

THE FLEET FOOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB | MARCH 2026



TALLAHASSEE MARATHON WINNERS



ANDREW TAYLOR
WEST LAFAYETTE, IN
2:29:59



TAMARA KOZULINA
CLERMONT, FL
3:13:54

Photo Credit: Street Safari Photo

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NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB | MARCH 2026

VOLUME 51 | ISSUE 3

Editor: Robert and Kory Skrob with Alex Baglietto,
FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org

Columnists: Jane Johnson (Featured Feet), Allen Blay and
Jerry McDaniel (Presidents Column), Bill Lott (Race Calendar).

Advertising Copy:

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Submissions/Contributions:

Submissions for publication are strongly encouraged, the preferred format is Microsoft Word. If you have pictures or stories about your running group, don't be shy, photos should be in jpg format. Contact us if you have questions. Robert & Kory Skrob, (850) 270-8295, FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org

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JANUARY BOARD MEETING RECAP

Here is a Gulf Winds Track Club Board of Directors meeting briefing about the meeting held January 14, 2025, hosted by Bill Lott and Jeanne O'Kon. The full meeting minutes are available at gulfwinds.org/minutes. To learn about future board meetings and their locations, visit gulfwinds.org/business-meetings. All GWTC members are welcome to attend any board meeting. Please join us if you are interested or curious about the work happening behind the scenes.

Board Meeting Hosts Needed for 2026 Board members are encouraged to sign up to host a 2026 board meeting. The club will provide up to \$100 for food for each hosted meeting. Members of the board were also reminded to review materials sent in advance so meetings can run efficiently.

Running Shorts Update Jennifer Hay has asked members to send in news and updates for Running Shorts, as she is temporarily unable to gather information as she usually does.

Turkey Trot 2025 Delivers Strong Results Final numbers are in for the 2025 Tallahassee Turkey Trot. The race generated \$157,571.74 in revenue with \$105,040.71 in expenses, resulting in a net of \$52,531.03. That amount will be divided evenly among the four beneficiaries, with each receiving at least \$17,000 in addition to direct online donations. The board approved the budget closeout.

5/10 Mile Challenge and Tannenbaum 6K Closeouts Approved The 5/10 Mile Challenge netted a \$751 profit, which will be returned to the club. The Tannenbaum 6K closeout was also approved after a last minute venue change due to the World Cross Country Championships.

Treasurer Transition Completed Carl Nordhielm has officially stepped into the role of treasurer. Peg Griffin met with Carl on January 7 to formally hand over financial records, with Betsy Miller serving as a third party witness. All records were reviewed and found to be in good order with no outstanding liabilities. The board also approved updating check signers at Capital City Bank.

Grand Prix Committee Update The Grand Prix Committee welcomed Hillary Powell and Hawthorne Hay as new members. One remaining position will be filled soon as responses are finalized.

FLEET **FEET.**

TALLAHASSEE



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Triathlete Club Update The St. Marks Duathlon will be held on March 15. The Triathlete Club also has several new board members.

Race Directors Update Mary Jean has completed the Race Directors Handbook and shared tools and resources with Lisa Unger, who is now coordinating EMS for club races. A meeting of race directors is planned for March or April.

Membership Membership continues to grow, with 1,410 members currently, compared to 1,321 at this time last year. Family memberships stand at 928, up from 831 last year.

Venue Changes The 2026 Christmas Party will be held at Goodwood on December 13 following the sale of Shiloh Farms. The Awards Ceremony is scheduled for January 25, 2026 at Goodwood.

Chip Timing Update All three races chip timed in December 2025 were Club races: the GWTC 10M/5M Challenge; the Tallahassee Ultra Distance Classic 50M, Bill Hillison 50K, and Manatee Marathon; and the Tannenbaum 6K. In January, two Club races were chip timed: the Swamp Forest Trail Quarter Marathon, Half Marathon, and 20M; and the GWTC 30K/15K. February included one non-Club race, the M.A.D. Dash 10K/5K/1M, and two Club races, the Bank of America Tallahassee Marathon, Half Marathon, and Marathon Relay; and the Flash 12K/6K. Chip timers were also secured for a second non-Club race in February, the Cobb Middle School 5K, though no additional information had been received following initial contact. Chip timing revenue from non-Club races for the fiscal year to date, July 1 through December 31, 2025, totals \$5,294.00, representing an increase of \$1,263.00 from the previous month's report.

Grand Prix Awards Update Bill McGuire will return as emcee for the Awards meeting. Due to higher award costs, the board approved an additional \$2,000 for gift cards for overall and select age group winners, bringing the total awards budget to \$8,000. Approximately 50 eligible participants have not yet recorded their volunteer service. Race directors can also assist by recording volunteer names.

Training Groups The half marathon training group continues to see strong participation, with a Springtime training group also underway. A budget proposal for training group expenses, including shirts and participant perks, will be submitted for board review.

FEAR NO DISTANCE

A group of runners is silhouetted against a bright, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise. They are running on a paved road that stretches into the distance. The overall mood is one of determination and physical activity.

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RACE CALENDAR

MARCH 2026



07 Shamrock Scurry 5K/1M, 8 a.m. 1M; 8:30 a.m. 5K. Killlearn Methodist Church, 2800 Shamrock South (at the Killarney Way traffic circle). Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.shamrockscurry.com; or email to jim@killlearn.church.

