:16:28	1st F45-49
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Savannah Rock n Roll Half Marathon

Raine Fussner	1:39:58	3rd F55-59
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Savannah Rock n Roll Marathon

Skylar Fussner	3:13:10
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12K O'Christmas

33	Katie Frederick	1:04:51	3rd F35-39
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Naked Nick 25K

14/174	Dale Wiest	2:29:02	1st M60-69
25	Diane Grim	2:35:14	1st F50-59
38	Duane Renninger	2:44:44	3rd M50-59
43	Emily Jensen	2:49:17	
45	Karen Rule	2:50:27	3rd F40-49
141	Barbara Raifsnider	4:12:36	

Humbug Hustle 5K

22/281	Duane Renninger	21:31	3rd M50-59
82	Aaron Kreider	26:49	
94	Tony Agentowicz	27:21	
122	Mark Mazurkiewicz	28:51	
151	Mike Ranck	30:12	
152	Barbara Raifsnider	30:15	
159	Aly Costello	30:38	
175	Diane Hardies	32:17	1st F68-74
197	Ted Hardies	33:43	
247	Rose Hagy	39:10	3rd F68-74
260	Judy Anttonen	41:40	1st F75+
276	Lisa Domeshek	52:53	
277	Kim Kohl	52:53	
278	Helene Horn	53:09	

Kris Kringle 5 Miler

13/612	Jon Durand	31:42	3rd M30-34
14	Mark Andrus	31:44	3rd M15-19
18	Dee Koutsourais	31:57	1st Female
24	Kyle Gery	32:49	2nd M40-44
34	Curt Minich	33:51	2nd M50-54
55	Greg Kellenberger	35:51	
58	Don Mengel	35:57	1st M60-64
63	Erik Leeds	36:21	3rd M45-49
64	Jayden Manbeck	36:33	
161	Lauren Massaro	41:52	
220	Aaron Kreider	44:44	
264	Tony Agentowicz	46:41	
282	Ann Gery	47:21	
290	Joanne Patti	47:32	
336	Janine Beidler	49:25	
349	Michael Ranck	49:56	
362	Tanara Govern	50:15	
363	Brooke Schell	50:15	
364	Rhoda Smoker	50:16	
382	Barbara Raifsnider	50:49	
385	Kristen Rothenberger	51:09	
399	Julia Hager	52:01	
406	Aly Costello	52:16	
413	Karen Sinnen	52:37	
538	Rose Hagy	1:02:22	2nd F70+

Pagoda Pacers Scholarships! Application Deadline: February 28, 2019

The Pagoda Pacers award four outstanding High School Seniors each with a \$750 scholarship for their continuing education. Students are recognized for their participation and achievements in athletics, academics and community service.

Two scholarships are open to all high school seniors whose **parents are current members** in good standing for at least one year of the Pagoda Pacers.

Two scholarships are open to all high school seniors who participated on a **Berks County high school cross country team**.



Scholarship Application and additional details are online at: www.pagodapacers.com/Scholarships/About.aspx.



RUNNER PROFILE: DALE WIEST

“Running with your Kids is the Fountain of Youth”

by Matt Brophy

Dale Wiest - dedicated family man and one of the youngest 60-year-olds you'll ever meet - grew up in Mohnton, and still lives nearby in Sinking Spring. Professionally, he's worked at Terre Hill Concrete for over three decades. Recreationally, his life has been one adventure after another, each of which has been meticulously documented by his loving, scrapbooking wife, Kitty.

Wiest is also the pater familias of a particularly athletic clan: his son, Brian, and his daughter, Lauren, are both accomplished marathoners, as are their respective spouses (Anita and Garry). Lauren and Garry actually organized a 5k - officially timed, with a marked course and over 50 participants - on their wedding day. After crushing the race, Wiest officiated the ceremony.

When his kids were young, Wiest coached their soccer and baseball teams, and he fondly remembers how much loved to watch them play. At age 41, Wiest started playing soccer himself, and continued to do so over the next ten years. As his fitness and skill improved, he started to realize that ageing didn't have to correlate with a gradual loss of athleticism. “I was a much better soccer player at 51 than I was at 41,” he told me.

While running has long been a part of his life, for many years Wiest was just a “fair weather runner.” He was too busy with work and raising his kids to really commit to the sport. Aside from one 5-mile race every year, he wasn't really competing or training to compete.

