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THE VULCAN RUNNER



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December 2014 Issue **12**

WHAT IS YOUR HAPPY PACE?

THIS ISSUE

- Presidents Address* – **6**
- Triple Crown Finishers* – **20**
- Discipline* – **23**
- Dirty Running* – **26**
- Pinhoti 100* – **29**
- Ramblings* – **35**



A story of a pacer running through the streets of Chicago and more...

The humble beginnings of my pacing journey happened at the 2013 Mercedes Marathon. Prior to pacing marathons, my race paces were all over the place. In 2013, I did not want to race the Mercedes Marathon, but I wanted to be a part of the marathon weekend. I had two options: be a volunteer or a pacer. I signed up with Coach Al DiMicco to be a pacer. This actually ended up making me both volunteer & pacer. It was a win-win situation for this runner.

My First Pacing Experience

In the 2013 Mercedes Marathon, I was teamed with Vanessa to pace a 4 hours 30 minutes (4:30) group. Vanessa, a very experienced marathon/ultra runner, told me that she could run an even pace as long as she knew how fast she was supposed to run. Before the race, we trained at our goal pace. At first, it was hard for me to keep a slow, even pace going. However, the more I trained, the more I started to enjoy the pace training. Pacing was a new game for me. I needed to learn how

to hold back and even pace from the beginning so that I would not run at full speed like I do for most races (yes, still). I am sure Vanessa was worried that I would take off as I always do. I assured her that I would stay calm and continue to be a student and co-pacer.

As the race started, even though my legs wanted to move faster, I held back. From the start, I talked to others around me and got to know them. As the miles progressed, I realized that this felt like a long training run with all my running buddies around me. In return, I was happy to help others to achieve their goals. I realized that this race was not about me finishing the race, but about getting others to the finish line.

We chattered about different things, mostly involving running. As we paced through the city of Birmingham, I learned a lot about pacing and being around other runners who had never covered such a large distance at this speed. For them, this was a fast race. Around mile 10, a runner who was following us fell and broke off

her front tooth. I stayed with her as the team moved forward. As she got up and moved, she told me that she was fine and set on finishing the race. It is inspiring to see how determined runners can be.

As we came close to the finish, we took more struggling runners to our pace group and asked them to keep on pushing and stay with us. The motivator/coach side of a pacer had kicked in. When I crossed the finish line, I was very happy that I was able to pull off this new pacing gig with help of my trail running mentor Vanessa.

Second Year of Pacing

For 2014, I signed up for 3 pacing tasks at the New Orleans Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, the Mercedes Marathon, and the Publix GA Marathon. All 3 marathons were at different terrains with the same 4:30 group. Pacing helped give me a totally different perspective on running. I learned that we, the runners, are similar no matter where we go. We have goals and the mindset to finish. I enjoyed these races much more than when I went at full speed.

Chicago Marathon Pacing

As my friends were signing up for the 2014 Chicago Marathon, I really wanted to go with them as well. I just wanted to enjoy the city and run – no full out racing. Then I thought to myself, why not give pacing a try? I sent an email to the Nike Chicago Marathon pace coordinator. The coordinator, Paul, told me that he did not have any spots at that time, but still wanted me to send him a running resume including my pacing experience. I did not hear from Paul until late July about a few available pacing spots for the marathon. After a long conversation, we both agreed that I should stay with the 4:30 group where I feel the most comfortable pacing. Yes! I was in as a 4:30 pacer for the Chicago Marathon! It was one of my biggest marathon pacing experiences to date.

Race Day

After traveling by bus, the train, and my own two feet, I arrived to the pacer tent at 6 A.M. for a pacers' meeting on the race day. I noticed that the security around marathon village was much tighter this year than it was when I ran last time. I guessed it was an effect of Boston 2013.



It was still dark, but I could feel excitement building even among pacers. As a new pacer for this marathon, I had to find my way around things. Finally, I ended up meeting other 3 pacers from the group. Between us, we had over 250 marathons worth of experience. I knew I was at the right place.

Even though our group did not start till 8 AM, we loaded up the G Corral with a 7:30 AM start group. At first there were hardly any runners on our corral; as the morning progressed, there were more runners gathering around. There were a lot of nervous runners who were also happy to be there. I talked to a few runners around me, getting to know them a little. Some runners from my local Birmingham even came by talk to me.

Once the race started, the fun really began. The Chicago streets had been completely invaded by runners from all around the world. It felt like water flowing through a big river, with different colored shirts and cheering crowds on each side of the streets. I knew these four and a half hours were going to be a fun journey through the streets of Chicago.

Streets of Chicago

The streets of Chicago were filled with people in the early morning. I loved the enthusiasm of the cheering crowd. In most small marathons, such a thing is very few and far between. A lot of the time, families are waiting on someone they know to run past. It is different for Chicago and a lot of big city marathons. People actually come out, cheer on marathoners, and enjoy their morning. I saw many places where they create a day of partying on their own. There were people of all ages, from kids to elders, cheering on runners. Live bands, music, and different acts were happening around us as well. With how big the Chicago Marathon is, you can tell that it is a well run marathon with a lot of intricate details. I felt that this race had more water stops and volunteers than any other races I have done so far.



Story in Side Story – Runners Running for Others

Many marathons bring people from different parts of the world for a singular cause, to make statements to themselves, to help charity, etc. I believe every runner has a story to tell. I found such a story as we were pacing through the streets of Chicago. I saw a runner with a flag. From afar, I knew there was something different about this runner and his flag. As I got closer, I realized what was going on. He was running in memory of his sister who died on 9/11. The flag had the name of each person who died that day as stripes.

Getting to the Finish Line

After a long journey on foot through the streets of Chicago, it always feels great to get close to the finish line. The crowd started to get bigger and bigger. I started to feel the normal marathon pain, but I could not stop. We kept going. As we made one last turn towards the finishing line, we knew we were home free now. I was so happy to finish the race with a nearly perfect finish time of 4:29:32! It was an emotional finish with a lot of hugs and thanks from fellow runners. A few runners said things such as “I could not have followed a better pacing time for my first marathon”, and “You guys were great”, and of course, “Thanks!” You know that made our day.

The first place we stopped after getting our medals was the beer tent. There, we had celebrations and waited on runners who had run the race with us. A lot of people came by, thanked us, and had some beer with us.

Reflection of a pacer

When I race, I hardly talk to anyone even during ultra distance races, which are 6 to 12 hours - or even longer. As a pacer, it was different. You couldn't stop me from talking start to finish. To get the best out of pacing others, I feel that you need to learn to be a motivator, teacher, coach, counselor, newscaster, weather man, time keeper, story teller, and more. As a runner, it is easy to connect to each other, but for most, it is a new adventure and they are counting on a pacer. I also realized that it is hard to keep the same group from start to finish. There are always runners who we can roll in to help them finish those last miles with just one pat on back. Encouraging words, such as “let's finish together” or “we are at almost at the finish, keep pushing”, may be all they needed to push through those last miles.

So what is my Happy Pace?

You may have guessed by now – if you guessed 4:30, you are correct. This is where I am most comfortable running, talking, helping and being a part of marathon events as mentor and coach. Even though I find joy in racing, the joy of pacing is much different.

How to become a marathon pacer?

The job of pacing comes with a lot of responsibilities that you may not want to deal with during a marathon, but it is still a fulfilling task. Not every marathon/half has a pace team. Contact your local race director or pace coordinator. If you are interested in pacing the Mercedes Marathon, contact Coach Al DiMicco at runningwithal@yahoo.com.

Finally, what is your happy pace?

“Happy pacing everyone. “

— by Suman Silwal



MRuns.com

2014 Chicago Marathon

PRESIDENTS ADDRESS

—Jennifer Andress



Greetings, BTC!

Happy December! Can you believe that 2014 is almost over? We have had another wonderful year in our club, thanks to you: our members, volunteers and runners. Let me recap the past month and catch you up on what we have going on for the remainder of the year.

November 8th brought us the 40th Anniversary of the Vulcan Run 10km. It was a picture perfect day, and we had over 1600 runners registered to run the historic route through Downtown and Southside Birmingham. I would like to thank our Vulcan team: Race Director Danny Haralson, Assistant Race Director Allison Stone and Race Coordinator Trish Portuese. Our Volunteer Coordinator Katherine Pezzillo had an incredible team of volunteers; we could not have had such a successful event without them. Our BTC inflatable Finish Line arch made its Vulcan Run debut, welcoming runners down the final stretch in front of City Hall. The Trak Shak once again provided our Top 200 runners with an additional race shirt proclaiming their accomplishment. Social Coordinator Katherine Dease brought back our Kids One Mile Fun Run. We had expert race announcing from NBC 13's Donnette Hulsey, and her NBC colleague Brooke Smith joined her to present the Vulcan Run Award Winners. We all enjoyed waffles from Waffle House and adult beverages from Cahaba Brewing Company at our afterparty. It really was a perfect morning!