07 Capital City Senior Games (50+) 5K (held with and MUST also register for Shamrock Scurry 5K), 8:30 a.m. Killlearn Methodist Church, 2800 Shamrock South (at the Killarney Way traffic circle). Online registration and information available at www.talgov.com/seniorgames. Cindy Mead at (850) 891-3975.

07 St. George Island Red Pepper Run 5K, 8 a.m. Paddy's Raw Bar, 240 E. 3rd St. (start at Fire Station on East Pine), St. George Island, FL. Online registration available at Webscorer.com. Visit www.stgeorgeislandchilicookoff.com. Shelley Shepard at shelshep@yahoo.com.

07 Gate River Run 15K, 8 a.m. Gator Bowl Blvd., Jacksonville, FL. Online registration available at RaceRooster.com. Visit www.gateriverrun15k.com; or ryann@1stplacesports.com.

14 Honoring Women Veterans 5K, 8 a.m. 326 1st St. NE, Cairo, GA. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Bob Asztalos at basztalos@icloud.com.

15 GWTC St. Marks Duathlon (5K run/20K bike/2.5K run), 8 a.m. 25

Riverside Dr., St. Marks, FL. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit <https://gulfwindstri.com/st-marks-duathlon/>; or Averil Lewis at duathlon.stmarks@gmail.com.

21 Bulldog Dash 5K/1M, 7:30 a.m. 5K; 8:30 a.m. 1M. MacIntyre Park Middle School, 117 Glenwood Dr., Thomasville, GA. Additional information and online registration available at www.tccity.org. Angie Ellis at ellisa@tccity.org.

21 Realtors Community 5K, 8 a.m. Cascades Park, 1001 S. Gadsden St. Online registration at EventBrite.com. Therese Gagliano therese@TBRnet.org.

26-28 Terry Long FSU Relays, 3 p.m. Thursday; 10 a.m. Friday; 10 a.m. Saturday. Mike Long Track, 1104 Spirit Way, FSU Campus. Visit www.Seminoles.com.

28 GWTC Springtime 10K/5K/1M, 7:30 a.m. 1M; 8 a.m. 10K/5K. Suwanee St. next to Cascades Park. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.springtime10k.com; or www.gulfwinds.org; or Jerry McDaniel at springtime10k@gmail.com.

APRIL 2026

04 GWTC Bowlegs 5K Run for Scholarship/1M Fun Walk, 9 a.m. FSU/FAMU Engineering Building, Innovation Park, 2525 Pottsdamer St. (across from Seminole Golf Course). Online

registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.GulfWinds.org; or Bill Hillison at (850) 893-4557 or whillison@fsu.edu; or Larry Giunipero at (850) 878-5569 or lgunipero@cob.fsu.edu. Rescheduled from 01/25/2025.

09-10 Dick Roberts Seminole Invite, TBA. Mike Long Track, 1104 Spirit Way, FSU Campus. Visit www.Seminoles.com.

11 GWTC Palace Saloon 5K, 8 a.m. Start at Messer Fields, corner of Jackson Bluff Rd. and Dupree St.; finish at The Palace Saloon, 1303 Jackson Bluff Rd. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.gulfwinds.org; or Tom Perkins at tomperkinsfsu@gmail.com or (850) 264-4595.

11 Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival Wiggle Worm Fun Run (1.4M), 8 a.m. Corner of Rose St. and Municipal Ave., downtown Sopchoppy, FL. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.wormgruntinfestival.com; or Mary Katherine Westmark at mkwestmark@gmail.com or (850) 445-4206.

18 Rose City Run 10K/1M, 8 a.m. 10K; 9:30 a.m. 1 M. North Broad St. at corner of Broad St. and Monroe St., near U.S. Post Office, Thomasville, GA. **No Race Day Registration for 1M.** Online registration available at <https://ymca-thomasville.org/rose-city-run>. Thomasville YMCA at (229) 226-9878 or rcr@ymca-thomasville.org.

25 Gladiator Challenge, an Adventure Race, (obstacle course races ages 3 and up), 8 a.m. Phipps Farm, 4300 N. Meridian Rd. (across from Maclay

School). Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. **No Race Day Registration.** Visit www.gladiatortlh.com; or Richard Lynes at (850) 339-4847 or gladiatortlh@gmail.com

25 Rose City 5K Walk, 8:30 a.m. Thomasville Center for the Arts, 600 E. Washington St., Thomasville, GA. **No Race Day Registration.** Online registration available at <https://ymca-thomasville.org/rose-city-run-walk>. Thomasville YMCA at (229) 226-9878 or rcr@ymca-thomasville.org.

MAY 2026

02 Tails and Trails Half Marathon/10K/5K/1M, 7:30 a.m. Half Marathon/1M; 8 a.m. 10K/5K. Tallahassee Animal Service Center, 1125 Easterwood Dr. next to Tom Brown Park. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.animalshelterfoundation.org; or Cara Fowler at carafowler@mac.com.

09 St. Peters Anglican Cathedral 20th Anniversary 5K/1M, TBA. St. Peter's Anglican Church, 4784 Thomasville Rd. Paddy Lang at langs01234@gmail.com.

16 River Runaround 5K/1M, 8 a.m. 5K; 9 a.m. 1M. Chattahoochee River Landing Park, 269 River Landing Rd., Chattahoochee, FL. Online registration available at ItsYourRace.com. Pamela Medley at pfmedley@hotmail.com.

Get Ready to Run Into Spring!

