

Their endurance is tested lastly with 4 “Doug” stride (100m sprints) named after assistant Coach Doug; affectionately known as the robot. They end their daily work out with the favorite team building exercise affectionately known as synchronized swimming (land stretching) accented by 150 butterfly kicks lead by team captain Brock Guzman & Julian Ramirez. During this time, Coach White zealously yells out during the last 20 butterfly kicks: “Who’s going to mail it in” hinting that failure is not an option while watching out for any “Lance Armstrong”; bicycling instead of straight legs. This is when Coach White gets to take some solace in watching the team devour their workout.

Coach White is his own words:

1. How long have you coached

**This is my 6th year coaching Cross Country. I have also been Coaching for the Track Team for 6 years.**

2. What is the demographics of the team...boys/girls, freshmen/senior, etc...

**Currently we have 33 kids on the team. About 19 boys and 14 girls. We have a large number of Freshmen which presents an opportunity to build a great team for the future.**

3. What are the average 5 k run times for the team

**Our top Boys run around 18 minutes at the beginning of the year. Girls Run 22 – 23 minutes.**

4. What drives you to coach Cross Country

**Initially my love of running and Cross Country is what drew me to Cross Country. That still is a strong motivation but now I greatly enjoy seeing the impact that running can have on a kids life.**

5. What motivates this team?

**This is a special team. They are not satisfied with doing things ok. They want to be the best they can be and are willing to make sacrifices to achieve their goals.**

6. What attributes do you see in this team?

**This team understands that the team is greater than the individual. They are always asking for ways to make the team better.**

7. Is Cross country a Team Sport or an Individual Sport.

**There are team goals and awards in Cross Country but most great runners derive more sense of accomplishment from team achievements.**

In their first invitational race of the year, XCursion, “both boys and girls set KWHs team time records for the Golf Course which is a great accomplishment” according to Coach White. Coach expressed great enthusiasm when asked about the team’s prospects for this year: “the team has a real possibility in advancing to the State Finals if they stay focused and keep improving”. The coach has promised all of us that the practices are going to get much tougher day by day, week by week until the team has the State Finals in their grabs.

Quite honestly, I started this venture hoping to spend some quality time with my daughter, improve upon my personal running times and maybe encourage young athletes from my experience as a NCAA tennis player. But I quickly found myself on the other side of this mentoring process; this group of mature and highly motivated students/athletes inspires me! Their love for this sport fortified by their coach dedication re-energized my 45+ year old competitive spirit.

**Spartan Race “The Beast” in Killington, VT, A thirteen mile uber obstacle race. Sheri Golden with Kelley Valle**



My coach once told me “One key to any race is to get comfortable being uncomfortable”.

He was right. Kelley Valle and I started the race on a crisp fall morning on the slopes of Killington Ski Resort. Hmmm...ski resort. Not just hills, but a very steep mountain. The cannon fired, and we ran the first 50 yards in the fake canned smoke, designed for drama, but just kinda smelled bad. The grass was wet and I thought “Oh no, my shoes are going to get wet”, and I then remembered what race I was in....and my next thought was “How much longer are my shoes going to be dry?”.

In about 90 seconds, the bomb bay doors on our cozy comfort zone sprung open and we were jettisoned into the great wide open of cold, wet, mud, steep trails, ice cold water, fire and more. The uncomfortable zone had arrived and it was ready to welcome us. The undulating mud trenches with waist deep water solved the dry shoe mystery. The next eight hours were spent covering a mere 13 miles. Yep, 13 miles, eight hours.

We Florida racers tend to think of our mileage on a strictly horizontal plane and straight line. None were present. We spent perhaps two hours on a “chain-gang dirt ladder”. Imagine a string of racers in single file going straight up an incredible narrow passage that in no way resembled a trail. At times, it was so steep that you had to use your hands to make progress towards the summit. Rocks and roots were your footholds. When you finally reached the summit, a nice rope climb awaited you. The descent down the “dirt ladder” was even slower—mud turned the trail into an evil slip and slide. Every tree, root and rock was a hand hold to check your balance and to take a tiny load off of your barking quads and squawking knees.

We Florida racers also take for granted that a swim will be in clear warm waters.

None were present. Fall in Vermont makes for very cold swims. Being fully dressed and wearing a back pack doesn’t make it easier. BOTH of the swims were not pleasant—nor were they short. The water was cold, muddy and deep. And now you and all of your gear are completely wet. And just so you know, ZIP LOCK BAGGIES DO NOT KEEP YOUR STUFF DRY!! We both lost our cache of E-caps to the mean Vermont waters. And that was bad news.