November also saw a successful conclusion to the 2014 BTC Triple Crown Half Marathon Challenge. We had 74 BTC members complete this challenge at the Magic City Half Marathon. Despite the threat of bad weather, these runners finished their 3rd Half Marathon in 3 months, and collected their shirts and medals just past the Finish Line at Regions Park. Congratulations runners! We are so proud of all of you!

The Magic City Half Marathon was a rainy and windy day, and in spite of this, Katie Pezzillo once again had a terrific group of BTC volunteers there with smiles on their faces. The BTC outfitted a water stop in the rain, and manned the Triple Crown table at the Finish Line. Thanks to BTC Water Stop Captain Kim Tyler, Angie Rodriguez, Christian Rodriguez, Michael Brown, Jerry Smith, Shane Franklin and Kevin Winters. Thanks also to Karen West for handing out Triple Crown shirts and medals!



We can't thank you enough, volunteers! Katie has put together a terrific Volunteer Rewards program to thank and reward you all. We will need volunteers February 20-22, at Mercedes Marathon weekend, so let us know if you can help out by emailing Katie at volunteers@birminghamtrackclub.com.

And speaking of volunteers, we had to say goodbye to one of our favorites this past month. BTC General Counsel and Parliamentarian Julie Elmer has moved to Washington D.C. We wish her the best! We welcome Lauren Anderson onto the BTC Executive Committee as our new General Counsel and Parliamentarian.

As we close out the year, please add two dates to your calendar: December 27th and January 10th. On Saturday, December 27th we will be returning to Red Mountain Park for the Annual Resolution Run. Together with the Trak Shak, we will feature a 3, 5 and 10 mile trail run to close out 2014 and bring in the New Year. The cost is \$15, and that gets you a tech shirt and breakfast and coffee afterwards. All proceeds benefit Friends of Red Mountain Park.

January 10th is our Year End Party. Social Coordinator Katherine Dease is hard at work looking into venues, and I know she has a big evening planned for us! It is at this party that we recognize outstanding contributors to the BTC by way of the Dr. Arthur Black/Rick Melanson Award for Outstanding Member, and the Randy Johnson/Danny Haralson Award for Outstanding New Member. If you have any members that you would like to nominate for one of these awards, please email me at president@birminghamtrackclub.com. We will also be awarding the 1200 Mile Club jackets to those BTC members that have achieved this milestone for the first time in 2014. 1200 Mile Coordinator Alison Hoover will be on hand to present you with your hard-earned awards, so make sure and join us! Stay tuned for more information as we finalize details for this big night.

Let me close by personally inviting you out to one of our early Saturday morning runs. Our Saturday groups are growing exponentially, and the feedback we have been getting is extremely positive. BTC Long Run Coordinator Monica Henley and Moderate Run Coordinator Mark Criswell have been welcoming runners of all paces to join us on our routes. They ensure that all new folks to the group are welcomed and comfortable with the routes and locations of the waterstops. Monica and Mark, along with Jeff Martinez from Trak Shak, have put together pace groups for Mercedes Half and Full Marathon training. There are pace leaders for paces at 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00 and 12:00 minute miles. We leave no runner behind! BTC member Vickie Varnes recently posted this on the BTC Facebook page: "Loved my first experience with the BTC Saturday Long Run group. Enjoyed the miles with my running friends, [and] made some new running friends. See you guys on the road!!!!" Vickie, thank you so much for posting that! You made my day!

The Birmingham Track Club has grown to over 1260 members. It is your involvement in this club—thru volunteering, serving, registering, participating and simply running--- that make us the strong club we are today. Thank you for your membership, and I look forward to seeing you at Red Mountain on December 27, and celebrating 2014 with you on January 10 at our Year End Party!

2014 Officers



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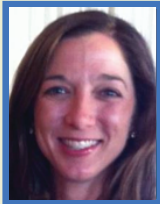
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BTC Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the Birmingham Track Club (BTC) shall be the education and training of individuals in and around the community of Birmingham, AL, as to the benefits of jogging, running, and walking for fitness, health, and recreation.

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Race Results

Find the latest and most complete
local race results at the following:

birminghamtrackclub.com
trakshak.com **run42k.com**

Join Us!

Join the Trak Shak and Birmingham Track Club for a 20 week marathon and half marathon training program that starts on October 6 and ends February 22, 2015 at one of Birmingham's premier events, the Mercedes Marathon. Seasoned coach Al DiMicco and second year coach Monica Henley have designed a training schedule to get you to the finish line. They will also provide you with weekly information and encouragement about Marathon training and are available throughout the training to answer questions. This is a free group. Join us for an information session on September 25, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Trak Shak in Homewood. E-mail mhenley1113@gmail.com or Jeff@trakshak.com for more information.



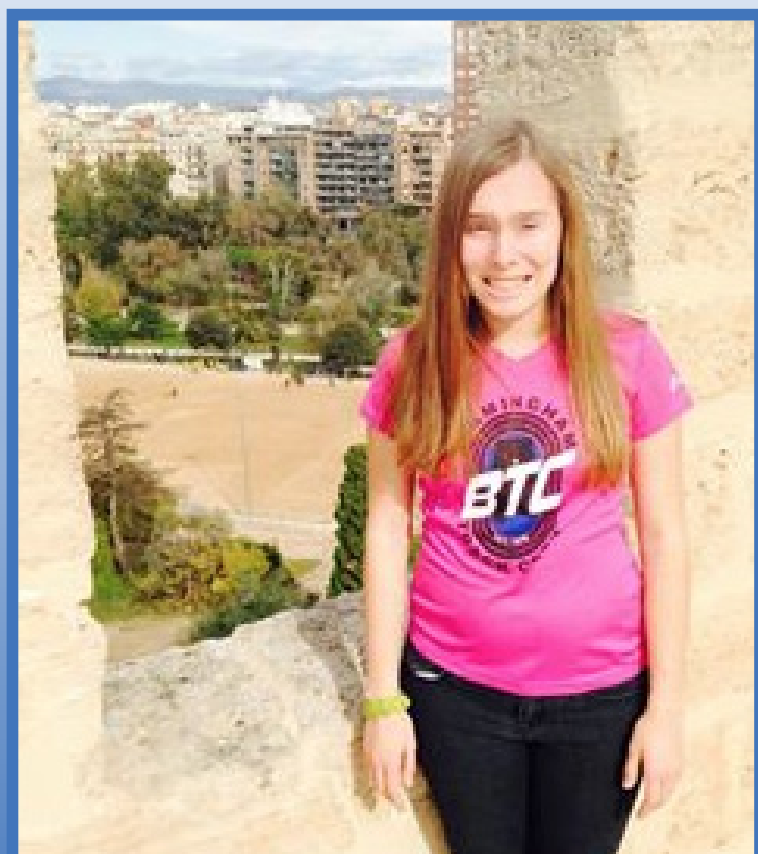


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SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



*Left to Right:
Bradley Whited, Kevin Roberson, Barry Thomason, Roger Corrin*



*Kendall Harris
Representing BTC shirt in Valencia,
Spain on top of the Torres de Serranos*

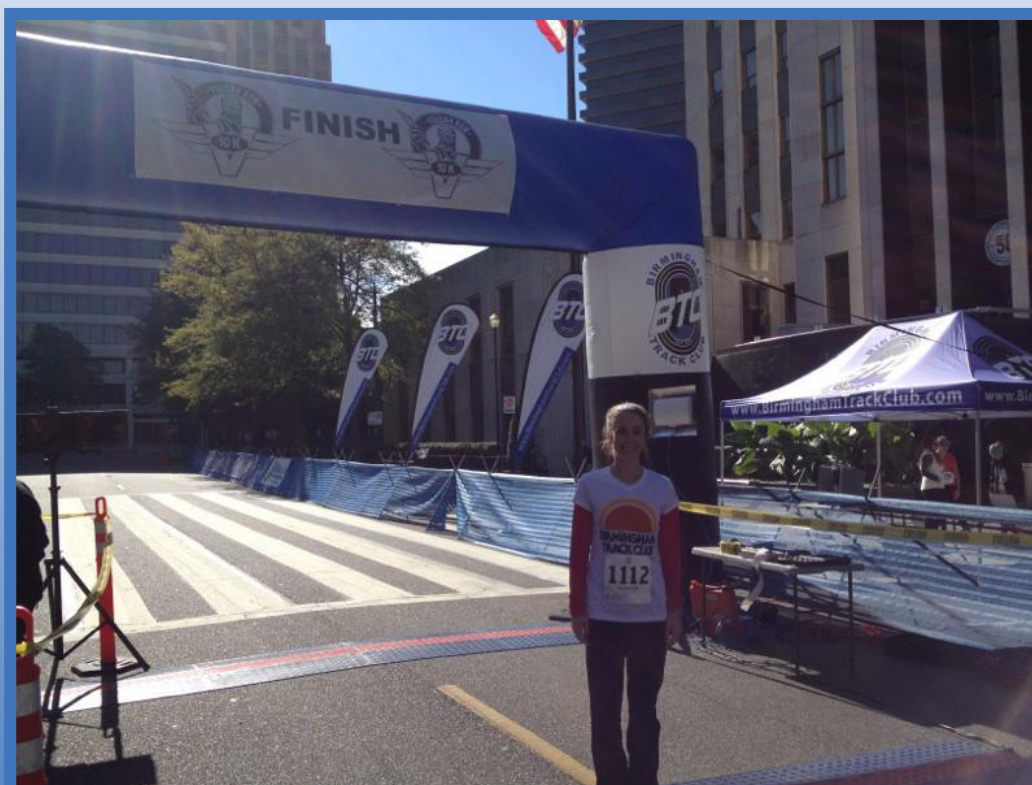
SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



Chulwon Park and Shawn Roberts at Oak Mt.



