

Welcome to the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 group winners from the 2021 season and to recognize everyone who completed all eight races of the series. While we're here today to look back on the 2021 season we also want to mention that the schedule for 2022 is set and there are schedule cards available 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 \$140, a savings of \$20 over the course of the year on pre-registration rates and \$60 off day of registration prices. In 2022 we're again offering a Youth Carpe Viam package for \$100 for anyone fifteen or under. We hope this will encourage more youth to participate in our 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](http://wcchallenge.org).

There will be a few changes and additions to the series in 2022. We are happy to announce the modification of our age group categories to include new 75-79 and 80 and above groups for both men and women. We're excited to add these new categories in response to increased participation in these age groups and our desire to offer recognition of these individuals.

The 18th season of the Wayne County Challenge was another excellent year and as usual we had some firsts. We have 13 first time winners, nearly half of the people who'll be recognized. We also had the continuation of some impressive streaks. Finally, we're excited to introduce a new award that we'll give out today

Now i'd like to recognize the remaining race directors for all their hard work:

**Melissa Soper** - 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

**Sean Andreas**– 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 recognize the other members of the Wayne County Challenge committee. Keith Morey is handing over the race directing duties for the Fall Foliage 5K/10K but will continue as an at large member of the group and part of the timing team. We also want to honor several members of the group who will be ending their service to the committee.

Ashley Stephen has been the chair of the WCC since 2015 and is turning this role over to Sean Andreas after seven years leading the group. Ashley will continue as the lead Timer.

Pat Bowers has served as the organization's Treasurer for many years and is stepping down from this position after nineteen years. We greatly appreciate the leadership both Ashley and Pat have provided and are very thankful for the many ways they have supported and helped grow the WCC in their time on the committee.

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 2022.

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 34 overall and age group winners and nearly fifty recipients of the "Elite 8" award for completion of each event are examples of this mission.

Winners please come up when your name is called, we'll start with the overall awards first. This also seems like a good time to issue a blanket apology for mispronouncing anyone's name, i'm going to read off a lot of people so apologize in advance for butchering any names.

The third place overall female is Addison Talbot. Addison began participating in WCC events in 2017, at the age of 8, and ran seven races in each of her first three seasons, winning the division in each race in those first two years....14 out of 14. In 2021 she participated in six races, placing first in her division twice, finishing third overall twice, second overall once and was the overall champion of the Flying Eagle 5K. Congratulations to three time winner and third place overall female, at the age of 12, Addison Talbot.

The second place overall female is Missy Moore. Missy won the 50-54 division in 2019, her second age group title. In 2021 she ran all eight races, taking the top spot in her age group in all but the Flying Eagle 5K, where she was the third overall female. Congratulations to three time winner and second place overall female Missy Moore.

This year's overall female winner is Britni Gettinger. Britni has participated in every WCC race since she began with us in 2013, eight seasons worth. Over this time she has three age group titles, three third place overall finishes and one second place overall crown. In 2021 she claimed the top spot by taking five age group wins and two second place overall finishes. She volunteered at the remaining event. Congratulations to eight time winner and first time female overall champion Britni Gettinger.

The third place overall male finisher is Aaron Lake. 2021 was Aaron's third season participating in WCC events. In 2018 he won his age group and in 2019 was the overall men's champion, winning his age group three times and finishing second overall three times. In 2021 Aaron ran six races and had two age group wins, two third place overall finishes, one second place finish and won the Heartbreak Hill 5K. Congratulations to three time winner and third place overall male Aaron Lake.

The second place overall male finisher is Scott Meinardi. Over his WCC career Scott has five age group titles, spanning three different divisions. In 2021 he ran all eight races for the fourth time, winning his division six times, finishing third overall once and second overall at the IU East Run With the Wolves 5K. Congratulations to six time winner and second place overall male Scott Meinardi.

The 2021 overall male winner is Jason Newport. Jason already had the record for most overall titles, male or female, winning his first in 2010. He added to those numbers in 2021 by running all eight races, taking the top spot in his age group three times, a third place overall finish, two second place overall finishes and winning the Flying Eagle 5K and IU East Run With the Wolves 5K. Congratulations to our overall male champion, for the eighth time, Jason Newport.

Now we'll move on to the age group winners. There are several categories where there was no winner because no one completed at least five races, a requirement to win an age group award.

The winner of the female nine and under age group is Sydney Wood. Sydney ran all eight races in 2021 and finished in the top four of her age group at each, including six division wins. She earned enough points to finish as the fifth overall female, at the age of seven. Congratulations to first time winner Sydney Wood.

#### **There is no winner of the male nine and under age group**

The winner of the female 10-12 age group is Elise Kretchman. Elise ran all eight races, finishing in the top six of her division in all, with two third place finishes, one second place and a category win at the IU East Run With the Wolves 5K. Congratulations to first time age group champion Elise Kretchman.

