

Welcome to the 17th 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're here to honor the overall and age winners from the 2019 season and to recognize everyone who completed all eight races of the series. While we're here tonight to look back on the 2019 season we also want to mention that the schedule for 2020 is set and there were schedule cards on your tables which you're encouraged to take and share. We are once again offering 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. In 2020 we're offering a new Youth Carpe Viam package for \$100 for anyone fifteen or under. We hope this will encourage more youth to participate in more events.

Signing up for the Carpe Viam program insures that you get a shirt or other swag from each race. Online registration for both Carpe Viam specials is now open by going to the WCC website, wcchallenge.org.

There will be one other significant addition to the series this year. We are happy to announce the modification of our age group categories to include a new 75 and above group for both men and women.

This is in response to increased participation in these age groups and our desire to offer recognition of these individuals.

The 17th season of the Wayne County Challenge was another excellent year and as usual we had some firsts. We have 17 first time winners, almost half of the people who'll come up to the stage. We also had the continuation of some impressive streaks. This is usually the point in this speech where I talk about the impact participation in WCC events has on our community. These races are all put on by local non-profit organizations who use the funds to help further their missions. And of course everyone who runs or walks gets increased health benefits which is the original intent of the WCC. But this year I'm going to share someone else's words on their reason and motivation for participating in our events and the impact it has had on them. Many of you know Dale Bolser from his years running WCC races, in fact he has been with us since our first season in 2003, when he incidentally finished as the third overall male. Dale has won numerous age group titles and completed all eight races multiple times over the years. But that's not the reason he shared with us for continuing to participate. Those of you who know Dale also know of his recent health challenges and of his continued determination, positive attitude and inspiring story. In Dale's words, and shared with his permission, these are his motivations to run.

I suppose that many of us who run have been asked (by someone who doesn't), "Why do you run? Why would you choose to 'punish' yourself in such a manner nearly every day?" Most of us would respond, "I enjoy it...." Others would mention the Thrill of "competing." Some might share the "sense of accomplishment."

Each is indeed a true statement. For me, all of these 'reasons to run' are quite true. But, when sarcoma cancer became part of my life in the fall of 2011, I learned why I run.....Really. People.....the people. Sure, medals & trophies are nice. Many though, go into a box, a drawer, or a display case. But, it's the people that make running such a gift. The WCC is about people.....who choose to 'challenge' themselves to live a healthy lifestyle through running.

In doing so, we meet new people who become our friends. We greet each other, encourage one another.....at every event. When I was unable to participate in the 2011 Frostbite 5K Run, due to chemo treatments, a friend and fellow runner took it upon himself to gather my packet and place my shirt outside the registration area for anyone to share their support. This.....is why I run.

I'm not as fast anymore, as I once was, most of my 'runs' are jog/walk efforts...the result of multiple surgeries and countless chemo treatments. But, it doesn't matter.....it's actions of 'people' such as this that makes the WCC what it is today. People, striving to be healthy & helping others to become healthier too. Each of us can make a difference. Not only in our own lives but in the lives of others as well. The WCC is about people.....helping other people. And these people.....are WHY I run."

We appreciate Dale sharing these inspiring and motivating words and we couldn't have said it better ourselves.

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 Allen – 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 Dept.

Keith Clemons-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 2020.

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-Rosemary Weigel Frostbite 5K

Most Challenging Course-Hagerstown Heartbreak Hill 5K (only 80% of vote)

Easiest Course-Flying Eagle 5K

Worst Weather-Turkey Chase 7K

Most Fun Course- Fall Foliage 5K

Best PR Course-Flying Eagle 5K

Best Awards-Rosemary Weigel Frostbite 5K

Best Overall Race-Fireworks 5K

Now let's move to on the awards. The mission of the Wayne County Challenge is to promote community health through amateur distance running. Our scoring system is designed to encourage and reward the participation of all types and ages of runners and recognizes both participation and competitive achievement. The thirty six overall and age group winners and recipients of the “Elite 8” award for completion of each event embody this mission.

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

The third place overall female is Gwyneth Falcone. Gwyneth began running WCC races in 2016 when she won the nine and under age group. She won the 10-12 division in both 2017 and 2018. In 2019 she ran seven of the eight races winning her age group twice, finishing third overall three times and second overall once. Congratulations to four time award winner and first time overall placer Gwyneth Falcone.

The second place overall female is Kathy Shelley. For the eighth straight year Kathy ran every event. During this period she has five age group titles, a third place overall and now another second place overall finish. In 2019 she took first in her age group five times, was third overall twice and second overall once. Congratulations to eight time winner and 2019 second place overall finisher Kathy Shelley.

This year's overall female winner is Chelsea Halderman. For the sixth straight season Chelsea participated in every race. In 2019 she had four overall wins, one second place overall finish and two age group victories as she took her fifth straight overall women's title. Congratulations to five time, defending women's overall champion Chelsea Halderman.