Hannah Foust at The Man Run 10k in Knoxville



Dr. Arthur Black's granddaughter Rachel Singletary running the Vulcan Run, her first 10km, in his memory.

SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



Greg and Diane Knight at the Savannah Half Marathon



Kim Benner, St Louis Half Marathon

*Triple Crown Scott Shirley
with Kerri Anderson and
Jennifer Andress*



SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



Micahel Greene with our very own Vulcan Bobble Head.



Brooke Smith and Donnette Hulsey from NBC 13 present Vulcan awards



Jennifer Andress and Danny Haralson with Jeh Jeh Pruitt from Fox 6.

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Richard Langston in Nicaragua

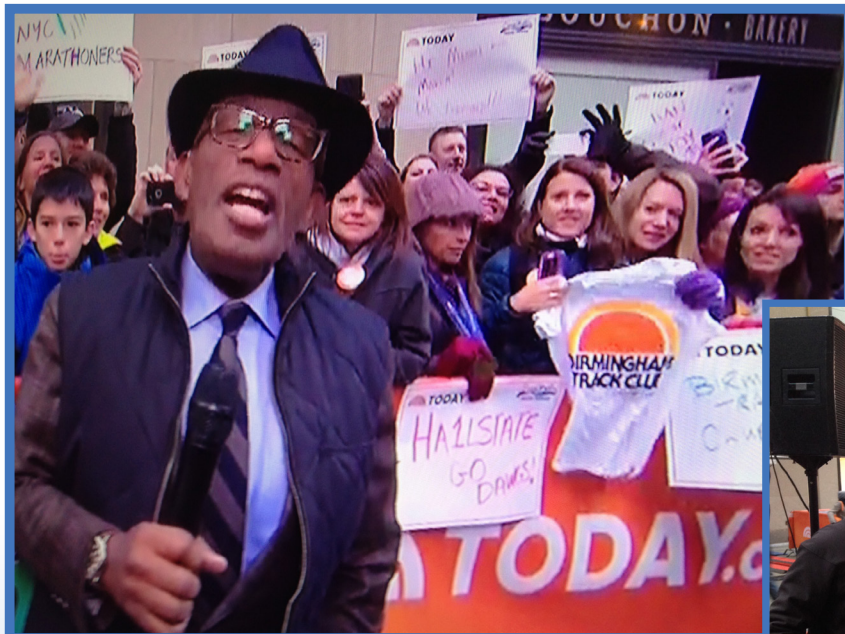


Darrell Gibson and Satya Gullapalli at Vulcan Run



*Pre-NYC Marathon
Shakeout Run in
Central Park; Julie
Pearce, Leslie Bailey,
BTC Long Run
Coordinator Monica
Henley, BTC 1200 Mile
Coordinator Alison
Hoover, Jim Hoover*

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Keith Andress and BTC President Jennifer Andress, BTC Long Run Coordinator Monica Henley, BTC 1200 Mile Coordinator Alison Hoover, Julie Pearce at NBC's Today Show. Seen during Al Roker's weather forecast

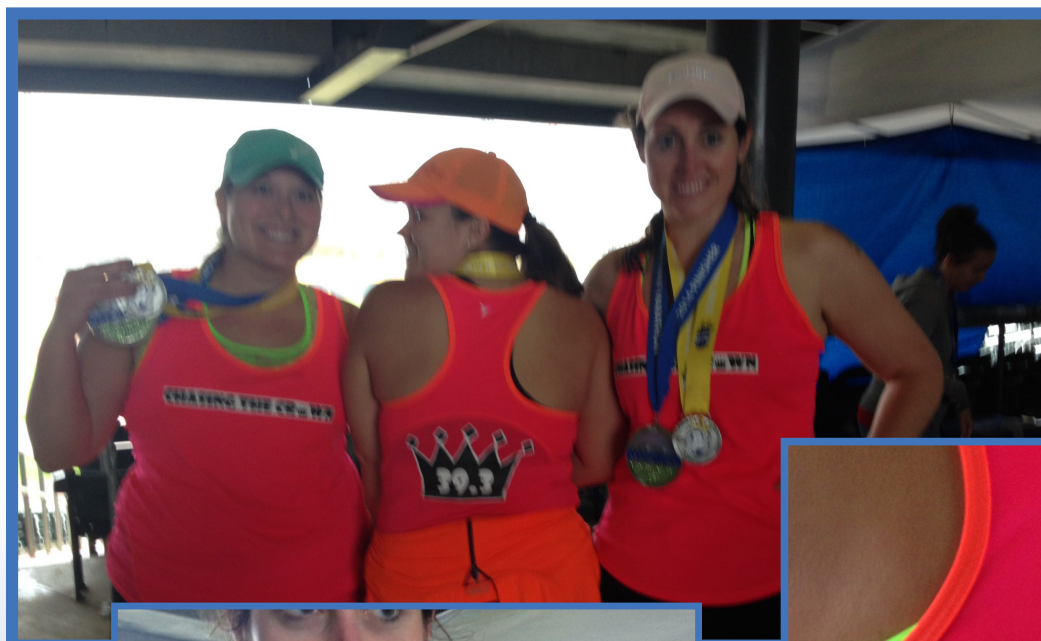


Nathan Miyasaki, Stephanie Lorino, Mekelle Bess, Kelly Kenzik at Vulcan Run

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SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL

We want to see where you have been running, representing the BTC! Email photos to:

[*president@birminghamtrackclub.com*](mailto:president@birminghamtrackclub.com)



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★ ★ ★
CONGRATULATIONS
TRIPLE CROWN
FINISHERS!



2014 BTC Triple Crown Challenge

These results were extracted from the posted results for each race.
The Finisher column indicates those who finished all three legs of the Triple Crown.
Please contact Alan Hargrave (alan.hargrave@gmail.com) with updates or corrections.

Ashley Bahr	Alison Henninger	Janie Mothershed	Nick Toth
Jennifer Baker	Susan Hill	Shelly Munger	Sharon Totten
Kari Bartlett	Angie Hogeland	Tre' Munger	Freddy Tse
Madeline Busby	Chris Hoggle	Karen Newsome	Larry Tyson
Ron Chambers	David Hogue	Katy O'Berry	Vickie Varnes
Britney Cowart	Elizabeth Huffman	Lisa Page	Faye Wallin
David Crane	Leslie Hunt	Paul Portwood	Whitney Wells
Jennifer Cruse	Brandon Ingle	Jamey Ramsey	Robin White
James Dawson	Lindsay Johnson	Shawn Redford	Randy Wilhite
Jonathan Dodd	Carmen Kitchens	Billy Rose	Olga Wright
Samantha Echols	David Latterman	Nichole Sellers	Alyse Young
Maggie Edmonds	Leslie Latterman	Danny Shaffield	
Kira Fonteneau	Kristin Long	Mitzi Shaffield	
Kelli Gant	Mary Lord	Emilie Shaver	
Robin Garner	James Madison	Ronald Shinn	
Darrell Gibson	Erin Mason	Scott Shirley	
Satya Gullapalli	Matt McKenzie	Matthew Sholar	
Noriyuki Hanashiro	Dustin McKinney	Bobby Smith	
Amanda Harden	Simon McVey	Owen Smith	
Alan Hargrave	Bryan Montgomery	Zachery Stoltzner	
Jerry Hartley	Denise Moss	Cedrick Thomas	

Saturday Morning Moderate Runs

Find us on FB or email Natalie
Ferguson at nataliezl@hotmail.com
for more information

JOIN US!



DISCIPLINE

What is discipline? The Webster's dictionary defines discipline as behavior that is judged by how well it follows a set of rules or orders. Another definition says that discipline is training that, corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character. There were several other definitions that Webster's gave to define discipline. These are some good definitions for discipline, but how well do they define the life of an athlete? In particular the lives of us runners?