In our back packs, we carried water, food, a required head lamp, two glow sticks, gloves, basic first aid needs and a few other items. This race was UNSUPPORTED. No one there handing you Gatorade and Gu, no one there smiling and waving you in the correct direction. No one there to give you a band aid or Vaseline. In fact, if you had any outside assistance, it was cause for DQ. You could receive aid from other racers, and that was it. The course was relatively well marked (during daylight hours) and you had to pay attention. There were many racers who got off course—they arrived at an obstacle way too early—and their option was to quit or start over. They started over.

We crawled under barbed wire, through mud, uphill. We carried a sandbag up the mountain and down again. We dragged concrete blocks up and down a gravel trail. We dragged a sled full of concrete that was attached to skis in a big circle—burning wood piles dotted this course, the resulting smoke made it worse.

Each obstacle that you failed required thirty burpees as restitution. There were two rope climbs, uneven monkey bars, climbing walls, a spear throw, a memory challenge, wicked climbs, tricky descents, a Tyrolean Traverse (look it up on their website), cargo net climbs, log hops (two varieties), walls to climb, walls to roll under, walls to go through, fire to jump over and Spartans waiting to take a whack at you at the finish line, just to name a few. The worst one was a tarzan rope traverse under a bridge. You had to swim to a rope ladder, climb the rope ladder, then tarzan swing on short ropes to ring a bell, drop off about 10 feet into the water and swim ashore. We did burpees like everyone else. We never saw anyone complete this obstacle.

We loved it. It was messy, it required you think, and we learned that being uncomfortable has many, many levels. Here are a few other things we learned, in case you were considering a race like this:

1. Bring more food than you need. We gave some away to a fading comrade.
2. Make damn sure that what you want to stay dry stays dry. Do your homework.
3. DARKNESS IS NOT YOUR FRIEND.
4. Mud is very slick.
5. Yes, you can pee in extremely cold water. No, no one really cares.
6. Take the flotation device every time it is offered. It helps keep you warm and counterbalances your back pack.
7. Bring gloves. Use gloves.

These races are challenging and fun, but maybe not for everyone. The conditions and demands were constantly changing. There are NO race fans lining the road to cheer you on. You will get dirty. I am talking “like a three year old with no supervision” dirty. Don’t bring anything with you that you plan on keeping. Finishing the race with all the gear you started with is just a bonus. If you wear a watch or GPS device, you may not be able to read it after the race, as the face of it will have a roadmap of scratches. You will have bruises in some of the weirdest places. And the Vermont mud will stay imbedded in your toenails much longer than you can imagine. This is Ironman meets MMA with a bit of “Survivor” thrown in for giggles.

Kelley and I ended our race after the first eight hour lap. We had six hours in which to complete a second lap, but we were pretty sure we were not going to go two hours faster in the dark. Crazy, yes...dumb, well, not this time. We scored a t-shirt and medal and called it a day. Later that evening, the rain started—and eventually the entire course was closed down. Less than half of the 400 racers finished the two lap Ultra Beast.

Send your stories for next month by November 1<sup>st</sup> to [don.n@juno.com](mailto:don.n@juno.com)

KWSR’s weekly group training run schedule is as follows:

Start Times and places have changed please note.

Mondays: 6 am / Green Parrot Bar / 3 miles easy pace (9:30-10:30/miles)

Tuesdays: 6 am / White Street Pier / 5 mile tempo run (mile slow, mile faster, mile slow, etc.)

Wednesdays: 6 am, White Street Pier / 5 mile. 6 pm / KW High School Track / Speed and form workout

Thursdays: 6 am / 5 mile run.

Fridays: 6 am / Green Parrot Bar / 3 miles easy pace (9:30-10:30/miles)

Saturdays: 7 am / White Street Pier / 4 mile social run up the beach and back / breakfast afterwards (non-race Saturdays)

Sundays: 7:30 am / White Street Pier / 10+ miles long slow distance run

Sundays: 7:30 am/ Big Pine Key Win Dixie Parking lot, 3.5-9.3 miles Group Run.

Call Don for Big Pine Key Run Info 305-304-0091

If you have any questions about the group runs, please e-mail Dedra at: [dr.dedraling@gmail.com](mailto:dr.dedraling@gmail.com). The schedule is also always posted on the KWSR website as well. All runners are always welcome to join us any morning.

**Check out Pictures and applications online from the [www.southernmostrunners.com](http://www.southernmostrunners.com) web site, all applications are in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. Race results from all our events are posted promptly.**

**Remember all memberships are now good for 1 year from the date you joined, Check on the website to see when you last paid or call me at 305-745-3027**

**Run On, Don**