Springtime 10K/5K/1 Mile is on
Saturday, March 28, 2026

All three races start and finish on Suwannee Street next to Cascades Park.

The 1 Mile race kicks things off at 7:30 a.m., followed by the 10K and 5K at 8:00 a.m. Whether you are racing, running with friends, or bringing the family, there is a distance for everyone.

The 10K and 5K wind through the Myers Park neighborhood. The 1 Mile is a fun out and back on Franklin Boulevard, perfect for kids and first time racers. New this year, the 5K now finishes with a run through Cascades Park, giving you an extra scenic boost in the final mile.

Once you cross the finish line, stick around for food, drinks, and an awards ceremony in the staging area. It is the perfect way to cool down, catch up, and cheer on fellow runners.

Registration

- 10K: \$25
- 5K: \$20
- 1 Mile: \$12

Awards

- Overall male and female winners in the 1 Mile
- Overall and masters winners for the 10K and 5K
- Traditional age group awards for the 10K and 5K, three deep in each race

Every runner will receive a race shirt featuring the new logo.

Packet Pickup Race day packet pickup begins at 6:30 a.m. and ends at 7:30 a.m.

Amicus Brewery – Wednesday, March 25th between 5PM-8PM
Deep Brewing – Thursday, March 26th between 4PM-6:30PM

Parking and arrival tips Plan to arrive early. Roads will be closed for the 10K and the Springtime Tallahassee Parade later in the day. Parking is not allowed in the FDOT lots near the start and finish area. Nearby parking garages and limited street parking will be available.





PRESIDENTS COLUMN

By: Allen Blay, GWTC Vice President

On February 8, 2026, I woke up to one of the most beautiful days of the year. The temperature was almost perfect for a nice little run. However, the only running I did that day was running from the parking lot of the new FSU Herbert Wertheim College of Business to the courthouse around 6:45 a.m. after dropping my daughter, Ansley, off at Kleman Plaza so she could get to the start line of Gulf Winds Track Club's Bank of America Tallahassee Marathon and Half Marathon. My daughter finished the half in a little over three hours, the second year in a row she's finished it. She was one of 161 U20 females to finish and one of only four U18. I'm so proud of her. After she finished, I handed out pizza at the finish, and then we cleaned up the finish line area when the race was over. Between the 377 marathon finishers, 1,991 half marathon finishers, and 51 relay teams, we had over 2,500 finishers and 3,000 registered runners. Our little local marathon has become a big deal, in large part due to the huge number of young adults in their twenties and upper teens running the race. The sixth episode of the GWTC We Run This Town Podcast features these "Young Runs," and if you haven't listened to it, you should.

One reason there are so many young people running this race is the cost. Our half marathon is \$65, about the cost of a 5K in a lot of places. The reason we are able to do this is because of the incredible generosity of race directors doing a job for free that amounts to two full-

377
MARATHON
FINISHERS

1,991
HALF MARATHON
FINISHERS

51
RELAY TEAMS

2,500+
FINISHERS

3,000
REGISTERED
RUNNERS

PRESIDENTS COLUMN CONTINUED

time positions for the month before the race. Robert and Kory Skrob did a fantastic and professional job directing this race. Robert estimates that he and Kory spent at least 1,000 hours in the past year on the race, including at least 10 hours a day each for nearly a month before the race. They are both highly skilled professionals with plenty of other things they could be doing, in addition to their real-life paid jobs. Although Robert tells me that he and Kory got tremendous satisfaction from putting on the event, this race has changed so much and has doubled in size from two years ago, when there were 988 half marathon finishers in 2024. Robert and Kory followed in the footsteps of Geb Kiros and Tsige Tadesse; Felton and Bonnie Wright; Sheryl Rosen; Nancy Stedman and Jay Silvanima; “Marathon” Jack and Laura McDermott; and others before them, giving their “yes” to our community.

Talking with Robert got me thinking about the overall volunteer workload required to put on a race of this caliber, as polished as any race, staffed almost entirely by volunteers.

When you look behind the scenes, the numbers are staggering. By the race directors’ estimates, we had 301 volunteers serving in official roles across the weekend. That does not count the many family members and friends who step in informally to help carry tables, move water, sweep streets, or load trucks at the end of the day.

At the Expo alone, 38 volunteers greeted runners, handed out bibs and shirts, answered questions, and set the tone for the entire weekend. Fourteen more were out marking the course so that every turn was clear and safe. On race day, 105 volunteers staffed aid stations, handing out water and sports

301+
VOLUNTEERS

14
**MARKING
THE COURSE**

38
GREETERS

105
**STATION
STAFFERS**

85
**TRAFFIC
DIRECTORS**

10
**AWARD AREA
STAFF**

13
**GIVING OUT
FINISH LINE
FOOD**

9
**SUPPORTED
TIMING**

PRESIDENTS COLUMN CONTINUED

10

**FINISH LINE
CLEANUP**

drinks with smiles and encouragement. Eighty-five more managed on-course traffic, standing at intersections to protect runners and keep cars moving safely.

3

**STAFFED
START LINE**

At the finish line, it takes a small army. Ten volunteers worked the awards area. Thirteen handled finish line food. Nine supported timing. Another ten managed finish line operations and cleanup. Three staffed the start line, and we know that number needs to triple next year. Three handled bag check. Four coordinated aid station supplies, setup, and in-race support. Five managed sign pickup. Two served as treasurer and paymaster.

