

Welcome to the 16th annual Wayne County Challenge end of season celebration. I'm Brian Schleeper, race director of the IU East Run with the Wolves 5K. Tonight we'll give out awards for overall and age group performances and to another large group of people who completed all seven races of the series. While we're here tonight to recognize accomplishments from 2018 I also want to mention that the schedule for 2019 is set and there were schedule cards on your tables which you're encouraged to take. We hope you'll take advantage of the Carpe Viam special which allows you to enter all eight series races at once, at a discounted rate. This year the program is available again for \$130, a savings of \$30 over the course of the year on pre-registration rates and \$70 off day of registration prices. Signing up for Carpe Viam also insures that you get a shirt or other swag from each race. Online registration for the Carpe Viam special and season opening Girls Inc. 5K are now open by going to the WCC website, wcchallenge.org.

2018 was another excellent season for the Wayne County Challenge and a year of firsts. We have 18 first time winners, over half of the people who'll come up to the stage. A record for overall titles and our first season with only seven races after the IU East Run With the Wolves had to be cancelled, our first such occurrence is sixteen years. But as they say the more things change the more they stay the same as we also had the same overall champions in both the men's and women's divisions, for the fourth straight season.

While we're here to give out awards and recognize some talented athletes I would also like to acknowledge the impact participation in WCC events has on our community. Your participation in each event helps provide much needed funds for the nonprofit organizations who put on each race.

The WCC is a win-win for all of you who run or walk in each race as you improve your overall health, as well as the groups who put them on. We're thankful for your participation and the positive impact it has on our community. So we would like to thank all of you for supporting the WCC and these organizations.

Now i'd like to have the remaining race directors stand and be recognized for all their hard work:

Patrick Ripberger-Girls Inc. 5K: benefitting Girls Incorporated

Rick Duncan – Fireworks 5K : benefitting the Richmond American Legion Post 65

Paula Wilson & Amanda Nocton – Heartbreak Hill 5K : benefitting Hagerstown High School Athletics

Beth Newton – Flying Eagles 5K : benefitting the Western Wayne Elementary PTO

Keith Morey – Fall Foliage 5K/10K : benefitting Cope Environmental Center

Mike Day -Turkey Chase 7K : benefitting the Centerville High School Athletic Department

Ashley Miller-Rosemary Weigel Frostbite 5K : benefitting the Richmond Parks Dept.

Additionally I want to acknowledge the other members of the Wayne County Challenge committee: Pat Bowers – Treasurer, Nicole Andreas-at large member and Ashley Stephens, chair.

Finally I'd like to thank our series sponsor Whitewater Valley Rehabilitation. We're incredibly grateful for their support of the WCC and our mission to help people become more active through our events and appreciate having them on board again in 2019.

Before we get to our overall and age group award winners I want to announce the "Runner's Choice" award winners as voted upon by all of you. Thanks to everyone who voted.

Best Swag-three way tie: IU East Run With the Wolves 5K, Fall Foliage 5K, Frostbite 5K

Most Challenging Course-Heartbreak Hill 5K

Easiest Course-Girls Inc. 5K

Worst Weather-Turkey Chase 7K

Most Fun Course-Fall Foliage 5K

Best PR Course-Flying Eagle 5K

Best Awards-Frostbite 5K

Best Overall Race-Fireworks 5K

Now let's move to the awards. Winners please come up when your name is called, we'll start with the overall awards first.

The third place overall female is Britni Gettinger. Britni has run every race since she started with the WCC in 2013, five seasons straight. She finished third overall in 2015 and 2016 and takes the honor again for the third time. Her best performance of the year came at the Flying Eagle 5K where she was the second overall female.

Congratulations Britni.

The second place overall female is Kathy Shelley. Kathy won her age group in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017. The one year she wasn't age group champion, 2015, she finished as the third overall female. Kathy has run every WCC race for seven straight years and in 2018 had four age group wins, three third place overall and one second place overall finishes. Congratulations Kathy.

This year's overall female winner is Chelsea Halderman. Chelsea missed only her third race in six years when she didn't run the Fall Foliage 5K. That didn't stop her from taking the top female spot for the fourth straight year after finishing second overall in 2013 and 2014. She won five of the six races she ran in 2018 and finished second at the other, the Frostbite 5K. She now has the second most overall titles in the women's division. Congratulations to four time, defending women's overall champion Chelsea Halderman.

The third place overall male finisher is Jorge Avila Ramirez.

Jorge ran two WCC races in 2015 and has run every one since. He finished second in his division in 2016 and third in 2017. In 2018 he finished second in his age group twice, took the top spot four times and was the overall winner at the Flying Eagle 5K.

Congratulations to first time winner Jorge Avila Ramirez.

The second place overall male finisher is Parker Jaynes. Parker ran his first WCC race in 2010 when he was nine. He has run all eight races three times and has two age group titles. In 2018 he ran six of the seven and started the year off by winning his division at the Girls Inc. 5K, Fireworks 5K and Heartbreak Hill 5K. He was first overall at the Fall Foliage 5K and Turkey Chase 7K and finished the season by placing third overall at the Frostbite 5K. Congratulations Parker.

