

Welcome to the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Wayne County Challenge end of season celebration. I'm Brian Schleeper, race director of the Girls Inc. 5K and IU East Run with the Wolves 5K. Tonight we'll give out awards for overall and age group performances and to almost 100 people who completed all eight races of the series. While we're here tonight to recognize accomplishments from 2016 I also want to mention that the schedule for 2017 is set and you'll find schedule cards on your tables which you're encouraged to take. I encourage you to take advantage of the Carpe Viam special which allows you to enter all eight series races at once, at a discounted rate. This year this program is available 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. We have entry forms for the Carpe Viam program here tonight and they're also posted on the WCC website, [wccchallenge.org](http://wccchallenge.org). Online registration for the Carpe Viam special and season opening Girls Inc. 5K are now open by going to the WCC website.

2016 was another excellent season for the Wayne County Challenge. We had almost 100 people complete all 8 races, we had repeat winners in both the men's and women's overall categories, and a record tying age group performance in the women's division.

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. Wayne County Challenge races are put on by nonprofit organizations who benefit from the funds raised at each event. This year's races raised approximately \$36,000 for the member agencies. These organizations use these funds to provide after school programs, put on the annual Fireworks display, support high school and college athletic programs, environmental education and our local parks. Participation at races not only improves the health and well being of those running and walking, it also gives back to 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:

***Rick Duncan*** – Fireworks 5K – benefiting the Richmond American Legion Post 65

***Paula Head & Amanda Nocton*** – Heartbreak Hill 5K – benefiting Hagerstown High School Athletics

***Ashley Mays*** – Flying Eagles 5K – benefiting the Western Wayne Elementary PTO

***Keith Morey*** – Fall Foliage 5K/10K – benefiting Cope Environmental Center

***Mike Day and Ashley Stephens***-Turkey Chase 7K-benefiting the Centerville High School Athletic Department

***Alisha Estabrook***-Rosemary Weigel Frostbite 5K – benefiting the City of Richmond Parks & Recreation Department

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

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize two members of the timing team who will be ending their service to the WCC.

Jennifer Lewis has been participating in WCC events since we began in 2003. She ran at least one race each of the first four years. In 2007 she took over directing the Girls Inc. 5K, a role she held until 2013. That means she has directed half of the Girls Inc. 5K's that have been held. In 2012 when the WCC purchased a chip timing system she also became a member of the timing team, which she continued through the 2016 season. Thank you Jennifer for the many ways you have served the WCC from the very beginning as runner, race director and timer.

When we began using chip timing in 2012 Sarah Morey became the lead timer mid-way through the season and was the driving force in transitioning us into this new way of timing races. When we flawlessly timed our first race with the new equipment we all thought that we were pretty hot stuff. Until the next race, the following month, when every possible technical issue imaginable, and more, happened and we were brought back down to earth. Throughout this process Sarah has been the one in the tent dealing with all the hiccups and glitches that come with putting on events with up to 500 people, all with small electronic devices on their shoes. Or in some cases NOT on their shoes. But more often than not, race day was the easy part. Sarah was also the one who spent her Friday nights preparing things for the next day's race, then the one who spent her entire Sunday figuring out why someone's chip wasn't read, watching video to determine who finished when or trying to calculate points. Sarah's technical skills have been invaluable in bringing the WCC into the world of chip timing. Thank you Sarah for your many hours of service to the WCC and may you enjoy your weekends once again. After you help make sure everything goes smoothly with the season opening Girls Inc 5K, which I just happen to direct.

Ashley Stephens, WCC chair, will take over as lead timer in 2017.

Finally i'd like to thank a few of our sponsors. Tonight's event is supported by First Bank Richmond and West End Bank. Cycling and Fitness Warehouse and Family Fitness Works provided series support this year. Reid Hospital has provided financial support for the timing team and equipment for the upcoming season. And once again Whitewater Valley Rehabilitation will be our Premier Series Sponsor. We're incredibly grateful for their support of the WCC and our mission to help people become more active through our events. Please join me in thanking all our sponsors who help make the series possible.

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.

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 awards for the Top-3-Overall Male & Female include personally inscribed plaques along with gift certificates for each of our champions.

The third place overall female is Brittni Gettinger. Brittni began running WCC races in 2013 and has run every race all four years. She won her age group in 2013 and 2014. She improved to third place overall female in 2015 and repeated that again in 2016. Brittni has fifteen age group wins out of 32 total races. She won her division six times in 2016 and placed third overall in the other two races. Congratulations to Brittni Gettinger.

The second place overall female is Nicole Andreas. Nicole is no stranger to the stage when it comes to the WCC. In 2011 she ran all 8 races and won her age group. She repeated both feats in 2012. In 2013 she was the overall female champion, running 7 races. In 2016 she returned to running WCC races and won her age group at the Fireworks 5K and IU East Run with the Wolves 5K. She then finished second overall in the last five races, finishing 7 of the 8 races. In the four seasons Nicole has run races she has an age group title and fifth place overall female, age group title and fourth place overall female, overall crown and now a second place overall. Congratulations to Nicole Andreas.

This year's overall female winner for the second straight year is Chelsea Halderman. Chelsea began running WCC races in 2013 and has run 30 of the 32 races in that time. In both 2013 and 2014 she finished as second overall female running seven races. In 2015 she ran all 8 and took the top spot finishing in the top three overall in 7 of the 8 races.