The third place overall male finisher is Duane Chew. Duane ran all eight races taking the top spot in his age group five times and second the other three. This is his second straight year winning an award after taking the top spot in the 30-34 age group in 2018, when he also ran every event. Congratulations to the third place overall male Duane Chew.

The second place overall male finisher is Brian Green. In 2019 Brian ran all eight races for the seventh straight season. In 2016 he won his age group. In 2017 he finished as the third overall male, a feat he repeated in 2018 but lost on a tiebreaker and had to settle for his second age group title. In 2019 he finished a spot higher taking the second place overall crown with five age group wins and a third place overall finish at the Flying Eagle 5K where he ran his fastest time of the year. Congratulations to four time winner and 2019 second place overall male Brian Green.

The 2019 overall male winner is Aaron Lake. Aaron began running WCC races in 2018 when he competed in six events and won his age group. In 2019 he ran seven of the eight and won his division three times and finished second overall three times. **Aaron won the overall male title by only five points, our closest margin in the overall category since our very first season in 2003.** Congratulation to the 2019 overall male winner Aaron Lake.

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

The winner of the female nine and under age group is Jordyn Wood. This was Jordyn's first year participating in WCC races and she made an impressive debut running seven of the eight races. She took second in her division twice and the top spot the other five times. Congratulations to first time winner Jordyn Wood.

The winner of the male nine and under age group is Zeke Andreas. Zeke is the youngest award winner in the history of the WCC at the age of five...in fact he was only four for the first six races of the year. This was Zeke's third year running WCC races starting with the 2017 Fall Foliage 5K. In 2019 he ran all eight finishing in the top six in his division at each race including a third place finish at the Turkey Chase. Congratulations to first time age group champion Zeke Andreas.

The winner of the female 10-12 age group is Holly Trotter. This was Holly's third season competing in WCC events and she continued improving after a third place age group finish in 2017 and second place in 2018 when she participated in every event. In 2019 she ran in seven races and volunteered at the eighth, finishing in the top three in her division at each event. Congratulations to first time age group winner Holly Trotter.

The winner of the male 10-12 age group is Brayden Lee. This was Brayden's third season of competing in WCC events and his third straight age group title. He completed all eight races for the second time finishing in the top three in his division in all eight, including two division wins. Congratulations to three time age group winner Brayden Lee.

The winner of the female 13-15 age group is Lydia Pentecost. This was Lydia's inaugural season with the WCC and she completed all eight races and had third and second place age group finishes. Congratulations to first time winner Lydia Pentecost.

The winner of the male 13-15 age group is Alan Seals. **This was the closest men's division and was decided by only nine points.** Alan ran all seven races last year as he finished third in his age group. He did each race once again finishing second in the division twice and first once. Congratulations to first time winner Alan Seals.

The winner of the female 16-18 age group is Jenna Shelley. Jenna ran in five races finishing second in the division once and first the other four. This is Jenna's sixth age group title and fifth straight. Congratulations to six time age group champion Jenna Shelley.

The winner of the male 16-18 age group is Rick Thalls. This was Rick's second year of doing WCC events after running the Girls Inc. 5K in 2018. In 2019 he completed six events as he finished second in the division twice, had one age group win and was second place overall at the Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to first time age group winner Rick Thalls.

The winner of the female 19-24 age group is Brittany Thompson. Brittany began her WCC career in 2018 when she ran three races. In 2019 she completed six and took second in her division twice and first once. Congratulations to first time winner Brittany Thompson.

The winner of the male 19-24 age group is Christopher Cassel. Christopher ran all eight races in his first season participating in WCC events placing third in the division three times and second once. Congratulations to first time winner Christopher Cassel.

The winner of the female 25-29 age group is Carmen Baxter. In 2018 Carmen ran every event and finished third in her division. In 2019 she once again did all eight finishing third once, second five times and winning the group once. Congratulations to first time winner Carmen Baxter.

The winner of the male 25-29 age group is Bennett Ritchie. 2018 was Bennett's first year with the WCC and he started off with a bang by winning his age group and being named the most improved runner. In 2019 he ran in seven races finishing second in the division once and taking the top spot the other six races. Congratulations to repeat age group champion Bennett Ritchie.

The winner of the female 30-34 age group is Anna Zimmerman. Anna finished second in this group in 2018 after doing six of the seven races. She improved to the top spot in 2019 by completing seven of the eight events, finishing second in the division five times and first the other two. Congratulations to first time winner Anna Zimmerman.

The winner of the male 30-34 age group is Garrett Singer. Garrett began running WCC races in 2007 and has finished as high as second in his age group in 2009 when he ran all eight races. He ran only five races in 2019 but made them count with two age group victories and three overall race wins. Congratulations to first time winner Garrett Singer.