The 2018 overall male winner is Jason Newport. Jason is no stranger to the stage as this is his fourth straight overall title and seventh total. This is the most ever in WCC history. He ran six of the seven races in 2018 placing second overall in five of them and won his age group at the other, the season ending Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to our overall male winner, four time defending and record seven time champion Jason Newport.

Now we'll move on to the age group winners.

The winner of the female nine and under age group is Addison Talbot. This was Addison's second year participating in WCC races and she took her second age group title. She competed in seven of the eight races in 2017 and all seven in 2018, winning her division in all fourteen races she's participated in. Congratulations to repeat winner Addison Talbot.

The winner of the male nine and under age group is Bryce Cordova. This was Bryce's first year running WCC races. He missed the season opening Girls Inc. 5K but ran the remaining six events and won his age group in each one. Congratulations to first time age group winner Bryce Cordova.

The winner of the female 10-12 age group is Gwenyth Falcone. Gwenyth began running WCC races in 2016 and won her division in all six races she ran as she won her age group. She did seven races in 2017 and repeated as age group winner. She participated in six of the seven in 2018, taking the top spot in her division twice, second overall at the Fall Foliage 5K and third overall at the Turkey Chase 7K. Congratulations to three time defending age group winner Gwenyth Falcone.

The winner of the male 10-12 age group is Brayden Lee. This is Brayden's second straight age group win after completing all eight races in 2017 and taking the top spot. He ran six of the seven races in 2018 finishing second in his division twice and first the other four times. Congratulations to repeat winner Brayden Lee.

The winner of the female 13-15 age group is Jewels Warfel. Jewels began her WCC career in 2017 when she ran the Fireworks 5K. She ran six of the seven events in 2018 placing in the top three of her division in five of them and finishing as the top overall female at the Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Jewels Warfel.

The winner of the male 13-15 age group is Gavin Newton. Gavin ran three WCC races in 2017 and six of the seven in 2018. He placed in the top five in each including a division win at the Fall Foliage 5K. He won the group by nine points, the closest men's division. Congratulations to first time winner Gavin Newton.

The winner of the female 16-18 age group is Jenna Shelley. Jenna missed her first race in six years but that didn't stop her from winning her fifth age group title. She won the 10-12 division in 2013, the 13-15 group in 2015 and 2016 and now wins the 16-18 group for the second straight year. She had four age group wins and finished as the third overall female at the Flying Eagle 5K. Congratulations to five time winner Jenna Shelley

The winner of the male 16-18 age group is Aaron Lake. Aaron ran six of the seven races placing third in his division twice, second twice and third overall at the Fall Foliage 5K and Turkey Chase 7K. Congratulations to first time age group winner Aaron Lake.

There was no winner of the female 19-24 age group because no one ran the required five races in this division.

The winner of the male 19-24 age group is Bennett Ritchie. This was Bennett's first year competing in WCC races and he did six of the seven missing only the season opening Girls Inc. 5K. He finished in the top four of his age group in each race including three division wins. Congratulations to first time winner Bennett Ritchie.

The winner of the female 25-29 age group is Lindsay Crawford. Lindsay ran all seven races finishing second in her division five times and first the other two. Congratulations to first time winner Lindsay Crawford.

The winner of the male 25-29 age group is Rhett Harkelroad. Rhett ran all seven races and placed in the top three of the age group in each one. He had two third place finishes, two second place finishes and three division wins. Congratulations to first time age group champion Rhett Harkelroad.

The winner of the female 30-34 age group is Angela Powell Ramirez. Angela began her WCC career in 2015 when she ran two races. She did all eight in 2016 when she finished second in her division and again ran every race in 2017. She did all seven in 2018 finishing in the top six of her age group in each one. She won the division by eight points, the closest women's group. Congratulations to first time winner Angela Powell Ramirez.

The winner of the male 30-34 age group is Duane Chew. Duane ran all seven races placing in the top three in each one. He was third once, second twice and took the top spot in the other four races. Congratulations to first time winner Duane Chew.

The winner of the female 35-39 age group is Elisha Frazier. Elisha did all seven races and finished in the top four in her division in every race. She was fourth once, third once, second four times and won the age group at the Flying Eagle 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Elisha Frazier.

The winner of the male 35-39 age group is Mike France. Mike ran all seven races and had his best finish at the Fall Foliage 5K where he was third in the division. Congratulations to first time age group winner Mike France.

The winner of the female 40-44 age group is Sarah Clifton. Sarah competed in all seven races and finished no worse than fifth in her age group, including two category wins at the Flying Eagle 5K and Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Sarah Clifton.

The winner of the 40-44 male age group is Brian Green. This is Brian's second age group title after also winning it in 2016. He was the third overall male in 2017, a spot he tied for in 2018, losing out on a tiebreaker. He completed every race for the sixth straight year, winning his age group at each one but the Flying Eagle 5K where he was third overall male. Congratulations to two time age group winner Brian Green.