This started to change in 2006 when his nephew, Matthew, talked him into signing up for the Flying Pig Marathon in Cincinnati. At age 48, this was his first time at-



All in the (fast) family:

Dale (right) with (L to R) wife Kitty, granddaughter Charlotte, daughter-in-law Anita, & son Brian at the Half-Wit Half Marathon in 2017

tempting such a distance, and he didn't have much of a plan when it came to preparing. “I winged the training,” he said. “The longest run I did leading up to it was 13 miles.” During the race, he ignored his body's need for calories, and bonked badly at mile 18. “It was fun, up until then,” he said, but despite the painful finish, he still felt a surge of accomplishment. (Immediately after the race, he embarked on the nine-hour drive home. When

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he stopped for lunch, he promptly collapsed as he tried to get out of his car.)

The next two marathons (Disney in '08 and Harrisburg in '09) also did not go so well. But after subscribing to Runner's World, and finding a training plan that was specifically designed to help him break 4-hours, Wiest was able to take a big step forward in 2010. Following the plan precisely - paying close attention to mileage, workouts, and nutrition - he found himself in tremendous shape for the Philadelphia Marathon, which he ran with Brian. Finishing in 3:34, he had himself a substantial PR (34 minutes faster than his previous best) and, at age 52, a Boston Qualifier (though it ended up being 48 seconds too slow to actually get in, and then Boston dropped their qualifying time for his age group by 6 minutes for the subsequent year).

Wiest would eventually make it to Boston in 2014. It was the first year after the bombing in 2013, and as you might imagine, it was an emotionally charged experience. He had a very strong race, finishing in 3:29, and would go on to run that iconic race two more times: a 3:26 in 2015 and a 3:27 in 2017. (His son Brian also ran both of those races. Brian smoked his dad in 2015, with an impressive 3:09, but dad got revenge in 2017, edging the younger Wiest out by a couple minutes.)

As running marathons came to be a family tradition, the Wiests started planning family vacations around new marathons they wanted to run. Such "destination races" brought them from northern New England (Maine Coast Marathon) all the way to the mighty Pacific (Big Sur International Marathon). After each race and trip, Kitty artfully constructs a scrapbook with photos and artifacts from both. Wiest says he loves nostalgically flipping through them: "It brings the vacation back."

When marathons weren't enough of a challenge, Wiest and his children tried out triathlons: in New York City (swimming in the Hudson - eww), Philadelphia, and a Half Ironman in upstate New York. Both Brian and Lauren have done full Iron Mans, but Wiest is waiting until after he retires before making the attempt. That way he'll be sure to have enough time to do the kind of training he'll need to do in order to hang in there with his kids. "There's a real competitive spirit in the family," he told me.

That spirit has certainly helped keep Wiest driven to improve. It's as if his legs get younger as he gets older. This past fall, at age 60, he ran the New York City marathon in 3:28, and set yet another PR at the Chicago Marathon with a 3:23. He's also pretty fast on the trails: he ran his first trail race at age 53 (Double Trouble 15k - he thought the people running the 30k were crazy); then his first ultramarathon at age 57 (Patapsco Valley 50k); and in 2017, at age 59, he ran a sub-5 Blues Cruise!

So what's next? Wiest looks forward to exploring new venues for running and being open to new experiences more generally, as he was when he ran the Ragnar Trail Relay at Wawayanda Lake in New Jersey. He's not afraid to jump into something new, even if he doesn't really know what he's doing. Once Lauren convinced him to join her in the "Gung Ho Adventure Race," an orienteering competition near Harrisburg. When handed his team's topographical map, his first question was, "What do the squiggly lines mean?" They ended up mostly following other teams around who could actually read their maps. Eight hours and a lot of fun later - no regrets.

Another important goal of Wiest's is to run with his grandkids someday. He already got a jumpstart on this when he ran the Delaware County Suicide Prevention & Awareness Task Force 5k in Ridley Creek State Park in 2017. Wiest won the race (not just his age group - 1st overall, at age 59), and Brian (with kid in stroller) came in four seconds behind in 2nd place.

Wiest credits Mel Marinaccio and Phil Presby with "recruiting" him for the Pagoda Pacers. Thanks to the club, Wiest has discovered more places to run, especially trails. He also loves how the club facilitates his ability to connect with runners of all different ages and all different abilities. "I can always find someone to run the pace I want to run," he said. Often those are younger runners, around his kids' age, pushing to keep up with him. Yet another way running keeps Wiest young.