The winner of the female 35-39 age group is Brittni Gettinger. Brittni began her WCC career in 2013 and has run every race all seven years. During this time she has two age group wins, three third place overall finishes and one second place overall win. In 2019 she took her third age group title by finishing first in the division five times and second overall once. Congratulations to seven time winner and three time age group champion Brittni Gettinger.

The winner of the male 35-39 age group is Aaron Ervin. Aaron began running WCC events in 2010 and has missed only two races, completing every race eight times. He took his second age group title in 2019 by finishing in the top three in the division at every race. Congratulations to two time age group winner Aaron Ervin

The winner of the female 40-44 age group is Tiffani Pentecost. This was Tiffani's first year running WCC events and she completed all eight races finishing in the top three of her division five times, including an age group win at the Frostbite 5K where she ran her fastest time of the season. Congratulations to first time winner Tiffani Pentecost.

The winner of the 40-44 male age group is Dave Snow. Dave did every race for the tenth straight year finishing first or second in his age group at every event as he took his sixth division title. Congratulations to six time age group winner Dave Snow.

The winner of the female 45-49 age group is Angela Johnson. This was Angela's third straight season completing every event. She finished second in her division in 2018 and moved up to the top spot in 2019. She placed in the top three of her age group in seven of the eight races, including a win at the Flying Eagle 5K where she had her best time of the year. Congratulations to first time winner Angela Johnson.

The winner of the male 45-49 age group is Jamie Roth. Jamie began running WCC races in 2013 and has completed every one for seven straight seasons. He finished third in his division once and second twice on the way to his first age group title. Congratulations to first time winner Jamie Roth.

The winner of the female 50-54 age group is Missy Moore. This is Missy's second age group title after winning it in 2013, her first season with the WCC when she did all eight races. She ran six in 2019 taking the division win in all six. Congratulations to two time age group winner Missy Moore.

The winner of the male 50-54 age group is Jerry Bradley. This was Jerry's third season participating in WCC races but the first that he did all eight events. He finished in the top four in his division at every race, including four age group wins. Congratulations to first time winner Jerry Bradley.

The winner of the female 55-59 age group is Sabrena Bartram. Sabrena ran all eight races for the sixth time and took her sixth age group title, and fifth straight. She finished second in the division twice and took the win at the remaining six races. Congratulations to six time age group champion Sabrena Bartram.

The winner of the male 55-59 age group is Phil Engle. This is Phil's second age group title after also taking the crown in 2015 when he ran all eight races. He did seven events in 2019 finishing third once, second twice and winning the division the other four races. Congratulations to two time winner Phil Engle.

The winner of the female 60-64 age group is Belinda Gray. In 2019 Belinda completed all eight races for the tenth straight season. She has finished in the top four in her division in each of those ten seasons and in 2019 took her fourth age group title. She finished third once, second three times and had four age group wins. Congratulations to four time age group champion Belinda Gray.

The winner of the male 60-64 age group is Rick Moore. Rick completed all eight races for the fifth time as he won his fourth age group title. In 2019 he finished in the top three in his division at every race, including two age group wins. Congratulations to four time age group winner Rick Moore.

The winner of the female 65-69 award is Geri Schick. Geri ran all eight races for the third straight year and took her second consecutive age group title. She had one second place division finish and won the group the other seven races. Congratulations to two time age group winner Geri Schick.

The winner of the male 65-69 age group is Dana Reihman. Dana began running WCC races in 2003, our very first season. He ran all eight races for the first time in 2019 and finished in the top three in the division at every race, including a win at the Heartbreak Hill 5K. Congratulations to first time age group winner Dana Reihman.

The winner of the female 70 and over age group is Pat Bowers. In 2019 Pat ran all eight races for the sixth time as she took her WCC record 12th age group title. She has won her division every year since 2008. In 2019 she won her age group at all eight races. Congratulations to twelve time, defending age group champion Pat Bowers.

The winner of the male 70 and over age group is Paul Hummel. Paul began running WCC races in 2015 and finished second in his division in 2016 when he ran all eight races. In 2019 he ran seven events and finished in the top three of his division at every one, including four age group wins. Congratulations to first time age group winner Paul Hummel.

Let's congratulate all of our age group and overall winners one more time.

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

This year's winner is Robert Taylor. Robert began his first year competing in WCC events by finishing the season opening Girls Inc. 5K in 1:06.58.

He did a total of five races over the course of the year and improved his time to 36:12 at the Flying Eagle 5K. This was an improvement of 30:46, over a half hour...very impressive. Congratulations to the 2019 Wayne County Challenge most improved runner Robert Taylor.

There's no award for this particular honor but we do like to recognize the holder of the longest race streak. For the 14th season in a row Judy Pierce ran every race, continuing her streak which began with the 2006 season. This means Judy has completed 111 races straight. In addition to being 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 8 races this season. We appreciate the dedication and support these individuals 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 18th year and the season opening Girls Inc. 5K, Saturday May 9. Remember online registration the Carpe Viam program is now open on the WCC website wcchallenge.org