The winner of the male 10-12 age group is Levi Johnsman. Levi ran in five races in 2021, placing in the top three of his age group in every one, highlighted by three division wins at the Heartbreak Hill 5K, Flying Eagle 5K and Turkey Chase 7K. Congratulations to first time winner Levi Johnsman.

#### **There are no winners of the female or male 13-15 age groups.**

The winner of the female 16-18 age group is Lydia Pentecost. Lydia began her WCC career in 2019 when she won the 13-15 division participating in all eight races. She repeated the feat in 2021 by once again running every race, finishing in the top three in seven of them, including three division wins. Congratulations to two time age group champion Lydia Pentecost.

The winner of the male 16-18 age group is Alan Seals. Alan won the 13-15 age group in 2019 when he ran each race. He once again did every event in 2021 winning the division at the Flying Eagle 5K and Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to two time age group winner Alan Seals.

## **There is no winner of the female 19-24 age group.**

The winner of the male 19-24 age group is Josiah Seals. This is Josiah's third age group title after winning the 16-18 division in 2016 and 2017. In 2021 he ran six races and had three division wins at the Flying Eagle 5K, IU East Run With the Wolves 5K and Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to three time age group winner Josiah Seals.

The winner of the female 25-29 age group is Mariah Seals. This is Mariah's sixth age group crown and second in this division after winning the 19-24 group four times. In 2021 she ran six races taking the top spot in the group at the Girls Inc. 5K, IU East Run With the Wolves 5K and Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to six time age group champion Mariah Seals.

The winner of the male 25-29 age group is Brandon Guth. Brandon ran all eight races with one second place division finish, six age group wins and a second place overall finish at the Fall Foliage 10K. Congratulations to first time winner Brandon Guth.

The winner of the female 30-34 age group is Kristin Rogers. Kristin ran all eight races in 2021 finishing in the top three at each event, including age group wins at the Fireworks 5K and season ending Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Kristin Rogers.

The winner of the male 30-34 age group is John Waltz. John ran seven of the eight races in 2021 and finished in the top three in his division at every one with two third place finishes, three runner up spots and age group wins at the Fall Foliage 5K and Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time age group champion John Waltz.

The winner of the female 35-39 age group is Abby Burkhardt. Abby ran every race in 2021 placing in the top five at each one, with four second place finishes and took the top spot at the Flying Eagle 5K and Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Abby Burkhardt.

The winner of the male 35-39 age group is Aaron Ervin. Aaron began his WCC career in 2010 and has only missed two races since that time, running all eight nine times, including in 2021. He finished in the top five of the division at every race and had three second place age group finishes. Congratulations to three time age group winner Aaron Ervin.

The winner of the female 40-44 age group is Crystal Smith. Crystal ran all eight races in 2021 finishing in the top five at seven of those, including two age group titles at the Flying Eagle 5K and IU East Run With the Wolves 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Crystal Smith.

The winner of the 40-44 male age group is Dave Snow. Once again in 2021 Dave participated in every event, for the eleventh straight year. He volunteered at one and finished in the top three of the division in the remaining events, including two division wins at the Heartbreak Hill 5K and IU East Run With the Wolves 5K. Congratulations to seven time age group champion Dave Snow.

The winner of the female 45-49 age group is Angela Wilmot. Angela ran in seven of the eight races finishing second in her division twice and winning it the other five races. This is her second age group title after also winning this group in 2019. Congratulations to two time age group champion Angela Wilmot

The winner of the male 45-49 age group is Brian Green. Brian ran all every race for the eighth straight season in 2021, winning the division at all eight. Brian has an impressive resume with the WCC including a second place overall male finish in 2019 and third place overall in 2017 along with two previous age group titles and adds his third in 2021. He earned enough points to finish tied for fourth overall male, missing third by only fifteen points. Congratulations to three time age group champion and five time award winner Brian Green.

The winner of the female 50-54 age group is Ruth Cutcher. Ruth began her WCC career in 2019 when she ran seven races. In 2021 she did all eight, finishing in the top four of her division at each one, including a second place finish at the Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to first time age group champion Ruth Cutcher.

The winner of the male 50-54 age group is Brian Fisher. Brian ran all eight races in 2021 and finished in the top six of each one. He had two second place finishes and three age group wins at the Fireworks 5K, Heartbreak Hill 5K and IU East Run With the Wolves 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Brian Fisher.

The winner of the female 55-59 age group is Sabrena Bartram. Sabrena ran every race for the seventh time, finishing second in the division at the season opening Girls Inc. 5K and winning it at the final seven events. This is her seventh age group title and she finished tied for fourth overall female. Congratulations to seven time age group champion Sabrena Bartram.

The winner of the male 55-59 age group is Jerry Bradley. Jerry won the 50-54 age group in 2019 and ran all eight races in 2021 finishing in the top four of the division at each, including a win at the Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulation to two time age group winner Jerry Bradley.

