



Running Club News:

Greetings, Macon Tracksters! Hope you all are taking advantage of the not-too-hot, not-too-cold weather and enjoying spring running and racing. We've been having a good turn out at the triangle every Sunday for our 7:15 am group run. Many thanks to Sid Banks & Mike Bilderback of Monroe County for arranging to have a large metal lock box placed at the 4.5 mile water stop. David Tinkey set it all in motion, and Sam Martinez installed a shelf, hooks, and trash can, so we now have a great place to keep drinks and supplies secure for our Sunday long runs. If you see Sid or Mike, tell them how much you appreciate them!

Thanks also to **GEICO** and **Cherokee Brick** for sponsoring the Macon Labor Day Road Race again this year. We've got some new ideas for this year's race, but we need our sponsors' help to make them happen!

We have two **Macon Tracks Piedmont Sports Medicine Race Series** races in May, Run4Missions 5K on May 3rd and the MSO Allegro 5K on May 10th. Be sure and plan to come to the Macon Tracks Social on May 3rd, also. Compare blister tales, LSD vs. ITB, and discuss the latest research on how having less abdominal fat decreases your chances of dementia later in life, though some might say we're already demented to be out running all those miles! Details are on the calendars at www.macontracks.org. Our next gathering will be in June at the home of Tom & E Jones, with special guest Scott Ludwig. Check the website and forum often to stay posted!

Kerry ☺

RunNING Atlanta

by Doug Frawley

Nearly 15,000 souls made the trip to tornado-battered downtown Atlanta to take part in the second running of the ING Georgia Marathon and Half-Marathon. Overcast skies and chilly conditions made early spring seem more like late fall as the sunlight barely registered at 7:00 am on Centennial Olympic Park. Seeing the corrals of participants line up for the start of the race made me appreciate all the hard efforts that volunteers and race officials had made in preparation for the race. A city that, just weeks before had come under an unlikely attack from mother nature, had to carry on. The Expo was moved to the Georgia Dome from the World Congress Center, but the course was cleared and ready to race. You couldn't help but notice the tall skyscrapers such as The Westin Hotel, the Georgia Pacific Building, and The Omni Hotel that had suffered visible damage with dozens of broken windows.

The first wave to take off was the wheel chair division. Soon thereafter the elite runners began their journey and the corrals followed. I waited in corral 3 as I decided if I would pace early with Eminem or Metallica. The dark gray sky, along with the chilling breeze, made me feel more like we were in Detroit, so I chose Eminem. The first couple of miles on the wet streets were rolling hills through downtown as I worked my way through Georgia State's campus and then to Midtown. Soon, I passed one of the many historic areas of the course, the MLK Jr. National Historic Site. After a few more rolling hills, thankfully not too steep, I found myself in freakish Little Five Points. Not having time to get a tattoo, I continued picking up my pace and passed the 3:40 pace team. Of course, I was running the half-marathon so I figured I would wish them luck. Next, I passed the Carter Center, which I unfortunately did not have time to stop and visit, but I can tell everyone I know where it is now.

At the marathon/half-marathon course-split at mile 7.5, I waved as the 2 or 3 marathoners continued on their course. Sad to say, I think that is all I saw go that route as I continued to fight for elbow room with the half-marathon pack. Knowing the pack was thinning now, and I was past the half-way point, I knew I had to pick it up as I approached Virginia Highlands. I know this is a trendy nightspot hangout for Atlantans, and I have to admit, I really wanted to sit down and drink a beer, but I had to stay focused. Believe it or not, there was a guy with a keg and two pitchers set up at a table on the side of the road for those that needed a little boost.

Approaching Mile 9, I strolled through Piedmont Park, home of many concerts and festivities throughout the years. I have to admit, being a Georgian for nearly 30 years and growing up in Marietta, I had never been there. I quickly pressed on as some dude rolled out

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Oak Mountain 50K

by Curtis White

The Oak Mountain 50K is the third ultra of a series based in Alabama. The word on the trail is that it is also the easiest. Maybe by Kevin Hatfield standards, but not mine. The weather was perfect, around 50 at the start, reaching no higher than 75 by the end of the race. After a few words the race director sent us on our way.