Over a few of my past long runs, I had plenty of time to think about everything, and I wandered what makes me disciplined at running. I mean we all are disciplined at one thing or another and some things are just easier to be disciplined at. It's easy for me to be disciplined at putting the toilet seat down so I can keep a happy home! That's some training that I learned as a young boy growing up with a mom. It's easy for me to be disciplined at going to work, because I know that I have kids that have to be clothed and fed and I'm not good at sewing or farming! I'm pretty disciplined at washing clothes, because well it's really no other choice. It's either wash the pile once it gets to a certain height or try to get used to running in maybe a tech top and some corduroy bottoms. Can you imagine the chafing? Nope, that's not gonna happen! So runners have to be disciplined and we have to be disciplined at quite a few things. Not necessarily good at a lot of things, but disciplined at a select few. To the general public, most runners love running. But contrary to popular opinion, we are not born with some special super duper discipline gene. We have to find motivation and desire just like the next guy (or gal). I am not quite sure any of the definitions I read fits exactly right when we talk about runners having discipline.

Maybe we can figure out what discipline is by describing what discipline is not. Discipline is not eating whatever I want, whenever I want, just because I run long distances. That is something I have known for awhile, but it is also something I as a runner, still struggle with from time to time. Yes, I like pizza, waffles, cookies, cakes, and burgers just as much if not more than the next guy. Truth be told, over-eating is probably what started me to running, but it's not what has kept me running. Runners are not immune from the "junk food blues" just because we run. The



struggle is real(at least I know it is for me!). This is where discipline comes in to play, because after really long runs, I have been quick to tell myself," I just burned a gazillion calories, the junk food will just burn off as fast as I eat it!" But in reality all of it won't, so I just can't raid the fridge looking for junk after a run no matter how bad I want to. I admit sometimes I win this battle of the "Buldge", and sometimes I don't. So I have learned to try to eat as healthy as I possibly can, but to cut myself some slack sometimes too by throwing in a "cheat" day once a week.

Discipline is not being the fastest runner out on the pavement or trail every time I go out to show the world that I'm the best. For the most part, I think I handle this pretty well. However there are times, when I may be running on the trail or wherever and I may be doing a long, slow

run. Like clockwork, someone comes along and blows by me like I am standing still. I then try to make myself feel good by thinking that, "oh, they are probably just doing speed work; I'm working on a 15 miler over here." This is where discipline really comes into play, if I can continue to hold my pace and not try to show them that, "hey, I'm a runner too. I'm really not as slow as pouring ketchup from a Heinz bottle." It's actually quite funny, because I am sure that I have blasted past a few runners in the same manner, oblivious, and having them thinking the same thing, "look at this guy, who does he think he is? Usain Bolt?" This is something I think we males struggle with more than females. It is just my opinion, but I think women are better at keeping pace, than men in general. I think there is even some data to back my opinion up. Also read my personal story in the BTC'S Newsletter, entitled "My First Marathon" and you will read my recount of how the lady with the "purple top" just cruised on by me like I was standing still, as I struggled to regain my form on my way to finishing the Mercedes Marathon. I mean, the guy who ran the first marathon from the battle of Marathon to Athens without stopping, collapsed and died after bursting into an assembly announcing a Greek victory over the Persians. He did really, that's why I think guys, could work on our discipline a little bit more.

Speaking of over doing it, Pheidippides was said to have ran over 150 miles the previous two days in his trip to Sparta before he made the final run that would cost him his life. This is the other side of the discipline equation; doing too much. So it's not news that runners have been accused of over doing it from time to time. It takes almost as much discipline to follow my routine and to not try doing too much too soon so I won't get an injury. Yes, I said an injury, because runners run hurt all the time, but an injury will sit us down and the only person we have to be mad at is ourselves.

So is discipline the same as will? Or motivation? Desire? Is it internal or external? Well for one, I think that it can be internal or external. It is internal in a way that you put discipline on yourself, or self-discipline. It is external in a way that you have to follow the rules and orders of others. I can remember back to when I was a senior in high school, and I was having quite a hard time trying to decide what I was going to do after I graduated. I was, oh so close to becoming one of "the few, the proud, the Marines." The only thing that stopped me from signing on the dotted line was the thinking that I didn't have enough discipline as a skinny, 18 year old high school kid to get up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and run for 20 miles. How ironic, I look back and laugh at the thought now because that is exactly what I find myself doing on some weekends! As a matter of fact, with most of my time divided between the

kids, work, and running, I could hardly tell you when was the last time I had the pleasure of sleeping in past 6 a.m. and doing absolutely nothing. Anyway, I'm giving a huge shout out to the Marines, and all other members of the armed services. You all do a lot more than just run. Y'all protect our freedom to run and it is greatly appreciated. So then there's motivation. What is the "carrot" being dangled in front of the runner to make us run? Is it the nice shiny bling we get? A new personal best time? Or just thrill of competition? I think that all of those work to a certain extent, but are they what keep a runner truly in love with running? For me at first, it was the need to improve my health, in which I did. I never even thought about running a race seriously when I first started out. I just liked the way it made me feel, a sense that I had done something good after finishing, although I would be "dog tired." The motivation continued when I started to enter races, getting bitten by the bug, and realizing how much fun I was having trying to better my times. And having a reason to train for something didn't hurt in the area of discipline either. Actually, now that I think about it, training for something and setting personal goals is what really helped me to become more disciplined with my running. If I hadn't decided to train for a half-marathon or make it into the 1200 mile club, I'm not sure I would have developed and maintained the passion I have for running. So I would say that personal motivation is one of the biggest factors and goes hand in hand with one's discipline towards running. The goals that I set and wrote down, and see all the time when I look at my dresser is mostly what has kept me "dialed in" to this sport called running.

There's this kid who runs in my neighborhood. I'm pretty sure he plays for the local high school which is right up the street. Sometimes when I'm leaving the house before the crack of dawn to get in my early morning run before the world awakes, I see this kid jogging down the street in his basketball gear all by himself. He has done this pretty regularly by himself for the past few years, and I know he doesn't know that I'm a runner because I'm in my car on the way to the track and we don't cross paths anymore after that. But I know that the kid has the kind of discipline that we as runners have to have. He has to be self motivated. He has to have his own plan, his own personal goal. He is not out there with his teammates running; his coach is nowhere around to keep tabs on him to make sure he is getting his miles in. He is making the extra effort, putting in the extra mile, and I am sure that it will pay off for the kid somewhere "down the road". But does the kid ever get tired? I am sure he does, because I don't see him every time I go out for a run. He is an athlete, but he is still a human, still a teenager, and I'm sure he enjoys sleeping in sometimes like all teenagers do. But this is where I can

relate. This is where I think we all can relate. I admit it, I enjoy sleeping in sometimes too. On some Friday and Saturday nights I have went to bed, set my alarm for 3:30 or 4:30 the next morning, and have dreaded it when that alarm went off “waaay too soon” and ruined my perfectly good sleep. Most of the time my discipline provoked me to get right on up, and get out and get my miles in. But there have been a few times where my discipline wasn’t quite strong enough on that day to get me out of bed and I came up with some “valid” reason to “phone that one in”. I’m pretty sure that the kid was out on one of those mornings I was taking it easy, while I or even the kid’s teammates were probably rolling over comfortably in our beds.

So what is it that helps to keep us motivated to have a certain level of discipline to reach our desired goals, even when we want to hit the “snooze” button and just roll back over? I say it is definitely discipline. But not only discipline, it is motivation. It’s the motivation that comes from within. It’s the motivation to get better or to crush your best times; to not only reach but surpass your personal goals. The motivation, to do something that someone said you couldn’t do; to prove your haters wrong. It’s the motivation to prove to yourself that you have the will and the power to finish something that you started a very long, long time ago. It’s the desire to keep going, too keep grinding, to keep churning when you know that you are not running for a million dollars or a gold medal or an endorsement contract. It’s the desire that can only come from within, when you know that you’re not at your best but you refuse to give up. The weather is nowhere near ideal; you’re bone dry or soaking wet, but you refuse to give up. It is way too early or way too late but you refuse to give up. The desire that burns within because this is your passion, this is where you thrive, and you feel so alive; you’ve been in wars and that pavement between the start and the finish line is your battle field. So you train, you set your alarm for 3:30 a.m. on a cold, Wintry Saturday morning; and when that alarm goes off and you you’re deep in a dream.... You get on up, and you get out the door; because you know that some kid, somewhere, is not rolling over. He has what it takes. He is doing the same thing. The primer of victory; discipline, what a sustained, beautiful thing!

—by *Eric Thomas*

DIRTY RUNNING

Running Through the Night - One of trail running's most unique experiences.

There are a lot of things to love about trail running. It is hard to beat just being out in the woods. But we all have our favorite trail running experiences. Mine is running at night. To me there is nothing as peaceful as running along in the middle of the night, in the middle of nowhere, with no one around. Your world shrinks to little more the area illuminated by your light.