The winner of the female 60-64 age group is Jeana Smelser. Jeana ran seven of the eight races and finished in the top three at every one, including two division wins at the Heartbreak Hill 5K and season ending Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Jeana Smelser.

The winner of the male 60-64 age group is Ray Blevins. Ray ran all eight races in 2021 finishing in the top six of each one. He had third place division finishes at the Girls Inc. 5K, Flying Eagle 5K, IU East Run With the Wolves 5K and Turkey Chase 7K. While we don't have a best dressed award if we did Ray would likely win that one too. Congratulations to first time age group winner Ray Blevins.

The winner of the female 65-69 award is Eileen Cravens. This is Eileen's fourth age group title, over three divisions, after winning in 2007, 2008 and 2012. In 2021 Eileen ran seven races in 2021 and had seven age group wins. Congratulations to four time age group champion Eileen Cravens.

The winner of the male 65-69 age group is Gary Rodefeld. This is Gary's second age group title after winning the 50-54 group in 2003, which was the first year of the WCC. In 2021 he ran seven of the eight races finishing second in the division at two of them and taking the top spot in the other five. Congratulations to two time age group champion Gary Rodefeld.

The winner of the female 70-74 age group is Geri Schick. Geri ran all eight races for the fourth straight season and took her third age group title. She finished second in the division at the Fireworks 5K and won the group in the other seven events. Congratulations to three time age group champion Geri Schick.

The winner of the male 70-74 age group is Gary Girten. Gary ran all eight races in 2021 and won his division at every one, a perfect eight for eight. He also earned enough points to finish tied for fourth overall male, only fifteen points from third. Congratulations to first time age group winner Gary Girten.

The winner of the 75 and over age group is Pat Bowers. This was the first year for this group but it had a familiar winner. This is Pat's 13<sup>th</sup> age group title, she's won her division every year since 2008. In 2021 she participated in all eight races for the seventh time, winning the division at all seven she ran...she volunteered at the remaining event. Congratulations to thirteen time age group winner Pat Bowers.

The winner of the 75 and over age group is Gene Black. Gene began running WCC races in our very first year, 2003. He won his age group that year, and every year, until 2010....eight straight seasons. He added two more titles and took home his eleventh crown in 2021. He ran six races last season, finishing second in the division three times and winning the Fireworks 5K, IU East Run With the Wolves 5K and Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to eleven time age group winner Gene Black.

I'd like to point out that between Pat and Gene they have 24 age group titles.

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

Our next award goes to the 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 will be making her second of three trips to the stage, after winning her age group.....she also completed all eight races so will be back in a few minutes. The 2021 most improved runner is Lydia Pentecost. Earlier in the program Lydia picked up her award for winning the 16-18 age group, she's now 2 for 2 in that regard after she took the 13-15 division in 2019, which was her first year running WCC events. She began the 2021 season by completing the Girls Inc. 5K in 49:05.

By the final race of the year she dropped almost eight minutes off that time by finishing the Frostbite 5K in 41:24. Congratulations to the 2021 Most Improved runner Lydia Pentecost.

We've just given out 35 awards to the overall and age group winners, along with the most improved runner, from the 2021 season. We commend and congratulate each of these individuals for their achievements and appreciate their support of the WCC and our member organizations. This year we are pleased to introduce a new category, the Spirit of the WCC award.

This honor goes to an individual who may not finish in the top ten overall or win their age division but still embodies what the Wayne County Challenge stands for, as stated in our mission statement..”*to promote community and national health through amateur distance running...and to encourage and reward the participation of all types and ages of runners.*“ Let's face it, there can only be one overall winner and one age group champion. But there are several hundred other stories in each of our events. This award is designed to recognize those who keep showing up race after race, year after year as part of this community striving to better themselves.

Our inaugural winner ran their first WCC race in 2011 and competed in half that season's events. The next year they did all eight, a feat that has been repeated three more times, including in 2021. Over the past ten years they've run a total of 63 races, averaging over six per season....a sign of consistency and dedication. While this award isn't based on race times or podium finishes this year's winner had their highest age group division finish, placing second overall for the season. Over the past ten years they've showed gradual improvement and produced their fastest finish times across the board in 2021. If you've been to a WCC race over the past ten years you've likely seen this individual and experienced their positive attitude, encouraging spirit and love for running and the WCC. All qualities that represent what the WCC stands for. It is our honor to present this years Spirit of the WCC award to Jared Haley.

There's no award for this particular honor but we do like to recognize the holder of the longest race streak. For the 15<sup>th</sup> season in a row Judy Pierce ran every race, continuing her streak which began with the 2006 season. This means Judy has completed 119 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 jackets 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 so we can take a group photograph.

Thank you again for attending today's event and your support of the Wayne County Challenge and its member organizations. We look forward to our 19<sup>th</sup> year and the season opening Girls Inc. 5K, Saturday May 14. Remember online registration the Carpe Viam program is now open on the WCC website [wcchallenge.org](http://wcchallenge.org)