The course was on beautiful single-track trails through most of the race. Usually I was caught between running groups, which made me feel as though I was far from civilization. My goal was to finish between 6 and 6 1/2 hours, so I had to keep an 11 minute pace to stay on track. This was easy at first, but what slowed me down was not the up hills, it was the rocky down hills. There were a few runners who flew down the hills with no worries of flying into a tree. I, on the other hand, have size fourteens that will grab any root or rock, and I did not want to end up falling face-first into an old oak tree.

Reaching the north trailhead was relatively easy. I grabbed some pb&j, refilled my water, and started walking up the trail eating. Peavine Falls was where I had my drop bag full of gels. To reach this point, the trail went native and shot down a cliff, through a creek, and then we climbed up a dirt cliff using roots and fallen trees to pull ourselves up. There was watermelon at the aid station, so it was worth it! Leaving this station at close to my goal pace, and knowing there was a long downhill within 5 miles, I felt the 6 hour goal was attainable. Feeling strong going up to Shackleford Point, I just knew I was going to fly down the hill, and be in the top half of finishers. Halfway down the hill, though, my toes felt like someone was beating them with a hammer and I was expecting my shins to come loose from my knees (mental note to self: learn to run down hill).



Wobbling into the north trailhead for a replenishment of water (they had no watermelon, so no reason to stay long), I headed up the trail back to Peavine Falls. This trail was a wide dirt road with plenty of creek crossings and mountain bikers to watch out for. My pace had slowed considerably from my 11-minute

target, down to a 12:20 pace. The uphill parts were still pain free, but every time I went down, it felt like another toe came off. Arriving at the final food station (with watermelon) at 5:37, I changed my goal to finish under 7 hours. It was close, but it will give me a goal for next year's race. I just need to practice down hill running. The finish line was filled with great people who made you feel right at home with grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, and plenty of drinks. When I sat down to take my shoes off, afraid of what I might not find, they were still intact. SO LIFE IS GOOD!

The race is advertised as a 50K, but they acknowledged it was closer to 33 miles, and my Garmin registered 31.8 miles. Either way, it was a fun-filled Saturday, running with friendly, helpful, and supportive runners!

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from behind a large rock to relieve himself, no kidding! As miles 10-11 approached, I could see the Coca-Cola building and the IBM tower in the misty distance. I knew I was headed in the right direction, right down Peachtree Street. As I rolled through Georgia Tech's campus, I couldn't help but shout some "Go Dawgs" chants. This helped me close with a sub-7 minute mile as I weaved my way through the finish on the bricks of Centennial Olympic Park. The bright orange medal made it all worthwhile.

I have to say, I was really impressed with the organization, the crowd support, and the overall race experience. You can PR on this course with the right conditions, but be prepared to take on quite a few hills. A great race in a great city!

Editor's note: Doug (aka "runningmasheen") finished in 1:44, a personal record!

Lunch with Superman

By Deborah Botkin

I had the privilege of eating lunch with Superman earlier this week. For the record, he doesn't work at the Daily Planet, he works at Robins AFB. Also, his name isn't Clark Kent (that's only in comic books), his real identity is John Dove.

To talk to John you would notice that he's a very down to earth, friendly, easy to talk to, likeable person. It is easy to see that John is an athletic person as he has that lean and toned look of a runner, but you'd never know how accomplished he was until you asked him to talk about his training and some of the races he's completed. Then you would quickly find out that John has completed about 80 ultra marathons, 20 of which were 100-milers. John has also placed in the top ten of these races nine times.