It takes a while to develop the confidence to be comfortable running at night in the middle of nowhere. If you have a race coming up that will require night running you had better get out and practice. First, you will need to find out what light source you like. Most people use headlamps as do I but many like an additional light source, either hand held or worn around your waist. This second light adds a third dimension to the trail. Without it, the trails appears flat. You can certainly see rocks and roots but it is sometimes hard to judge the height. Shallow holes or depressions just don't show up at all. It is a weird sensation to step where you think there is solid ground and find there is nothing there.

Borrow or buy a light or two that you think you will like and go out and try it. The best way to do this is go out to a local park very early in the morning and run a while before daylight. It will only take a few night runs before you are feeling pretty comfortable with the process. Just a word of advice before you head out in the dark. 1) Always run with a partner or several on night training runs and 2) Always carry an extra light source or extra batteries and be sure the be batteries "fit the light you are carrying!" Don't laugh. I was running the Tahoe Rim Trail 100 in 2011 and I guy I had been passing and passed by all day was running way off the trail. I yelled at him so he could get back on the correct path and he soon was out of sight. A little later, there he was off the trail again. I called him over to the trail "again" and he explained that his light was going out and the batteries he had with him were the wrong size. I let him borrow my extra light. (I had spare batteries too.) Then, at the Lookout Mountain 50 one year my handheld light was going out so I grabbed my extra "AAA" batteries only to realize it required "AA" batteries. Fortunately it wasn't too far to the end.



One of the unique experiences of night running are the tricks your light, your eyes and your mind tend to play on you. My first run at night was in the Kat'cina Mosa 100K in Utah. The race started at 3:00 AM so the entire 10 mile long first climb was in the dark. As we were walking up a gravel road I kept seeing things sparkling in my headlamp beam. I finally realized it was "dust." Next, strange things kept flying off the road in front of me in the dark. I finally got the headlamp on and they were grouse.

The next night running experience was in the 2008 Pinhoti 100. I was headed down "Blue Hell" the very steep climb near the end of the Cheaha 50K where you are going up. The sun was setting directly ahead of me as I went down the hill. It was spectacular. This was also when I realized I left my armwarmers at Bald Rock. I was not going back. Nothing out of the ordinary happened until I turned off the gravel road onto the "Silent Trail." As I was running along the trail I kept seeing tiny lights on the ground flashing back at me. I knew they were some type of insect but I have never seen an insect with "Strobing Eyes." The eyes would strobe slowly as my light beam first hit them, then it would get faster as I got closer. My curiosity finally got the better of me and I knelt down to take a look at this odd creature. Turned out to be tiny spiders. I don't think their eyes actually strobe. I think it is the effect of the LED headlamp.

Later in the same section of the Pinhoti 100 I kept seeing flashes of light off to the side. I would look that way to see what it was but of course the bright light of the headlamp totally obliterated the flashes. At first I thought it might be a campfire off in the woods or perhaps another runner. I finally decided it must be fireflies but are there still fireflies in November? I never figured that one out. Maybe just my imagination. Before reaching Adam's Gap I did come upon a campfire. By then it was very cold and I considered going over to the fire and asking if I could warm myself by it a while. I decided that would be a really bad mistake.

The strangest experience of the Pinhoti that year, also on the Silent Trail, as I was nearing Adams Gap. I was in the pitch black woods, seemingly miles from anywhere, and heard what sounded like music. Then it was gone. I decided there must be a house around somewhere. A few minutes later I heard it again and then it faded away. A few minutes I heard

it again, this time louder. I was getting confused because I absolutely could not figure out where it was coming from. It continued to get louder over a distance of probably a mile from where I first heard it. Finally, as the music became distinct, I began to see light streaming through the woods and I realized I was almost to Adams Gap and I was over half way to the end.

There was one more obstacle to overcome that night. This one was purely mental. The Adam's Gap Aid Station crew had hot soup. They also had a large fire going. I got my cup of soup and sat down in a comfortable chair in front of the warm fire (It was a very cold night) and I did not want to leave. I finished the soup, got what I needed out of my drop bag and continued to sit in front of that fire. I would look up that very long, very dark road that was the next section of the course and I just didn't want to leave. I probably lost 20 minutes sitting there enjoying the warmth of the fire. I finally realized, if I don't leave now I will never leave, so I got up and headed off into the abyss. Now, I never allow myself to get too comfortable at an aid station. It's dangerous.



There were more amazing experiences to come while running my next race at night. At the Leadville 100 in 2009 I was heading up the "Powerline climb" which starts about mile 78. As I was climbing, I saw the taillights of some sort of vehicle up ahead of me some unknown distance. I was trying to figure out why an ATV would be headed up this road at 2:00 AM. I decided it must be someone replacing the glow sticks that were hanging in the trees as course markers. Perhaps a mile up the climb the trail turns left then back right before continuing staring up the mountain. As I turned left I looked back down to see a very long line of tiny headlights coming slowly up the mountain behind me. The odd thing was, all the headlamps were in pairs. That made absolutely no sense until I finally caught up to the "ATV" I had seen earlier, as I reached the top of Sugarloaf Pass. The taillights turned out to be just one red light on the back of one runner's headlight. I was wearing a pair of "One Day Use Contacts" and at a distance, lights appeared double. As I started down the other side of the pass, Turquoise Lake slowly became visible in early light of dawn. All across the far shore of the lake, 1.5 miles away and 1,000 feet below, I could see 10 or 15 tiny circles of light moving almost unperceptively along the shore. It was a truly surreal sight, looking more like something out of the Disney Classic, Fantasia than any form of reality. I was also very jealous. They were 10 to 12 miles from the end. I had 17 miles to go.

So get a good light, and a backup, get together with some friends and go out and try a little night running. I think you will enjoy the experience as much as I do.

— *by David Tosch*

PINHOTI 100

A STORY OF CHASING CUT OFF TIME

**“If you can't fly then run,
if you can't run then walk,
if you can't walk then crawl,
but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”
~ Martin Luther King Jr.**

Introduction:

As the pain from the Pinhoti 100 faded away, I wondered how one managed to finish such a huge race in extreme weather conditions like we had during the weekend of November 1st, 2014. Often, I get asked: “What motivated you to run a 100 miles race? Was it the challenge? Or was it an attempt to find internal willpower?” It could be a mix of many things. Even with pain, suffering, and being on the verge of not meeting the cut-off time, I still managed to move forward to the finish. Nothing was going to stop me till I got to the finish line. I started my 100 mile journey as a top 20 runner, but I finished at the bottom 20. Regardless, I did finish. I defied all odds against me and crossed the line 53 minutes before the 30 hours cut off time. In the end, my only motivation for this race was to complete it and hold that beautiful Pinhoti buckle.

Summary of Race

The Pinhoti 100 has a reputation of being one of the best and hardest 100 mile races in Alabama. It is a qualifying race for the Western State 100 and few more. It goes from Heflin to Sylacauga, Alabama – a point to point foot race. A lot of the race goes through single track trails, including the highest point of Alabama, the Cheaha Mountain. The course continues up and down with two large climbs. Luckily, there are 18 aid stations and plenty of volunteers



to help you through day and night. Most aid stations are rocking like a big party in the middle of the woods, even at midnight or early morning hours. One aid station had college football going for those football junkies to catch the score and watch few minutes of a game while refueling. You can even hear some aid stations from miles ahead. Even with the climb and single track technical trails, there are a lot of runnable parts. Save yourself for after mile 80. There are many more runnable areas where you can make-up your time. Still, the race elevation charts do not tell the whole story. You have to run the race to find out how the course is unless you train or live around the area.



The best thing to do to finish this race or any 100 mile race is to “keep moving forward”, one step at a time. Every step gets you that much closer to the finish. There are a lot of ups and downs you go through as the day progresses. Do not look at the DNF list; with proper training, race day planning and self-determination, this race is doable. There is nothing like crossing the finishing line and still making the cut-off time. When you hold that beautiful Pinhoti buckle in your hand with a lifetime of memories, you know that it was all worth your time and effort.

Training

Unless you live in the Himalayas, most of us trained during the heat of the summer to get ready for the Pinhoti. Everyone trained for the 100 miles differently. There was one thing for sure: no one ran 80 to 90 miles in one run to train. You build to 100. My training for Pinhoti included a 60 mile “Run for Kids Challenge” race in May, summer races by Southeastern Trail Series, the Coldwater Mt. 50k, the Autumn Equinox and, for sure, the Birmingham Stage Race. I feel that the Stage Race helped me go faster on

tired legs. I ran all kinds of hills and different trails. If you live in the Birmingham area, Oak Mt. State Park has a lot of hill options for you.

Crews and Pacers

If you have ever run a 100 mile race, you know how important it is to have pacers and crews to get you out of tough moments and also help you along the way to make your journey successful.