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**THE PAGODA PACERS A.C.'S 29th ANNUAL  
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LEGENDARY 5K & 10K "NO FRILLS" WINTER RACE SERIES  
Sunday(s) Dec. 9, 2018 and Jan. 13th, Feb. 10th & March 10th, 2019  
\*\*\* New Time\*\*\* 10:00 A.M. start for all races. Registration opens at 8:30 A.M.**

**Jim Dietrich Park, Muhlenberg Twp., Reading Pa.**  
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**Please note the NEW START TIME: 10:00am. Many of you have asked us to start earlier, and we are listening!!!!**

Per RRCA insurance guidelines, the Pagoda Pacers strongly discourage the use of headphones during any Pagoda Pacer event, including training runs, and races.

Popular winter race series that draws approx. 400 runners per month because of its friendliness, great price, devotion to running in almost any type of weather, indoor registration, a wheel measured course and a wonderful post-race buffet!!!

Both races start at same time and place; 10k runners do the loop twice. ROAD OPEN TO TRAFFIC DURING RACE;  
*Proceeds benefit Pagoda Pacer Scholarship Fund and health & fitness activities supported by the Pagoda Pacers.*

Questions can be directed to [shiverdirector@pagodapacers.com](mailto:shiverdirector@pagodapacers.com) Or Kelsey Jackson (484) 336-7683 or Sue Jackson (610)779-6556 or Georgine McCool 610-927-1606

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**AWARDS:** Only to the male and female top 4 runners in each of the 5k and 10k. However, awards are given for the overall series, based on a cross-country type of scoring (the person finishing 15th will be earn 15 points). Lowest scores in each age group will receive the awards. Both distances will be counted toward one set of awards. To be eligible, a runner must complete a minimum of 3 races (best 3 finishes count).

Series Awards to: 3 Overall Males/Females; Male/Female Master; Male/Female Clydesdale; Male/Female Master Clydesdale; plus age groups: 14 & under; 15-19; 20-24; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50-54; 55-59; 60-64; 65-69; 70-74; 75+; and Clydesdale

Clydesdale: 2.2 lbs/vertical inch for women and 2.65 lbs/vertical inch for men.

**ENTRY:** Series registration includes great long sleeve tech shirt. \$45 for series if postmarked by Nov. 18, 2018; afterwards, \$60 for series; \$25 per race on race day, while shirts last; \$20 on race day, no shirt. No pre-registration for individual races. No refunds. No mailing of awards.

This is not a Pretzel City Event; therefore, Pretzel City gift certificates will not be honored as payment.

**Race Cancellation:** If, and only if, the weather is mega-foul and predicted to get worse, the status of the race may be checked at [www.pagodapacers.com](http://www.pagodapacers.com). Cancellation should also be listed on the scrolling bar on [www.pretzelcitysports.com](http://www.pretzelcitysports.com)

**Address:** 4899 Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Rd. Reading PA 19605

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**Directed By the PAGODA PACERS A.C., [www.pagodapacers.com](http://www.pagodapacers.com) Insured by Road Runners Club of America**

Register online at [www.pretzelcitysports.com](http://www.pretzelcitysports.com)

Or mail checks, payable to: PAGODA PACERS A.C., to Sue Jackson 89 Kinsey Hill Rd. Birdsboro, Pa. 19508

**Last Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **First Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Paid for Series? Yes / No**

**Street Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age as of March 10,2019 race:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ **Sex:** M F **Clydesdale? Yes / No**  
(this will be your age group for the entire series)

**Shirt Size (unisex):** XS \_\_\_ S \_\_\_ M \_\_\_ L \_\_\_ XL \_\_\_ XXL \_\_\_

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WAIVER: I know that running a road race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I also know that there will be traffic and winter hazards on the course and assume the risk for running in traffic. I also assume any or all other risks associated with running or attending the race including but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather and the condition of the roads, all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Knowing these facts, and in consideration of your accepting my entry fee, I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators or anyone else who might claim on my behalf, covenant not to sue, and waive, release and discharge the Pagoda Pacers A.C., Muhlenberg Twp., the race committee, volunteers, any and all sponsors including their agents, employees, assigns or anyone acting for on their behalf, or anyone else associated in any way with the race, from any or all claims or liability for death, personal injury or property damage of any kind of nature what so ever arising out of, or in the course of, my participation in this event(s). This waiver extends to all claims of every kind or nature what so ever, foreseen or unforeseen, known or unknown. By entering this race, I grant permission to all of the foregoing to use my photographs, motion pictures, recordings or any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose. Per RRCA insurance guidelines, the Pagoda Pacers strongly discourage the use of headphones during any Pagoda Pacer event, including training runs, and races. I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS WAIVER:(if under 18, legal guardian must sign).