One these 100-milers he has participated in is the Western States 100. For those of you who haven't read Dean's book, let me share that the Western States 100 race is to ultra marathons as the Boston race is to marathons. You have to do a prior ultra event and you have to do it well in order to qualify for an entry. The elevation climbs on the Western States 100 race make Boston's heart break hill seem like just a bunny slope. John not only qualified for the race but also completed the 100 miles in 23:30:40.

Modestly, John shared with me that he will be attempting an even more difficult 100 miler this July, the Hard Rock 100. This race is run in the San Juan Mountains of southwest Colorado. The average elevation ranges at 11,186 feet with a peak of 14,048 feet. The elevation gain during this race is 33,000 feet (anyone up for some hill training?).

So, as I sit in awe listening to John describe the different endurance races I could barely dream of accomplishing, he changes the subject and starts talking about the different adventure races and triathlons he's completed. Of course we're not talking the sprint triathlons that I might one day participate in but rather the Ironman Triathlon (2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike ride, 26.2 mile run). John stated the most difficult race he's ever completed was an off road Ironman. After 112 miles of mountain biking he was glad to start running the marathon. I'm just glad to get to a marathon starting line uninjured!

John says the Eco Challenge expedition race is what got him interested in adventure races. John did his first adventure race in 1998. He says one of the hardest parts of adventure racing is the race preparation. You have to get all your gear/food/clothing to each leg of the race.

I asked John to give some training suggestions on how to complete an ultra marathon. His suggestions were very encouraging. If you can train for a marathon and use the marathon as a training run then you can finish a 50-miler. A general rule is that you can race twice the distance of

your longest long run. He favors doing one really long training run (35-40 miles) over two back-to-back shorter (20 mile) long training runs. He also suggests walking on



the hills during the race and start walking them early in the race to conserve energy. One of the most important things I learned is to train for the terrain. If you're going to run an endurance race on trails with lots of elevation, then do training runs on trails with elevation. John runs the trails in northern GA and in Pine Mountain, GA.

So how does John train? John runs about 6 times a week. On any given week his mileage will range from 30-100 miles. His favorite running partner is his four-legged German Short Haired dog and his lovely bride will also crew for him on some of his training runs.

John has also taken up yoga to help stretch out his muscles.

I think what I enjoyed most about listening to John talk about his races is the fact he is very low key about it. To me what he has accomplished is super human indeed. To him, it's just normal everyday accomplishments. John talks about completing a 50 mile race like most of us would talk about running a 10-miler. He says he won't travel for a race unless it's at least 50 miles, otherwise it just wouldn't be worth the expense. I guess some of John's matter-of-fact attitude toward these incredible feats is due to the fact that John hangs out with other super humans that perform the same incredible feats as well.

I think what I've taken away from this interview is the knowledge that if you want to do an incredible feat you have to change your mind set and believe you can complete the feat. I don't believe John realizes how incredible his accomplishments really are. To him they are just races and training runs. I wonder how far I could go with the mindset, "Oh, it's just a 50 mile race....no biggie."

Thanks John for not only giving me the interview but also encouraging me and inspiring me to take it to the next level.

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Cherry Blossom 5K & 15K

April 5th started off with a bang. A bang of thunder, that is, with lots of lightning to go along with it! Luckily there were no more bolts after the start of the race, just us nuts out running in the rain. It wasn't very spring-like, but we'll look forward to all those May flowers next month.

Despite the bad weather, spirits were high, and even Phil Brown had a smile to match his cheery pink tee. Kurtis Johnson and Megan Breitbach won the 15K. Michael Strickland and Grace Tinkey won the 2.5-mile long 5K (though all 5K participants were blessed with a new personal record).

The Macon Tracks highest honor, however, goes to Mort Haddix. After finishing the 15K race, he ran back in his barefoot shoes and in the pouring rain to run back in again with Phil Brown, cheering him along during that last tough stretch of the race. Supporting and encouraging each other in this way is what it's all about. Three cheers for Mort, and for everyone else who came to run the Cherry Blossom race in the rain!