Even though I ran my first 100 miler, the Lake Martin 100 (LM100), without crews and pacers and with no proper planning, I was told that it is better to get a pacer/crew for a better Pinhoti experience – especially the first time around. I asked a few of my long time running friends, Bill, Ed, Jeff, and Mike, to see if they were interested to join me for one night of fun on the trails of Pinhoti. They were more than happy to be a part of the journey.

I had two rules for my crew and pacers:

- 1) Do not let me quit – unless it is medical.
- 2) Do not get me lost.

Each of them had a section that they needed to pace from mile 45 till the finish with 17 miles being the longest leg.

Night Running

Since the LM100 in March 2014, I have not truly run nights. In the future, I need to do some night runs. Night runs are different on trails. They are much slower-paced. Besides looking down, one needs to be sure that they did not miss any turns. You can hear things, but you cannot see where they are coming from. I feel that night runs are much more focused than day runs. As you move forward, you do not feel as intimidated by nightfall. Through the night, you can see runners ahead and runners behind moving with headlamps. Overall, it is a nice experience that I want to do more often. Having a good headlamp and plenty of back-up batteries are important as well. If you can, carry an extra headlamp from the start or at least put on your drop bag. Once night starts, you should always have an extra headlamp as well. They do not weigh a lot. They are an essential tool for the success of your 100 miler. I was suggested by David, the Race Director for the LM100, that you should always replace your current headlamp batteries before you start a 100 miles race.

Dealing with Extreme race day weather.

Ultra running is a very long running experience. If there's one thing for sure, it's that you cannot change the weather no matter how unpleasant it is. You have to face Mother Nature the way it is. You cannot win there.

Due to the colder November weather, all the runners were thrown off a bit. When I ran the 2014 Mt. Mist, I almost got frostbite. Because of this, I've learned my lesson. I promised myself that I would not play around with the weather for future ultra-distance races. I actually bought a light jacket in February 2014 for the sole propose of using it for cold and/or windy ultra-distance races. I was well covered and prepared for the challenge of the weather ahead with extra layers of jackets and clothing.

First Part of the Race

My race started normally, just like any other race. I was surrounded by friends and was eager to run, and I started at a good pace. As I'd learned from my previous 100 mile race, I started walking on hills earlier in the race. I flew by a few aid stations quickly. My goal was to cover the race course as much as possible during daylight without killing myself. I kept it calm and moved forward. From the very beginning, Martin, Shawn, and I ran comfortably as a pack. As we zipped through aid stations, we felt that we were getting in a good rhythm with our pace. Even

though I am not used to running with others on trial races, it was fun. I did not know how long I hanged on with our pack, but all of us had the same goal of covering as much distance as we could before nightfall. As I was running, I kept getting bumped and saw Martin fall twice. It was then I realized that I might be slowing down the group. Around mile 20, I went back of the pack. That was the last time I saw Martin and Shawn. I started to hold back a bit, but before Aid station #5, I started to get muscle cramps. I did not realize this was the start of a long day.



Getting to Bald Rock

After many early struggles, I arrived at the top of the Cheaha Mt. – Bald Rock at mile 40+, at about 4:15 PM. It took me a bit longer than I expected to get there. Regardless, I was there before sundown. I was told by others that this is the make and breakpoint for many Pinhoti racers. The top of the Mt. was rocking like a big party! This was the point at which pacers were allowed to join the runners. After a lonely day, I really enjoyed being around familiar faces. It gave me some uplift/life to see so many people. After not finding my crew at Bald Rock, my friend and trail running buddy, Sonia, was kind enough to take care of me while she was waiting on pacing Donna. However, as I was getting comfortable with the warm food and friendly faces around me, Sonia said “Suman, you got to go now.” There I went. I started to feel discomfort on my right knee as I was going downhill. I was not sure what was going on. The only thing I knew was that I need to keep moving forward. The day was still young, and I had much more to cover. Coming down off Cheaha Mt. on Blue Hell- the nickname given to it by those who run Cheaha 50k- was not easy. Yes, even going down was a difficult experience. As I ran down the road towards the next aid station, my running buddy, Raymond, passed me and told me: “No

matter what, do not quit Suman.” I told him: “I will not. See you at the finish. Go on.”

First Time Crew siting

When I saw Mike, who was running towards me at the Silent Trail Aid Station at Mile 45.25, I was so happy. I knew my crews/pacers had made it to the Aid station. I saw the rest of the crew waiting on me. They told me that they saw me flying through first few aid stations, and that they were worried that I was going to pass them at Bald Rock. They did not realize that I had slowed down a lot during the day time. Regardless, I was happy to see them. As night was going to start soon, I grabbed my headlamp, put on an extra layer of clothing, and moved on with Mike.

Getting to Adams Gap

As nightfall started, it took me a while to get adjusted to my headlamp and the darkness. As the pain settled in, it was hard for me to go downhill. I was trying to adjust my stride and pace. Mike, who was pacing at that time, ran ahead of me and told me if the section was runnable. As I ran, walked and power hiked through the woods, I arrived at the famous “Christmas Tree” aid-station at mile 52+, a little more than halfway through. There, I actually got to watch college football. I enjoyed hot food and loved the hospitality.

After moving forward, at 9:15 PM, I arrived at Adams Gap, mile 55. I finally changed my shoes and clothes and put on warmer clothing. I ate some curry food that my wife sent me with my friends. I was happy to eat homemade food in the middle of the woods.

By this time, for several reasons, I was slowing down further. As Jeff took over his section of pacing, I briefed him on what was going on with me. Even with a long runnable area, I was not able to run as fast as I would like. Still, I kept moving forward even at crawling speed.

Ports Gap to Pinnacle

It was a struggle, but at 2:15 AM I arrived at Ports Gap, mile 68. Other than the last mile or so, this section was my slowest section of the race. I knew then that I would be chasing the cut off time. I was at least an hour behind the time I wanted to arrive at. However, I was still 1 hour and 15 minutes ahead of the cut off time. I knew what was ahead of me: one of hardest parts of the race was just about to start. At that point, our goal was to get to top of the Pinnacle - infamous due to its steep climb and miles we were at.

Bill was pacing the next 17 mile section. He’d had to wake up from his deep sleep and get ready quickly. As we were running through, the night Bill noticed that my headlamp was going dim on me. If I was by myself, I would have gone a few more miles with those dim lights. Instead, Bill stopped me and made me use my other headlamp that I’d been carrying since the start. I was back with a much brighter light – I could see the trail again! Even small extra lights on dark trails can make a world of difference.

Climbing the hills was not hard as I thought it would be, but there was a lot of effort needed to get to the top. Finally, we got to the top of the Pinnacle around 4:15 AM. This was the true making and breaking point for me. When I arrived, there was another BUTS aid station. A lot of familiar faces and trail running/racing buddies from Birmingham area were there. I enjoyed the love I got. I sat a few minutes in front of a bonfire while Olivia fixed me food. I told my friends that “No matter what, I will be at the finish. See you all there!” By then I had been physically defeated, but mentally I was fresh and determined to finish. I could easily have sat there till daylight, but I decided to move on as my friends were ready to push me out of the aid station as well. As I was leaving my friend Jimmy said: “Suman, you only need to run a marathon distance, and you still have around 8 hours!” I looked and considered that I had gone a marathon distance 48 times before this race, but not in the condition I was facing. I had no doubt I would finish it. The question was, how long it would take me?

Awakening moment – a turning point

As I had been struggling all day and night with the determination to finish, I was still moving forward. I started to get worried about not meeting the cut off time. Still, I could not do anything else. I moved as fast I could move, but I felt like it wasn’t fast enough. I was passed by other runners through the day/night, though it had no effect on me. Nothing was moving inside me.

Little more than a mile or so from aid station #15, Wormys Pulpit, with more than 20 miles to go, something suddenly woke up inside of me. As I was calculating the speed that I was running (2.5 miles per hour) and evaluating my condition, something inside me said: “At this speed, you are not going to make it.” I told Bill, who had been patiently running and pacing, “It is go time.” Bill said “Let’s go.” I was sure he’d been waiting for this moment just like me. With that, my body started to move faster. I started to run faster than at Adams Gap, almost 12 hours before. I did not know how long this feeling was going to last, but I was willing to try it. As we passed the Wormys

Pulpit aid station at 6 AM with only 43 minutes to spare, the day was getting started. I stopped just long enough to fill up my water. As we started to run and power hike, things start to come together again. For the first time all day/night since the early miles, I started to pass people- and no one was passing me! I had a running rhythm going. Bill told me that whatever I was doing, it was working. He asked me to keep it up. As we arrived at the top of Bulls Gap, Bill called the next pacer, Ed, to get ready.

Last Fastest 10 Miles

As I passed Aid Station #16, Bulls Gap, at mile 79.53, I only had 37 minutes. I did not even stop. I only checked in and left. Ed, who was supposed to pace me in that section, was ready for it. This section of course was very fast and runnable. Despite this, in my condition, I was not sure how fast I could move. We started to pass more people. We arrived to the next aid station within an hour. We'd gone through a lot of ground already. Ed kept on pushing me forward.