3

**HANDLED
BAG CHECK**

4

**IN-RACE
SUPPORT**

Every one of those roles matters. Every volunteer makes the race possible.

5

SIGN PICKUP

And that is only part of the picture. In addition to volunteers, the race directors coordinated with outstanding local partners: MidTown Print for materials, the Dunlap Champions Club for Expo space, In Tents Events for tents and infrastructure, ACME Barricades for course control, American AV LED panels at the finish line, Doodie Calls for portable toilets, the Tallahassee Police Department for safety and road closures, EMS for medical emergencies, among others. It truly takes the support of the entire community. Without law enforcement managing key intersections and helping with road closures, and EMS ready to respond, we simply could not host an event of this size safely.

2

**TREASURER &
PAYMASTER**

2

**RACE
DIRECTORS**

PRESIDENTS COLUMN CONTINUED

When you compare our \$65 half marathon entry fee to other large races, the difference is remarkable. Many major half marathons across the country charge between \$125 and \$200, depending on when you register. Some well-known urban races exceed \$200. Even mid-sized regional half marathons often land in the \$90 to \$140 range. In other words, our half marathon costs roughly half, and sometimes less than half, of what runners pay elsewhere.

How can we do that?

Because 301 volunteers show up.

Because two race directors donate roughly 1,000 hours of their time.

Because sponsors step up.

Because our community believes in this event.

The true cost of a race like this is not just measured in dollars. It is measured in early mornings, in standing at intersections for hours, in hauling water jugs, in picking up discarded cups, in staying late to make sure the last barricade is removed and the streets are cleaner than we found them. It is measured in patience, professionalism, and pride.

What makes me most proud is that we do not cut corners. The race is safe. Because someone was there immediately, a young life that would have been lost due to a medical emergency was saved. The course is clearly marked. The timing works. The finish line feels big and celebratory. The medals are meaningful. The food is plentiful. The experience is first class.

Robert and Kory have carried on the torch of something special. They, along with Geb and Tsigé last year, have handled the growth of this event from under 1,000 half marathon finishers just two years ago to nearly 2,000 this year. They have done it thoughtfully, carefully, and with excellence. And they have done it without drawing a paycheck for their leadership.

To every volunteer, whether you handed out water, marked a turn, managed traffic, served pizza, or picked up trash at the end, thank you. You made it possible for more than 2,500 runners to accomplish something hard. You made it possible for 161 young women under 20, including my daughter, to cross a finish line and feel strong and proud.



Tallahassee, FL

Gulf Winds Track Club

GRAND PRIX

All GWTC members receive points for finishing in the top 12 positions by age group for Grand Prix events. It's a fun way to compete with fellow members throughout the year.

2026 Complete Grand Prix Schedule

Date	Race	Adult	Youth
March 7	Shamrock Scurry 5K & 1M	5K	5K or 1M
March 28	Springtime 10K, 5K & 1M	10K	5K or 1M
April 4	Bowlegs 5K or 1 Mile	-	5K or 1M
April 18	Rose City 10K	10K	-
May 2	Tails and Trails 5K, 10K, and 1/2	5K, 10K, or 1/2	-
TBD	Potluck Bash 4 Miler	4M	-
July 4	Firecracker 5K	5K	5K
TBD	Breakfast on the Track	1M	1M
TBD	Miller Landing Madness 3K	-	3K
TBD	Women's Distance Festival 5K	5K	5K
September 7	Bluebird Run 5K	5K	5K
October 10	Pine Run 20K	20K	-
November 26	Turkey Trot 15K, 10K, 5K, & 1M	15K	5K or 1M
December 5	GWTC 10 & 5 MC	10M or 5M	-
December 12	Ultra 50K & 50M	50K or 50M	-
December 19	Tannenbaum 6K	6K	-

GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Get the complete 2026 standings by visiting:
<https://runsignup.com/Series/GWTCGrandPrix>

PRESIDENTS COLUMN CONTINUED

You made it possible for this race to remain accessible to students, young adults, families, and first-time runners.

That accessibility matters. When a half marathon costs \$150 or more, many young runners simply cannot afford it. At \$65, we remove a barrier. We invite the next generation into the sport. And based on what we saw this year, they are responding.

This race is not just an event on the calendar. It is a community effort. It reflects who we are as a club and as a city. It shows what can happen when skilled leaders like Robert and Kory combine vision with hard work, and when hundreds of volunteers say, "I'll help."

I am deeply grateful to them. And I am deeply grateful to all of you.

When you see someone wearing that marathon or half marathon medal, remember: behind that medal stand 301 volunteers, two extraordinary race directors, supportive vendors, our police department and EMS, and an entire running community working together.

That is something worth celebrating.

THANK YOU.



2026 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Members aged 15 and older must perform volunteer service for at least one GWTC race.

[Document your volunteer service here](https://tinyurl.com/GWTCVolunteer)

<https://tinyurl.com/GWTCVolunteer>



FEATURED FEET

BILL HILLISON

(GWTC MEMBER SINCE THE EARLY 1980S)

What motivated you to begin running?

I began running in the early 1980s. At the time, I was playing basketball for exercise, but I wasn't very good and seemed to get injured regularly. Running turned out to be a much better fit. Once I started, I became hooked—like so many runners I know. Now that I am in my 80s, I am still running—longer now, not any farther, just longer.

