

“The weather was perfect for running”*

Race director Jim Woolfitt was covering tubs of bottled water positioned at the finish line around 10:30am the morning of the race to keep it away from the bright sunlight. Before the January 5, 2008, noon start for the 3rd annual Run to Read Half Marathon, the bright sunlight turned to a mist. Most of the record 185 runners (186 including a bandit) didn't seem to mind the 40 degree temperatures. Six runners broke 1:20 (compared to 4 last year), 20 runners broke 1:30 (including 2 women for the first time) and 10 ladies broke 1:40 (only 2 did so in 2007.)

Turning to the recap found on the Queen City Striders webpage: “Prickett's Fort was originally built in 1774 as a place of refuge for early white settlers against Indian attack. At the third annual Run to Read Half Marathon...at Prickett's Fort State Park, Jaron Hawkins found a safe place...and that place was in front of 185 other runners while cruising to a winning time of 1:13:18.3.”

“David McCollam, 28, [a former Alderson Broaddus cross country runner] of Philippi, WV, stopped the clock in 1:14:09.7 before three more Allegany County [MD] runners rounded out the top 5. Daniel DeWitt, 22, Cumberland, was 3rd in 1:14:49.3. David Mertz, 22, of Cumberland, was 4th in 1:17:30.7 and Jeremy Rice, 25, of Frostburg, finished 5th in 1:18:55.3.”

“But it was Hawkins, 25, of Frostburg, who perhaps knew the competition best. Not knowing what to expect of himself in the middle of an 118 mile training week, Hawkins eyed McCollam, last year's winner in 1;13:34.3, before the start and thought he'd try to keep pace with him. The strategy worked through the first 3 quarters of the race until McCollam ran out of gas.”

“Meanwhile, Hawkins, running for the Hagerstown based Cumberland Valley Athletic Club, just got faster as he ticked off

each mile and closed mile 13 in about 5:30. The Frostburg State University graduate averaged 5:36 per mile over the 13.1 mile course....” (<http://www.qcstriders.org/.Halfread07.html> for the full story)

Hawkins finished 3rd overall at the recent Marine Corp Marathon with a time of 2:25 and change.

Chelsea Jarvis, who runs for the Wapiti Runners from Kanawha County’s Elk River Valley, won the ladies title after finishing 2nd last year and winning in 2006. The 17 year old Jarvis, who runs cross country at Capital High School, has dramatically improved her times going from 1:42:50 to 1:33:07.8 to this year’s 1:26:02.1.

Fellow Wapiti runner Jordan Burgess has likewise shown significant improvement in 3 years going from 1:34:32 to 1:29:16 to this year’s 1:20:28.9. Burgess, 17, was 7th overall and took age group honors in the 15-19 age group. Other Wapiti Runners included Christine Azevedo, 17, who won the 19 & under age group in 1:39:33.4, 13; year old Makayla Shamblin who ran 1:43:35.3 in her very first half marathon, Chris Jones, 16, who finished in 1:33:15.1 and Luke Teel, 14, who won the men’s 14 & under. in 1:36:07.2. Teel, like Azevedo, a 3 year Run to Read Half Marathon veteran has also shown steady improvement going from 1:47:39 to 1:40:48 to this year’s 1:36:07.

Both Jarvis & Burgess had top 15 finishes at last fall’s state cross country meet competing for Capital High School.

The women’s runnerup, Kaite Wolpert, 26, formerly ran cross country and the steeplechase at Carnegie Mellon University. With a time of 1:29:27.7, she and Jarvis were the first females to break 1:30 at our event. (An interesting side note, both runners-up, McCollam & Wolpert, reside in Barbour County.) 20 year old Bonnie Latham of Beaver Falls, PA, took 3rd running 1:34:43.7.

Jennifer Sirockman, a varsity runner for University High's 2007 state champion cross country team, finished 4th with a time of 1:35:55.3. Kathy Timperman, last year's Run to Read Half Marathon winner, was 5th this year finishing in 1:36:22.

Race organizers thank Marion County Parks and Recreation for clearing the trails of snow and ice. The MCPARC crew also helped set up water stops and helped to direct parking prior to the race. A big thank you to Dan Talbot, Michael Kuhn, Steve Davis, Wes Talbot (a volunteer) and to the other guys.

We also thank the Prickett's Fort Historical Society, Tree of Life Church, the Marion County Rescue Squad, Speedway Market, the Mon River Trails Conservancy, and McDonald's of Fairmont. A very special thanks to all the volunteers who helped with food, registration, water stops, awards, and clean up.

74 of the 185 finishers were female and the 20 to 29 age group outnumbered the men 22 to 17. With the increased numbers in many age groups, look for more 5 year interval age groups next year. The race may very well be included again in the Morgantown Area Grand Prix, too.

The 4th annual Run to Read Half Marathon is scheduled for January 10, 2009, and the 10th annual Run to Read Races (15K, 5K or run both) are scheduled for June 21, 2008, at the Marion County Adult Ed Center.

Feel free to email race director Jim Woolfitt at run2read@yahoo.com with any suggestions or concerns.

We appreciate all the runners and volunteers who helped make this event successful. Morgantown's Maurice Miller, 78 years young, was the oldest finisher, while the previously mentioned 13 year old Makayla Shamblin of Clendenin, was the youngest finisher.

* Runner-up David McCollam's quote (above) was recorded by Mary Wade Burnside in the January 6th edition of the *Fairmont Times West Virginian*.