When we arrived at Aid Station #18, Watershed, the last aid station before the finish, there were 2 hours and 35 minutes before the cut off and 5 more miles to go. As simple as the aid station was, I was sure every fellow Pinhoti racer who arrives here on time finds relief and assurance that they are going to make it. With 5 miles to go, I knew I was no longer chasing the cut off time.

Getting to finishing line

New sets of pain kicked in, and I was literally pushed out of the aid station towards the finish. I could barely move. I struggled again for the last 2 miles, but kept on moving forward. By now, I was almost crawling.

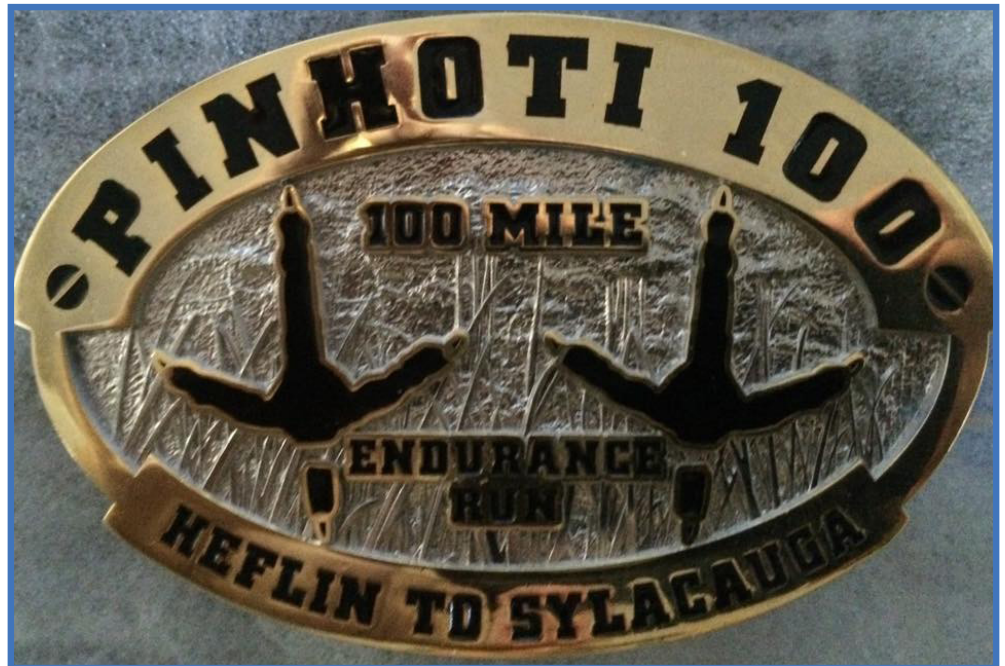
As soon as I saw a long stretch of road, I was so happy to be off the trail and onto the road. Even though the stretch wasn't long, it was a good distance with the condition that I was in and at the speed I was running. Finally, I made the last turn to the finish. Then I saw the stadium.

Bill, who paced me these last 5 miles, shouted at me "Go, Suman, go!" I wasn't sure what came over me, but it was then that I started to push hard through the last half lap around the track. As I crossed the finish line, Todd

Henderson, the race director, handed me the Pinhoti Buckle and congratulated me. I was so emotional and relieved that after 29 hours, seven minutes, two sunrises, and one sunset, with all the cold, wind, pain, suffering, uphill, downhill and so much more, I could say "I am a proud Pinhoti 100 finisher!!!!"

I was surrounded by my crews, pacers, friends and volunteers. We'd all made a lot of memories that we will remember for a long time. My biggest thanks goes to them. They pulled me through some of the hardest moments of my running life- at least, so far.

After the race, Bill asked what motivated me to go faster towards the end. There were many possible answers: fear of defeat, not making the cut off time, disappointing my pacers and crews, etc... but the biggest motivation of all was the ability to hold that Pinhoti buckle.



In conclusion:

With the correct planning, training, and determination, one can finish any race. A 100 mile race is no exception. I have much more respect for those of you who tough-it-out and get to the finish line no matter what – even the last person. Lastly, I would like to thank all the volunteers, race organizers, my family, friends, and everyone who helped make this race memorable for me, as well as all those who participated. Special thanks go to Jamie and Todd Henderson for another great year of Pinhoti 100. One thing for sure, this will not be the last time I will run this race; I will line up again soon.

A Few Lessons from Pinhoti 100:

- 1) Good training with a mix of uphill and downhill trail/road training is important.
- 2) If you can, try to run part of the race course once, especially sections that you may have to run during the night.
- 3) Do not play with Mother Nature. She will always win. Keep mindful and prepare ahead of time for the race day weather.
- 4) When you think something is going bad, most likely it is. Slow down and apply different strategies as you go along. 100 mile races are long and many things can go wrong. Just keep your cool and calm.
- 5) Keep moving forward even when the voice inside you may say you should stop or drop out.
- 6) If you can, get crews and pacers who know you well. If not, spend time with them prior to the race so that they can help to push you through some hard moments.
- 7) Have the big goal of finishing the race, and have the small goal of getting from aid station to aid station before the cut off time.
- 8) Have proper race planning long before the race week – food, clothing, drop bags, etc.
- 9) Pack a flashlight, at least 2 headlamps and extra batteries - these do not cost a lot and make a world of difference during late night. Always carry a backup headlamp with you.
- 10) Learn to eat on the run. Planning is important prior to the race, and is equally important during the race.
- 11) Enjoy the race. It is not often we get to be in the woods for a 30 hour run.
- 12) Plan for after the race. It will be a while before you start to walk like normal.
- 13) Do not worry about others passing you. Just run your race. It is a long race. You can pass them along the way.
- 14) Do not forget to thank the volunteers and race staff. Some of them will be out there just as long as you are, or even longer.

If you got this far, thanks for reading my story. Till next time, #HappyRunning #HappyTrail

— by *Suman Silwal*

RUNNING RAMBLINGS

— by Randy Lyle



Quotes

“If you believe in yourself and have the courage, the determination, the dedication, the competitive drive and if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done.”

~ **Vince Lombardi, (1913-1970) American football player, coach and executive best known as the head coach of the Green Bay Packers during the 1960s**

“Setting goals gives your life meaning. The feeling of setting a goal, working hard, and then achieving it is the best.”

~ **Sarah Jamieson, Australian middle distance runner and Olympian**

“I do not try to dance better than anyone else. I only try to dance better than myself.”

~ **Mikhail Baryshnikov, Russian actor and dancer cited as one of the greatest ballet dancers in history**

“Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying with that plan.”

~ **Tom Landry, (1924-2000) American football player and coach ranked as one of the greatest and most innovative coaches in NFL history**

“A winner is someone who sets their goals, commits themselves to those goals and then pursues their goals with all the ability that is given to them. That requires someone who believes in themselves, who will make self sacrifices, work hard, and maintain the determination to perform at the best of their ability.”

~ **C. Leeman Bennett, former American football coach most prominently remembered as head coach of the NFL's Atlanta Falcons and Tampa Bay Buccaneers**

“Don't measure yourself by what you have accomplished, but by what you should have accomplished with your ability.”

~ **John Wooden, (1910-2010) American basketball player and coach that lead UCLA to ten NCAA championships in a twelve-year period, including seven in a row**

Ramblings

What to Pack for a Marathon

Source: <http://www.runnersworld.com/getting-started/what-to-pack-for-a-marathon>

It is hard to believe that 2014 is almost over. Did you set any goals for this year? They may or may not be running goals. Hopefully, we all enjoy running but we also need to enjoy other areas of our lives. To be well rounded, we need to seek fulfillment in our running along with our personal and professional lives. I have heard it said that going through life without goals is a recipe for mediocrity. None of us wants to be just average or mediocre. Having said that, did you set any running goals for 2014? If so, did you accomplish them? Why or why not?

What I decided to share this month is not new or original. If you are like me, you have probably heard this advice several times in various settings. For me, however, I need regular reminders like this. Please bear with me while I write about the importance of setting SMART goals.

Setting goals is an excellent way for us to stay motivated to achieve success, whatever that means to us. For runners, goals can help keep us motivated to get out and run. It may sound easy to make running a habit, but it is probably easier for most of us to make “not running” a habit. At my company, we are starting a concerted goal-setting program corporate-wide based on the SMART principle, which states that we should set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. We can use this same process to establish our running goals. How does the SMART principle work? The following are the basic rules to follow when setting SMART goals.

Be Specific.