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **date** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/20\_\_\_

# “Race Report: 2018 JFK 50 Mile”

By Michael Heimes

## The Lead-Up:

2018 was my “Ultra Year” and this race was my 7th since March. My 2018 before JFK was:

1. HAT 50k on March 24th, 2nd place in 4:00:41 on a slushy, muddy, snowy course
2. Dirty German 50k on May 12th, 1st place in 3:39:02 on a muddy course (some mud skating in road shoes)
3. Highlands Sky 40 Miler on June 16th, 2nd place in 6:20:54 on a surprisingly tough and rocky course
4. Finger Lakes 50s 50k on June 30th, 1st place and course record in 4:19:20 on what was said to be pretty dry (still muddy to me) but really hot day
5. Vermont 100 on July 21st, 4th place in 16:54:40 for my first hundo
6. Water Gap 50k on October 14th, 1st place in 3:22:11 on a great, fast course.

## **THAT’S LOT OF RACING! (for me)**

Once my body and mind forgave me for Vermont 100, I started to slowly get back to structured training. Earlier in the year, I had fantasized about running Boulder Field 50k and going for the course record. What a silly idea that was. As that date approached, I was still trying to get my shit together. My recovery after Vermont was slow and ugly. I had thought about running Tussey Mountain-back 50 AND JFK 50. But as the gravity of JFK 50 and the possibility of throwing down a competitive performance sunk in, it was a pretty easy decision to not run Tussey. I wasn’t going to be in great shape by Tussey anyway.

## The Plan & Training:

Looking at prior performances and gauging myself against those runners, I knew I had a good shot at breaking 6 hours. Even on my first try. I thought that hitting the C&O in 2:00 was reasonable if not conservative and running the rest of the race with an average pace of 6:55 per mile... I’d be able to do it. That pace didn’t seem hard in training, and man did I TRAIN. The only real unknown was the early hills and the trails. Sure, the last 8.4 miles were on rolling hills, but none looked worse than the hills that are pretty much unavoidable road running where I live.

For training, I once again mostly followed Sage Canaday’s Advanced 50m-100k plan. I did add a lot of miles to the runs and had a stepped pyramid buildup. I noticed a lot of prior top JFK performers would string together 2-3 medium-long to long singles. So the week ending 4-weeks before the race I had three 15s in a row followed by a 22. The following week I ran 20/20/26. The first 20+ run was moderately hilly, the 2nd was hilly and 3rd was flat. The week after I did more fast runs and then tapered. I was ready for that taper.

You know what they say about plans. A few days before the race, it snowed 6-8” on the course. The next two days looked hopeful as the temperatures looked pretty high and the sun was supposed to shine. But that just didn’t happen. Instead, it was cold and cloudy. I was thinking my sub-6 goal is out the window, so all I could do is compete. And was there going to be some competition!!

Among the runners who I saw on the entrant list were: Jared Hazen, Seth Marcaccion, Eric Senseman, Jacob Puzey, Tommy Rivers Puzey, Tyler Sigl, Anthony Kunkel, Jim Sweeney, and Ian Torrence. Then The North Face 50 Mile Championship in San Francisco was canceled and at the minimum, Zach Miller and Alan Spangler jumped into JFK as well. This list includes huge names in the sport, no less than 4 National Champions, and lots of fast, young guys. Easily the most competitive race I’ve ever also tried to compete at. I ran Cayuga twice with decent fields, but I wasn’t as serious about running then.

Top 6 at JFK 50 gets money and I WANTED TOP 6!

The final thought on planning: I have to thank Iain Ridgway, Cole Crosby, and Michael Owen. All three of these guys ran JFK 50 and answered a lot of question and gave helpful advice.

## The Trip Out:

My friend Matt Aughter volunteered to help me with the race by crewing me. I rarely have crews as it just makes me feel bad for asking for and receiving favors. Matt loves to help out (which I appreciate and results in less guilt) and I set him up with a duffle bag full of anything I might possibly need. We tried to scout a couple trailheads the night before and saw a lot of snow. Not cool!