What benefits do you gain as a GWTC race director? I have served as co-race director of the Bowlegs Run for Scholarship since the late 1980s. The race provides a scholarship—currently averaging about \$1,000—to older returning students at FSU who demonstrate financial need. Serving in this role has been deeply rewarding. I am grateful for the opportunity to volunteer and to help the Club make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. To date, the race has funded more than 250 scholarships.

What is your fondest memory as a GWTC race participant? I have many fond memories—far too many to list—but a couple stand out.

One year at the Oak Mountain 50K, I was battling severe leg cramps as I approached the final aid station and was ready to call it a day. Inside

the tent, another runner had already dropped and was sitting with both feet soaking in the drink cooler. As I sat there drinking bottled water from the same cooler, we commiserated about the misery of quitting. After a few minutes of honest conversation, we made a pact to get back on the course. We left that tent together and struggled our way to the finish.

I haven't won many races, but at the very first 5K Deer Run in Tallahassee, the field was small and I found myself leading. I was fairly young at the time. As I rounded the final corner about 100 yards from the finish, a young girl ran toward the finish line shouting, "The winner's back—and it's an old man!"

It's moments like those—equal parts grit and humor—that have stayed with me the longest.

What advice would you give to someone training for their first 50K race? I've completed many 50Ks over the years, but I can't claim much original wisdom of my own. Most of what I know has come from mentors—too many to name—who have generously shared their experience. One who stands out is Gary Griffin. He often reminds runners, "You don't have to train fast—success in training for long races is tied to

time on your feet.” That simple idea captures the essence of ultramarathon preparation: consistency and endurance matter more than speed. He also likes to say, “Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional,” a reminder that mindset can make all the difference when the miles get long.

Another quote that resonates with me comes from Jim Fixx, the well-known running advocate: “I can’t remember why I started this race, but I am sure I will remember the reason when I finish.” That thought has carried many runners—including me—through the toughest stretches.

For a first 50K, focus on steady training, spend plenty of time on your feet, trust the process, and remember that the reason you start will be waiting for you at the finish line.

Do you have any tips for staying healthy and running longevity?

Several strategies have helped me along the way:

Surround yourself with other runners—most of my best friends are my running partners.

Stay active in both mind and body. As a Professor Emeritus from FSU, I continue to write educational materials. I also volunteer for GWTC as a chip timer and have timed more than 200 races. For my body, I continue to run an average of 30 miles per week.

Stay positive. Like most runners, I have had injuries. When they occur, I turn to other physical activities until I can return to running.



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Gulf Winds Track Club We Run This Town

Tracking the Youth Movement

Host: Mickey Moore

*Featuring: GWTC Tri-Club Members
Gabriella Passidomo Smith and Noah Ramby*



The Youth Movement Isn't Coming. It's Already Here.

If you were anywhere near the start line at the Tallahassee Marathon and Half Marathon this year, you could feel it. The energy was different. There were more college students than many of us remember seeing in years past. There were young families with kids pinned up and ready to race. There were groups of friends taking photos together before the gun went off. It didn't feel like a small pocket of younger runners sprinkled into the field.

From elementary school runners to college students training for their first half marathon, more young people are showing up, signing up, and sticking with it. And the one thing driving it all is community.

From Hating It to Owning It

Gabby Pasadomo's running story is one many people quietly relate to. She ran cross country and track in high school and hated it. At the time, it felt like something she had to do, not something she chose. Once she got to college and joined TriGators at UF, everything changed. She dove into triathlon, qualified for Worlds, and built a life around training, racing, and friendships formed through endurance sports.

However, law school changed the rhythm of her training. With less time to balance swimming and cycling, she leaned into longer distance running and eventually ultras. She's raced in places like Zion and the Grand Canyon, turning races into fun family adventures. Now, seven months pregnant, she's still running.

Building Something College Students Actually Want to Show Up To

As an FSU student, Noah was training for Ironman Texas, spending most of his time studying and training alone. He was committed, but something was missing. When he found Peak Pulse Run Club, he didn't just join. He introduced himself to the founder and offered to help build it.

Peak Pulse started in Gainesville and has since expanded to multiple locations. The Tallahassee chapter has a team of volunteers who make weekly runs happen. The runs are free and people show up because they want to. Music usually plays before and after the run. There are cold plunges and drinks. Sometimes there's volleyball or spikeball. Occasionally a Pilates instructor leads a cooldown. But ultimately, people run at whatever pace feels right, and they leave feeling better than when they arrived.

Noah describes it as lowering the barrier to entry. Running can be intimidating, especially if you're new to it. Peak Pulse tries to remove that intimidation by making it clear that pace doesn't define belonging. For many college students, especially those who aren't interested in traditional nightlife, it's a real outlet. A place to reset after exams. A place to work through stress. A place to connect.

Younger Runners Aren't Just Showing Up. They're Going Longer.

Runners between 20 and 29 now make up a significant portion of half marathon finishers nationwide. Under 18 runners are among the fastest growing registration groups in many events.

Gabby mentioned how striking it was to look around at the start line and see so many college aged runners. Years

Podcast



ago, that demographic felt smaller. Now it feels dominant in certain races. It's not unusual to see younger runners tackling half marathons, marathons, and even ultras.

Part of that likely comes from exposure. Many of these younger runners grew up seeing their parents train. They had access to youth programs. They saw running as normal. Once they step into a community where their friends are doing it too, the distances start to feel less intimidating and more like a shared challenge.