The winner of the female 45-49 age group is Lianne Warner. Lianne ran all seven races finishing second in her division at the first three before closing out the season by winning the group at the final four. This is her first age group title after placing second in 2017. Congratulations to first time winner Lianne Warner.

The winner of the male 45-49 age group is George Sowers Jr. This is George's second age group win after also taking the top spot in 2016. He ran every race for the sixth straight year and finished second in his division twice. Congratulations to two time winner George Sowers Jr.

The winner of the female 50-54 age group is Brenda Baumer. This is Brenda's third age group title but first since winning in 2009 and 2010. Last year she ran all seven races finishing in the top five at each one including a win at the Fall Foliage 5K. This was the sixth time she's run every race. Congratulations to three time winner Brenda Baumer.

The winner of the male 50-54 age group is Jeff Fields. Jeff ran all seven races placing in the top four of his age group in every one, including five division wins. Congratulations to first time winner Jeff Fields.

The winner of the female 55-59 age group is Sabrena Bartram. Sabrena ran every race for the fifth time as she took her fifth age group title and fourth straight. She finished second in her division three times and won the group the other four. Congratulations to five time winner Sabrena Bartram.

The winner of the male 55-59 age group is Thomas Ropp. Thomas began his WCC career by running three races in 2014. He hasn't missed one since and has finished as high as third in his division before taking the crown in 2018. He had his best race of the season at the Fall Foliage 5K where he finished second in his age group. Congratulations to first time winner Thomas Ropp.

The winner of the female 60-64 age group is Sarah Geise. This is Sarah's fourth age group title after also winning in 2010, 2011 and 2016. She ran every race for the sixth time finishing in the top three at six races including an age group win at the season ending Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to four time winner Sarah Geise.

The winner of the male 60-64 age group is Richard Chew. Richard ran every race for the fourth time and this is his second straight age group title and the second straight season he won his division in each race. Congratulations to two time age group winner Richard Chew.

The winner of the female 65-69 award is Geri Schick. This was Geri's first age group title after finishing second in 2017. She completed every race for the second straight year and had four age group wins. Congratulations to first time winner Geri Schick.

The winner of the male 65-69 age group is Don Benzinger. Don began running WCC races in 2013 and has run every one for six straight years. He finished third in his age group four years in a row from 2013-2016 before finally taking the top spot in 2018. Congratulations to first time age group winner Don Benzinger.

The winner of the female 70 and over age group is Pat Bowers. Pat has won her age group every season since 2008, eleven straight years. This also extends her WCC record for age group wins, which she set last year. She once again won her division at every race, in fact the last time Pat was beat by someone in her age group was at the 2012 Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to eleven time, defending age group champion Pat Bowers.

The winner of the male 70 and over age group is Gene Black. This is Gene's tenth age group title, the most by any man in WCC history and only second overall to, well, Pat Bowers. Gene won his division the first eight years the WCC existed, from 2003-2010. He finished second in 2011 before retaking the crown in 2012. He completed every race in 2018 for the sixth time and won his age group five times. Congratulations to ten time age group winner Gene Black.

In case anyone was keeping track that's a total of twenty one age group titles between the last two people who were up.

Let's congratulate all of our age group and overall winners one more time. Many of the winners who were just up here completed all seven races. 75% of the age group and overall champions completed each event this year. The mission of the WCC is, in part, ***to encourage and reward the participation of all types and ages of runners.*** In a moment we will give out awards to the 73 individuals who participated in all seven races, many of whom will be making their second trip up.

But first we do have one more individual award to give out to our most improved runner. This award goes to the individual who shows the highest degree of race improvement over the course of the season.

This year's winner is Bennett Ritchie. Bennett was already honored for winning the men's 19-24 age group in his inaugural year of doing WCC races. Bennett missed the season opening Girls Inc. 5K but ran the Fireworks 5K in a time of 28:17. He did the remaining five events, dropping his time to 22:10 at the season ending Frostbite 5K, an improvement of over six minutes on essentially the same course. Congratulations to the 2018 Wayne County Challenge most improved runner Bennett Ritchie.

There's no award for this particular honor but we do like to recognize the holder of the longest race streak. For the 13th season in a row Judy Pierce ran every race, continuing her streak which began with the 2006 season. This means Judy has completed 103 races straight. Not only is this the longest current race streak, it's the longest streak ever for the WCC. Congratulations Judy, please stand to be recognized.

We'll now present certificates and shirts to the runners who completed all 7 races this season. We appreciate the support these 73 have shown to the WCC and the organizations that put on and benefit from each race. Congratulations to each of you. Please come forward when your name is called to receive your awards and please remain on the stage so we can take a group photograph.

Thank you again for attending tonight's event and your support of the Wayne County Challenge and its member organizations. We look forward to our 17th year and the season opening Girls Inc. 5K, Saturday May 11. Remember online registration for this race and the Carpe Viam program is now open on the WCC website wcchallenge.org