## The Gear & Nutrition:

For this race, I planned on running in Adidas Boston 7, but the snow made me switch to the Salomon Sense Ultra from last year. I had a brand new pair in the box and figured the weight/grip/protection ratio made them the best possible choice. I had the Bostons in my crew bag but never switched as even the C&O was a bit sloppy. I also wore the only socks I race in, Swiftwick Aspire. I also wore Adidas Supernova half tights shorts, Territory Run Co. singlet, Territory Run Co. arm sleeves with some thicker

Brooks arm warmers over them until I was warm enough, the awesome TrailHeads Convertible Gloves, and Salomon RS Pro headband (until I shed it). I also used the amazing Naked Running Band.

For nutrition, I continue to keep it simple and reliable. Just a Hydrapak bottle for water and a CrankSports e•gel every 30 minutes and one 30 minutes before the race. I skipped the last gel at the 5-hour mark and drank Coke until the finish.

### The Race:

For those who don't know this, the JFK 50 Mile is the oldest and biggest 50-miler in the country. This was the 56th year. The race can be divided into thirds. The first 15.5 is long and sometimes steep road climbs, before a trail section that follows the Appalachian Trail before losing close to 1000 feet in 2 miles. At mile 15.5 you enter the C&O Canal Path which is a flat but ever-so-slightly uphill 26.3-mile path about the width of a car. The surface is dirt and crushed stone with some washed out sections of larger stones and patches of deep mud. At mile 26.3 you leave the C&O and enter the 8.4-mile road section. Right away you're greeted with a 140-foot climb in .3 miles and then it's rolling hills between farms until you turn onto a major road and cruise to the finish.

The JFK 50 Mile starts in downtown Boonsboro, Maryland. For such a huge race (close to 1,000 starters), it still felt a little laid back. I totally missed the pre-race speech in a nearby school as it was so crowded outside the gym. A mass started walking away from the school and I followed assuming we were walking to the start about a half mile away. It was pretty cold but with Matt with me, I could wear a jacket. As we approached the start, I was surprised that there was still traffic as the roads weren't closed yet despite all these runners wandering around the streets. Again, laid back.

I found Cole Crosby and we squirmed our way to one row from the front. Once the race started a pack shot out ahead. I mean, the group I was in was moving pretty well with a 6:35 first mile that included some uphill. The lead pack of Miller, Hazen, and Senseman was reported to have run that mile in 5:45, which is 25 seconds faster than when Jim Walmsley set the course record. Call that crazy, call that dumb, call that what you want. That's how the front started and I wanted nothing to do with it! The opening section of the course is pretty much all uphill on what was then a closed road and you climb close to 500 feet. I felt like I was working a little too hard but still chatting with Cole as we joined Jim Sweeney and a few other guys. Leah Frost, who was the women's winner in 2016, was running with us as well. Which was impressive, but she sounded like she was working very hard one mile into the race. That never bodes well, and she ended up eventually falling to 4th. (She wasn't the only one up front to have a less-than-desired outcome.) But our little



*Michael Heimes on snow-covered trails at the 2018 JFK 50 Mile*

group swapped places here and there on the road climb, along the trail section connecting, and the 2nd road climb. Jacob Puzey was another notable member of our early group.

Once we hit the Appalachian Trail section, the race changed quite a bit and was very far from what I imagined for the last few months. The trail was either snow-covered, wet leaf covered, muddy, had freezing puddles up to 10 inches deep, or rocks. Anyone who knows me knows that I hate rocks. The trail was so sloppy I was looking for rocks to land on. It was that bad. Easily the worst trail conditions I've ever raced or run on. I tried to stay relaxed and just be safe to avoid injury. I still worked harder than I wanted to as anything uphill resulted in so much wasted energy. Sometimes I got gapped and sometimes I found myself stuck behind guys. I said out loud that I should have just run the Philly marathon that weekend. I could not wait to get to the C&O Canal Path. Eventually, I was pretty much alone and gapped by my former group. Coming down the Weaverton Cliffs, which is the tail-end of a 1000' drop in 20 miles, I found myself navigating the switchbacks by running quickly from turn to turn, but basically walking each turn. I looked down the switchback and saw my former group bunched up. At the very bottom I caught up to them and saw the large crowd waiting to greet us by the timing mat. I heard someone yell out and point to the front of our group "That's 10th place! First out is 10th place!" which placed me around 15th.