Technology Is Fueling Connection, Not Just Competition

Social media and wearable technology play a role here too. Strava groups, Instagram pages, and online communities make it easier to find a run club, see what it looks like, and imagine yourself in it before you ever show up. Peak Pulse uses social media to post updates, race sign ups, group photos, and share stories.

But what stands out is that technology isn't being used to flex pace or mileage. It's being used to invite. To say, we're here. We're doing this together. Come join us.

SMIRFs: Building Runners Before They Even Realize It

For elementary and middle school runners, Gulf Winds has been investing in that foundation for years through SMIRFs, which stands for Summer Mornings Include Running Fun. It meets at Forest Meadows Monday through Friday throughout the summer. Kids arrive just before 8:00 a.m. and finish by 9:00.

Workouts are thoughtfully designed by David Yon, who shows up every morning. Kids work on hills, strides, and speed to build strength and confidence without overwhelming them.

SMIRFS is about normalizing movement, effort, and friendship. Over the course of a summer, kids learn what it feels like to work toward something. They make friends outside of their school circles. They start to identify as runners.

From Summer Training to the Starting Line

The summer track series builds on that, offering mile focused workouts that help runners of all ages. That training culminates in Breakfast on the Track, held just before school resumes. Heats are organized by estimated finish time, and the morning ends with pancakes and breakfast right there on the track.

It's competitive, but in a supportive way. Parents cheer. Friends compare splits. It becomes a memory that sticks. The youth Grand Prix extends that encouragement across the season, recognizing young runners not only for podium finishes but for consistency and participation.

A Collaborative Future

Gulf Winds provides structure, races, mentorship, and a long term home for runners who want to stay. The youth movement isn't about replacing what Gulf Winds has always been. It's about expanding it. Welcoming new energy. Meeting younger runners where they are. Giving them a place to grow.

The next generation of runners is already here. They're just looking for a place to belong.

Listen to this full episode and future stories from our running community on the We Run This Town podcast—available on the [Gulf Winds website](#), [YouTube](#) and wherever you listen to podcasts.

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YEAR ROUND RUNNING GROUPS

Learn a lot more about
running groups by visiting
www.gulfwinds.org/training.

TUESDAY MORNING INTERVALS

Tuesday, 6:30am at Holy Comforter
Episcopal School, 2001 Fleischman Road.

TUESDAY EVENING INTERVALS

Tuesday, 6:00pm at Railroad Square (by skate
park/rattler snake)

MIDTOWN MIDWEEK MILES

Wednesday, 5:30am at Whole Foods Market

**WEDNESDAY EVENING
INTERVAL WORKOUT GROUP**

Wednesday, 5:30pm at Harriman Circle Park

OPTIMIST PARK THURSDAY NIGHT GROUP RUN

Thursday, 6pm at Optimist Park

SUNDAY AT FOREST MEADOWS TRAIL RUN

Sunday, 7:30am at
Forest Meadows Tennis Complex

REFLECTION TRAIL RUN

Every Sunday EXCEPT for the last
Sunday of the month. Tom Brown's Lafayette
Heritage Trail (501 Easterwood Dr). Meet at
the West Cadillac Trailhead signpost.



Months of preparation. 2,994 registrants. One unforgettable weekend.

The Bank of America Tallahassee Marathon and Half Marathon had record finishers with 380 marathon finishers and 1988 half marathon finishers from 33 states. Race Co-Directors Robert and Kory Skrob led the event for GWTC, months of preparation and building toward one full weekend of racing, cheering, and community.

When it was all over, what stood out most were the moments at the finish line.

“The smiles of the finishers as they crossed, and the ringing of the bell for first time finishers or those who achieved a PR, stands out the most,” Kory said. “We loved taking brief moments to step back and watch the pride on the faces of loved ones as runners came through.”

From the early finishers to those grinding through the final miles, the emotion at the line was palpable. The bell ringing marked more than a time on the clock. It marked months of training, sacrifice, and commitment finally coming together.



Photo credit Left: Street Safari Photo.

Photo credit Below: Robert Skrob



They were just as struck by the volunteers.

“I was amazed at the volunteers and how excited they were and how generously they gave their time all weekend,” Kory said.

BEHIND THE SCENES

For participants, race weekend unfolds over a few intense hours. For race directors, it is the final chapter of months of work.

“The amount of time it takes to put on an event such as this,” Kory said. “I have so much more respect for race directors after having co directed this event.”

Permits, logistics, safety planning, vendor coordination, and constant communication all build toward race morning. And there is one request they hope runners will take seriously.

“Please read the website and FAQ before emailing the race director. Ninety five percent of the emails we received were answered in the FAQ. It would save the race director so much time that could be spent on more important things.”

It sounds small, but during race week, that time matters.

SEEING IT ALL COME TOGETHER

After the winners of the marathon had come in and many of the half marathoners were already celebrating with loved ones, while marathoners were still making their way down the final stretch, Kory said she and Robert looked at each other and thought:

“We are pulling this off.”

It was not just about numbers. It was about flow. Safety. Energy. Volunteers in position. Runners moving smoothly through the course. A finish line that felt big.

POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS

If there is one answer to how the Tallahassee Marathon happens each year, it is volunteers.

“None of this is possible without the amazing volunteers from the beginning of the planning stages to the last trash bag being thrown away at the finish line,” Kory said. “I think we had close to 200 volunteers total covering all aspects of the race and the race is only successful because of volunteers.”



Photo credit: Karen Moore via Facebook

WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER

When the final runner crossed and the finish line began to quiet down, one word came to mind.