You need to avoid goals that are too general. Make sure your goals answer the questions of “who”, “what” and “when”. If you set a general goal such as to “run faster” or “lose weight by running”, how do you know whether you achieve your goal? Are those even goals? How much faster do you want to run? How much weight do you want to lose? What deadline are you setting for being faster or lighter? A Specific goal is, “I want to improve my 10k PR by two minutes by June 30”. Specific goals help keep you motivated because you know precisely what you need to do to achieve them. As you get closer to accomplishing your goal, your progress can excite and motivate you. That makes it more likely that you will work hard to get the result you desire.

Make your goal Measurable.

It is critical that you choose a running goal that has criteria for measuring progress. Making your running goal Measurable helps you keep focus to stay on track, maintain your motivation and know when you reach your target. To determine if your goal is Measurable, ask yourself if it defines “how much” or “how many”.

Keep it Attainable.

As much as we would like to think differently, not everyone can qualify for the Olympic Trials or Boston Marathon. We all have limitations to what we can do. For me, I started running too late in life to ever be in contention to win most races so I do not set that as a goal. While it is good to set lofty goals that will stretch us, it is important to choose goals that we can actually accomplish if we are willing to do the work. The best goals do require you to push yourself to achieve them, but they are not too extreme. If a goal is too far out of reach, you likely will not truly commit to it because deep down you know it is not achievable.

To figure out if a running goal is Attainable, compare it to your previous running achievements. Do you have to make considerable improvements, beyond your ability, to get to that level? If you are not sure, talk to a running coach or your running friends to get their opinion. It is best to find someone that will be honest with you, even if it hurts your feelings. In the end, a goal that is not Attainable is not a worthwhile pursuit.

Make your goal Relevant.

Just because your running friends set a certain goal does not mean that you have to have the same goal. All of us are different and want to do different things. Not everyone wants to run a marathon or compete in a Tough Mudder, and that is okay. Whatever goal you set, make sure it is Relevant to you. For a goal to be Relevant, it should be something that you consider important and worthwhile. Otherwise, your commitment will be too weak to do the work necessary to achieve the goal. Your goals should represent you. They should not just be something that someone or some group is doing or something that others are suggesting that you attempt. Take ownership of your running and set goals that you want to achieve, regardless what everyone is saying or doing.

Coach Danny Haralson often says that everyone is an “experiment of one”. He is usually referring to learning that what shoes, nutrition, etc., works for one person may not be good for you too. I also feel like that saying is true when it comes to goals. We all started running for different reasons and continue running with different priorities. Find the goal that is Relevant to you and pursue it.

Keep your goals Timely.

To me, this is the easiest step to miss, but you must attach deadlines with your goals. There will be no sense of urgency to achieve your goal without a deadline. If you say, “I want to break an hour in a 10k” but never select a race to run, the goal has no real meaning. However, if you want to run a 59-minute 10k at next year’s Vulcan Run on 7 November, you know exactly where you need to be by that date. Having a looming deadline will help keep you motivated and prevent

you from getting bored or wanting to skip your workouts. If you find that you are ready to achieve your goal way ahead of schedule, simply readjust your goal and continue challenging yourself.

The New Year will be here before we know it. Many people like to set New Year’s resolutions. I am not really a fan of New Year’s resolutions because most people have already broken their resolution before mid-January. Personally, I think that is because resolutions tend to be very vague and general. This year, instead of setting New Year’s resolutions, set SMART goals. If you do, this time next year you will likely find that you have accomplished much more than you realized you could in 2015.

BTC MINUTES

September 23, 2014

**BTC Meeting
September 23, 2014**

Attendance:

Board: Jennifer Andress, Alex Morrow, Russ Hiller, Kelly McNair and Brad Clay

Executive Committee: Olivia Affuso, Kemper Sarrett, Monica Henley, Allison Stone, Tanya Sylvan, Alan Hargrove

I. Introductions

- a. Monica Henley will be replacing Natalie Ferguson as long-run coordinator. Natalie and her family are moving out of state.

II. Membership

- a. Membership is up – 114 new memberships; 143 new members – for a total of 1124; 905 memberships (includes families) up from 791 (last year numbers – not reliable)
- b. Look at race-it data to compare to last year
- c. Who is getting BTC membership gmail emails? – Alan will give Olivia the login so she can start receiving emails.

III. Social

- a. Smaller scale
- b. Multiple routes
- c. O-henrys Coffee in Highland Park
- d. On Vulcan and Mercedes course – perk
- e. First wave at 6:00 – staggered starts
- f. Vulcan drawing? Any other sponsors
- g. Put up flags and signs; I'm a Vulcan Runner sign
- h. Share and Invite friends on FB
- i. End of Year Party – January 10
- i. Rogue and Trim Tab (possibilities)

IV. Vulcan Run

- a. 404 registered to date / 503 (2013 registered at this time)
- b. 0 – fun run
- c. Volunteer module is up and running
- d. Good People – Nov 3 – packet stuffing

- e. Packet pick-up in the new space next door
- f. Use of van and trailer
- g. Start and Finish line details are coming together
- h. Order porta potties – Allison will handle
- i. Sponsor – spreadsheet of what each sponsor has paid for
- i. What is going into packets – keep a list going
- ii. Need to know how much is going into packets ahead of time so we can plan accordingly with volunteers
- iii. Tighten up promotions
- j. Shirts
 - i. Marian came in under other vendors
 - ii. T-shirts will be given to race participants; Tech shirts are available for purchase for \$10.00
 - iii. Allison needs shirts in hand on the 27th
 - iv. Pre-package ordered shirts in labeled, manila envelopes
- k. Flier in packet for 2015 race series - \$65.00
 - i. 4 race t-shirts plus a race series t-shirt
 - ii. Motion put forth and approved for the above
 - iii. 2000 pre-made quarter sheets to put in packets
 - iv. Need to set date for Adam's Heart to go on flier
- l. Elite athletes – 6 signed up so far. Erica has specifics
- m. Danny working with Sheraton to house the elite athletes
- n. Need to clean out BTC storage. Need to communicate the importance of keeping it clean when you take stuff out and put stuff away. Put forth motion to approve up to \$150.00 for shelving. Approved. Kemper will be researching deals. Measure coolers to see how deep and tall. 18 inch shelving; 23 in with top
- o. Rinse out coolers with powerade and do not seal the lid if they're not dry
- p. Create a sign-in/sign-out sheet and attach to inventory. Tanya will handle
- q. Trish and Allison are working on race-week details
- r. Vulcan signs are starting to go up around town
- s. Selling space down the sides of the arch. Athleta will have big space
- t. Sponsors at packet pick-up
 - i. E & W had presence last year
 - ii. Truitt insurance had presence as well
 - iii. Where would they go – outside (if we land them)
 - iv. Orthotics Solution – on website but they haven't paid
 - v. Orange Theory – still working on getting them to commit
- 1. Calorie burning zone
- u. USATF Sanctioned vs RRCA – do we need both?

V. Financials

- a. Invoices for Trak Shak
- b. Ads that need to be billed
- c. Russ needs clarification on a few items

VI. Water Fountain

- a. Marker – Founded by the Birmingham Track Club 2013

VII. Triple Crown

- a. 56 registered as of today; 5-6 registered since Talladega;
- b. 125 members ran Talladega – special marketing to that group;
- c. 80 medals ordered – same as last year; ribbon is gold;
- d. Asics gold shirt - small logo on front and races on the back

VIII. Personnel

- a. David Christy has stepped down as photographer
- b. Ensure he is paid to date for his work with the BTC

IX. 1200 Mile Jackets/Apparel

- a. The embroiderer is working on a patch to go over the old jackets from last year. A patch would cover up the smaller embroidered jacket.
- b. Vote to keep the smaller embroidered jacket as opposed to changing it.
- c. Arthur Black T-shirts and tech-shirts are selling fast

X. Run Sign-up

- a. Continually evolving product
- b. New feature announced today: added the ability to send an email to a member when membership expires and send a copy to all directors
- c. Currently, they get a renewal letter at 30 days and 7 days



BTC Membership application

Single: ☐ Family: ☐ Renewal: ☐ Gender: ☐

First Name:

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Last Name:

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Street:

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City:

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State:

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Zip:

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Birthdate:

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Cell:

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e-mail:

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Family member

e-mail:

Phone:

Born

Gender:

2. _____/_____/_____/_____/ M F

3. _____/_____/_____/_____/ M F

4. _____/_____/_____/_____/ M F

Waiver: I know that running and volunteering to work in club races are potentially hazardous activities. I should not enter and run in club activities unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a race official relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risks associated with running and volunteering to work in club races including, but not limited to, falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather, including high heat and/or humidity; knowing these facts, and in consideration of your acceptance of my application for membership, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release the Road Runners Club of America, The Birmingham Track Club and all sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising out of my participation in these club events even through that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver.

Initial:

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	Single	Family		Single	Family
1 Year	\$24	\$36	2 Year	\$45	\$65

Signature

Date

Mail this signed application and a signed check to:

Birmingham Track Club, P.O.Box 530363, Birmingham, AL 35253