As soon as we hit the pavement, I felt like a sports car spinning its tires and finally finding traction. Asphalt meant traction and I immediately surged by everyone and was suddenly in 7th. Jacob Puzey and I commiserated about how crappy the trails were and the pace (around 6:20) felt a little spicy for me. I told Puzey the same and he ran ahead then just stopped gapping me. I yelled ahead to him, "You're supposed to gap me!" I caught up and we shared about 7 miles together. I wasn't sure if he was Tommy or Jacob...apparently Tommy had a work commitment and didn't start the race. Jacob said I

looked familiar and apologized for not knowing my name. I assured him that there was no reason whatsoever to know my name as I'm a nobody. We chatted about out big feet, shoe preferences, our love for Territory Run Co., and other topics. It was great to share some miles and have a conversation on what's a pretty boring part of the race. The pack behind us faded and one runner drafted us for a bit and passed us. He ran ahead a bit and the gap stopped. I felt like our pace was a little stale so I leaned in a bit and picked it up. I separated from Jacob, caught the runner who had passed us and again sat in 8th place.

Around mile 28 I passed Tyer Sigl who was dropping. Then I passed a runner who told me he broke 50k which was the furthest he's ever run but his legs were toast. Soon after, I was suddenly told I was in 5th as last year's winner Eric Senseman dropped. My legs were starting to feel the miles and who-knows-what damages the slippery trails did to them. For miles, my pace on my watch for the C&O was creeping over 7:00 pace. I think I even saw 7:15. Considering I thought that 6:30-6:40 pace would be feasible on a great day, this was not good. The miles were just going by so slowly and doing the math in my head, I thought I was headed for a very slow time. At the 2nd to last aid station, they had a sign with the mileage and I realized that my watch was showing 3 less miles than I actually ran. WHAT A BOOST! I started to realize I was actually having a pretty good run on the C&O and before I knew it I was onto the roads. I pushed the hill and started to grind out that last section. Just running against the clock and hoping to be as close to 6 hours as possible.

With about 4 miles to go, I thought I saw a runner ahead but it was briefly and the hills and turns limited my view. Then coming into an aid station where you turned right to get to it and then left after it... I saw the runner across the field walking. I couldn't believe I was going to snatch another position. I filled my bottle, walked while drinking some coke, then got back to running. As I caught up, Seth Marccacio started to run again... but slowly. Seth's a hell of a runner, a former Canadian XC National Champion who won Cayuga 50 in under 7 hours last year. He's a much better runner than me but the course chewed up both his Achilles and he was struggling. I passed him and just kept driving my by-now-totally-shot legs. The roads aren't marked except for miles-to-go markers, which I appreciate. Not too far from the finish, a police car was blocking traffic and I saw a few cones by a curb on the left. I went to make a left turn and a cop yelled that I was going the wrong way. Did I mention this course is pretty much unmarked?

The miles ticked by, a little more Coke for good measure, a directed left turn onto Rt. 63 running on the shoulder of a pretty busy road with just over a mile to go. As I approached the finish I let out a couple screams claps, fist pumps, etc. I was so stoked by how my race went down

and couldn't believe this 40-year-old nobody was 4th place behind Jared Hazen, Zach Miller and Allan Spangler. I suddenly got really emotional which never happened before. I think the amount of work I put in, the caliber of the field, and how much the last 20 miles hurt made this performance so important. Easily the greatest of my life.

My official splits were 15.5 miles in 2:08:09, 26.3 miles in 2:57:49, 8.4 miles in 58:05. I ran 6:46 miles for 26.3 miles on the C&O and 6:55 miles on the 8.4 mile road section. Hazen, Miller, and I were the only runners to break 3 hours on the C&O as Spangler ran the trails much faster than me and I ate into his lead for the rest of the race.

In summary, I found myself standing on a podium with some of the best runners in this sport, some really young and fast guys. My finish time is the **53rd fastest out of 28,358 finishes** and as a performer, I am ranked **41st out of 14,405 finishers**. That's all just crazy to me. If the course was dry, and I came out of the C&O in under 2:00... who knows that I could do. The master's record is definitely in my sights. I might be able to do it on a great day. Will that day be November 23rd, 2019?

#### What's Next:

As of writing this, my next race in the Boston Marathon. After that, I'm running WESTERN STATES!!! After "only" 4 years in the lottery, I got in. I may run the USATF Road 50k National Championship at Caumsett 50k before Boston, but I'm not sure. Talk about a step up in race profiles... JFK 50, Boston, possibly Caumsett, and then Western States. I've got some hard work to do. Please snow, stay away. Please.

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