“Gratitude. Grateful for the amazing weather we were blessed with, grateful for the incredible volunteers who gave their time over the weekend, and grateful that we had very few incidents and that participants and spectators were safe.”

The Tallahassee Marathon grew by 40 percent this year, a clear sign that momentum is building. More runners are showing up. More volunteers are stepping forward. More families are lining the course.

For those who have never been part of it, whether as a runner or a volunteer, the invitation remains open.

“You could do either or both. You can volunteer the day before or leading up to it and race the day of, or volunteer on race day and experience the joy and excitement the runners bring.”

Race weekend may last only a few days, but the effort behind it and the impact it leaves stretch much further.

And somewhere between the first bell and the last barricade being packed away, Tallahassee proved again that this race is more than an event.

It is a community effort.

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FEATURED FEET



LISA VICKERS

What do you attribute your new running success to?

It's probably the first thing you mentioned more than anything. I aged up! Now that I am 60, in a lot of trail races, I am the "age group." Trail racing definitely attracts a younger crowd especially for women. I am in awe of our amazing 60+ women here in Tallahassee like Nancy Proctor, Kelley Coe El-Urfali and Brigit Maier-Katkin just to name a few. I am definitely running stronger than I have in years and there are two things I would attribute it to. First, discovering some interesting and unexpected things about my health and second, actually having time to train consistently.

What did you discover about your health?

Sort of by accident I discovered I was insulin resistant. I had a friend who was pre-diabetic and having to do daily finger pricks to test his blood sugar level. I suggested we both try the new wearable continuous glucose monitors. They were recently deregulated and you no longer need a prescription to get one. I didn't expect mine to reveal anything. I just thought it would be an interesting experiment and a great way to support my friend. I never had an unusual blood test or anything that would have suggested a problem.

What did you learn from wearing a Continuous Glucose Monitor?

It really is like having a little window to peak into your body. As I said, I never had a fasting blood test that indicated that my blood glucose was out of range, but when I

started monitoring it in real time, I could see that when I ate carbohydrates my blood glucose level would skyrocket and it would stay up for hours. I started reading more about blood glucose and learned these spikes and prolonged periods of high blood glucose were not normal and probably a result of my body being insulin resistant. There are some really great books that tell you about the impact of elevated glucose levels on the body and how to better control them through diet and exercise. So, I changed the way I was eating and the timing of my exercise to keep my blood glucose levels within an optimal range. Some of it was what I ate but a lot of it was how I ate. The order in which I ate food, what I did after I ate. I eat more now than I did before I started monitoring my glucose.

What impact did the changes to your diet have on running performance?

The changes impacted my health overall. Many of the nagging things I (and doctors) attributed to being post-menopausal began to change. Over the course of 8 months, I lost 25lbs. It wasn't even weight I thought I really needed to lose; it was just those pesky extra pounds around my mid-section that never seemed to go away no matter how little I ate. They disappeared once I started eating differently. I stopped waking up multiple times during the night to go to the bathroom, so I was getting better sleep. When I did get up, the achy joint pain I had disappeared, and probably the biggest one for me, I stopped getting migraines two or three

Join us for the St. Marks Duathlon on March 15, 2026

hosted by the Gulf Winds Triathlon Club!

This beginner friendly race features a flat and fast 5K run, 20K bike, and 2.5K run through beautiful St. Marks. It is the perfect early season test for experienced athletes and a welcoming first race for newcomers to multisport.

Prefer to race as a team or ride your mountain bike? Relay and fat tire divisions are available.

Not racing? We would love to have you as a volunteer. From course support to transition area help, volunteers play a key role in making this event safe and successful. It is also a great way to earn Grand Prix volunteer credit while supporting your fellow athletes.

The race begins at 8:00 am. Optional packet pickup will be held Saturday, March 14 from 3:00 to 6:00 pm at Bluewater Vitality, 2557 Barrington Circle, Suite 1, Tallahassee. Race morning check in opens at 7:00 am for those who prefer same day pickup.

Proceeds from the event support the Gulf Winds Triathletes. The St. Marks Duathlon is a USA Triathlon sanctioned race. All participants must hold a USA Triathlon membership or purchase a one day license.

More info + register online at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/SaintMarks/TheStMarksDuathlon>

OR scan the QR code:



**ST.
MARKS
DUATHLON**

Questions? Email
duathlon.stmarks@gmail.com

FEATURED FEET, LISA VICKERS CONTINUED

times a month. Sleeping better and just generally feeling better made running so much easier and suddenly fun again.

Most runners adopt diets based on food types to enhance their performance, e.g., high protein vs high carbohydrates, carnivore vs plant-based, etc. What did you discover about your blood sugar might be the key to better performance and health?

I listen to my body. If I keep my blood sugar levels mostly within an optimal range (yes occasionally I have a cookie or a piece of cake and watch that good old spike go right up) I am going to feel better. This means I'm eating a lot of protein but I'm not afraid of carbohydrates. Carbs are in all plant food, and your body needs glucose but choosing broccoli or an apple that has fiber and slows down the absorption of the carbohydrates in the food makes me feel a lot better than candy or a cookie. When you do get those spikes, insulin inevitably kicks in to bring the spikes down and when it crashes, so do you. Once I tuned into what was happening in my body, I could really feel it. Lots of spikes in a day or high blood glucose levels before bedtime always equal a bad night of sleep and low energy for me.

What has surprised you the most in your research on the role of blood sugar levels in overall health and fitness?

When I first started wearing the monitor I saw my blood sugar level spiking when I did a hard run or a high intensity workout even if I had nothing to eat. The harder the workout the bigger the spike! This made no sense to me until I read that when your muscles need glucose during a workout and when there is no glucose readily available in your blood stream, your body pulls stored glucose from the liver (and other places) into your blood

for use by your muscles. Our bodies are so smart!! Our livers are literally a glucose reservoir but it's important not to overfill that reservoir.

Are there any foods/drinks you have completely eliminated from your diet?

No, I haven't eliminated anything from my diet, but I definitely have changed the proportion of what I eat and the order in which I eat food. I eat a lot more high fiber vegetables and fruits (broccoli, spinach, blueberries, apples, dates). I eat a lot of protein from meat and especially nuts. I eat a lot of healthy fats from cheese and avocado. If I am going to eat a high carbohydrate (low fiber) food like bread or a dessert I make sure I eat high fiber foods first to slow down the absorption of the glucose or I add vinegar to my salad or vegetable which also helps or I take a walk immediately after eating something sugary so my muscles can use up the glucose. The monitor is real-time accountability, so it definitely affects my choices.

Another weird thing I learned is that if you cook, refrigerate and re-heat potatoes and rice before you eat them, the starch in them becomes "resistant starch" and is not easily absorbed by your body. This is a cool trick I learned from one of the books I read, and I can literally tell if a french-fry in a restaurant was made from fresh potatoes (spike) vs. cooked, frozen and then fried (little spike) by what happens to my blood glucose level after I eat them.

What type of nutrition do you take in before and during a long run (anything over 8 miles)? This has been a little hard for me since I typically like to run on an empty stomach but of course that is not a good idea for longer distances. Your

FEATURED FEET, LISA VICKERS CONTINUED

muscles (and your brain) need glucose to function, and your body only has so much stored glycogen to give up for their use. For the Forgotten Florida 50 miler I ate a microwaved potato about an hour before the race to make sure I had glucose readily available in my system when I started. I drank Liquid IV and Gatorade along with water - continuously just listening to my body sipping one or the other all day. I also ate 200-300 calories an hour from things like bananas, baby food pouches, salty snacks, bacon (yes bacon!) and candy at the aid stations. This is pretty much how I trained on runs longer than 20 miles prior to race day. I ran/walked a 13:30 pace over 11 hours and fifteen minutes. The glucose you consume while exercising gets used up pretty quickly by your muscles. I learned this while doing long distance hiking. I could eat my favorite candy (nerds) while hiking and never spiking.

If you could convince someone reading this to change one thing about their diet to improve their running fitness, what would it be? I would encourage them to do a little reading about glucose and how you can change the way you eat (not necessarily what you eat). Having said that, you can't do much research without quickly coming to the realization that highly processed foods are just really bad, in terms of overloading our bodies with glucose. Our bodies do an amazing job of trying to regulate this by releasing insulin, but too much of that wears our bodies out and if you are like me, you become insulin resistant. Headaches, lack of sleep, stubborn weight gain, frequent urination were warning signs my body was giving me that my system was under stress.

You mentioned there were two things that you attributed to your running success. The second was time to train consistently.

Anything you want to mention about this? I have always loved running. I usually fit it in when I could while I was working, just doing the bare minimum to prepare for whatever I signed up for. I did the Ironman twice and trained just enough both times to finish under the 17-hour cutoff. I definitely got my money's worth out of those races! My mother passed away in June at the age of 96. In the days before her passing I told her I was going to try to run a 50-mile race and as was typical of her she looked at me like I was crazy. She then told me she wished she had exercised more. (Really, 96 is pretty amazing!) After she passed, I suddenly had this void in my life. Time that I had spent caregiving was now empty and I knew it wouldn't take long for life to fill it in. I downloaded a beginner training plan for running a 50-mile race and I treated the mileage on that plan like my new job. The long hours on the trails not only made my body stronger but they gave me time alone with my thoughts to process my grief. I honestly looked forward to every run knowing it was the place I could think without interruption about everything and everyone important in my life; my mom, my kids and grandkids, friends I've lost, friends who trained with me and most importantly my husband who is patient, encouraging and supports me in all my crazy endeavors (like running 50 miles!). So mostly just thinking about how lucky I am. I ran 132.5 miles in November, 195 in December and 215.4 in January and honestly, I felt great for every mile.

2026 GWTC SPRINGTIME 10K TRAINING GROUP

February 3rd - March 24th
Tuesdays at 6:00 pm
Myers Park, 904 Myers Park Drive
(by the Picnic Pavilion overlooking the pool)

Join our supportive training group to prepare
for the Springtime 10K on March 28, 2026!

Pace groups will be available based on participant needs.

Training kicks off with a 2 mile run and increases weekly.

Routes will be available on the GWTC Group Runs Facebook
page and in the RunGo app.

For additional information or to volunteer contact:
Lauryn Boyette at gressell16@gmail.com
Michelle Comeaux at michellecomeaux10@gmail.com

Visit www.gulfwinds.org to complete the "GWTC Training Groups
Waiver" under the Training section. Consider joining the club or
renewing membership while visiting the site!

Visit www.springtime10k.com to sign up for the race!



TALLAHASSEE HALF MARATHON WINNERS



SEM SULTANOV
JACKSONVILLE, FL
1:08:20



ANNA BUSBY
CHARLOTTE, NC
1:27:25