In 2016 she once again ran all 8 and finished no worse than sixth overall and had a stretch where she won four straight races from the Heartbreak Hill 5K to the Turkey Chase 7K. In four short years Chelsea has seven race victories and now two overall series titles. Congratulations to Chelsea Halderman.

The third place overall male finisher is Scott Meinardi. Scott began running WCC races in 2004. He skipped the next season but has competed in at least one race every year since. In 62 WCC races Scott has won his division 33 times and has taken four age group titles. This year he took the top spot in seven races and was third overall male at the Flying Eagle 5K. This was also the third year Scott has run all 8 races but his first placing in the top three overall. Congratulations to Scott Meinardi.

The second place overall male finisher is Ron Ross. 2016 was Ron's fifth season running WCC races and this will be his fifth trip to this stage. His first two years he won his age group. In 2014 he was the overall male champion. In 2015 he was second overall male and once again takes that spot for 2016. Ron has only missed two races in his five year career and volunteered at one of those. In those five years Ron has run 38 races and has 22 age group wins and seven top three overall finishes. Congratulations to Ron Ross.

The 2016 overall male winner is Jason Newport. This is the fifth time Jason has taken this award, the most ever in the men's division. He previously was the top overall male in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2015. 2016 was the fourth time Jason has run all 8 races. He finished third overall twice, second overall at the Fall Foliage 5K and was the overall winner at the Girls Inc. 5K, Fireworks 5K, Flying Eagle 5K and season ending Frostbite 5K. In the remaining race, his "worst finish" he placed sixth overall at the IU East Run with the Wolves 5K. Jason has been running WCC races since we began in 2003 and has finished in the top three overall in 44 of his 48 races. Congratulations to our overall male winner for a men's record fifth time Jason Newport.

Now we'll move on to the age group winners. Of the 29 age group winners this year 15 of them, over half, are first time winners so we'll have some new faces coming up to claim awards.

The winner of the female nine and under age group is Gwyneth Falcone. This was Gwyneth's first year participating in WCC races and she competed in six of the eight races. She had a perfect season winning her division in all six races finishing with her fastest time at the season ending Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Gwyneth Falcone.

The winner of the male nine and under age group is Joseph Noth. This was Joseph's first year running WCC races and he completed all 8. He had two second place finishes and four wins in the division. He had his best time of the season by almost two minutes at the Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time age group winner Joseph Noth.

The winner of the female 10-12 age group is Brianna Hillard. Brianna began her WCC career by running the Frostbite 5K in 2013. In 2014 she ran the final two races of the season placing first in her division at the Turkey Chase and third at the Frostbite 5K. In 2015 she ran five races winning her division once. In 2016 she ran all 8 races finishing in the top four of her age group in all 8 including four division wins. Congratulations to first time winner Brianna Hillard.

The winner of the male 10-12 age group is Riley Jaynes. For such a young runner Riley has already built up an impressive resume in the WCC. He ran one race in 2013 and placed third in his age group. In 2014 he ran 5 and won his division for the year. In 2015 he ran all 8 races, winning his division in 7 and placing second in the other. He earned enough points to finish as the third overall male, at the age of 9. In 2016 he once again ran all 8 races taking the top spot in four of those. In 22 total WCC races Riley has 14 age group wins, six second place finishes and two third place finishes meaning he has finished in the top three in his age group in every WCC race he has run. He has also run 20 straight races. Congratulations to two time age group winner Riley Jaynes.

The winner of the female 13-15 age group is Jenna Shelley. Jenna ran her first WCC race at the 2012 Girls Inc 5K. Her next race was the 2013 Girls Inc. event and she hasn't missed one since, 32 straight. In 2013 she won her age division. She finished second in 2014 before reclaiming the top spot in 2015. In 2016 she finished third in her division once, second once and first twice as she finished the year strong by clocking her fastest time of the year by three minutes at the season ending Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to three time winner Jenna Shelley.

The winner of the male 13-15 age group is Parker Jaynes. Parker ran two races in 2010 then seven in 2011 placing fifth in his age group. He then ran all 8 races from 2102-2015 placing third twice, second once and winning his division in 2014. He ran seven of the eight races in 2016 placing fifth once, second three times, first twice and finishing as the third place overall male at the Fall Foliage 5K. Congratulations to two time winner Parker Jaynes.

The winner of the female 16-18 age group is Alexa Blessing. Alexa ran one WCC race in 2013 and two in 2015 before competing in five in 2016. She finished fourth in her division once, second once and first twice. Congratulations to first time winner Alexa Blessing.

The winner of the male 16-18 age group is Josiah Seals. Josiah ran two WCC races in 2015 and followed that up by finishing all 8 in 2016. He placed third in his division once, second once and took the top spot three times. Congratulations to first time winner Josiah Seals.

The winner of the female 19-24 age group is Ashley Strait. 2016 was Ashley's first year running WCC races and she made an impressive debut. She ran all 8 races placing first in her division in four of them. Congratulations to first time winner Ashley Strait.

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

The winner of the female 25-29 age group is Brittany Wilson. Brittany ran her first WCC race at the IU East Run with the Wolves 5K in 2013. She ran 7 of 8 races in 2015 and ran all 8 for the first time in 2016. She placed third in her division twice, second once and first three times. Congratulations to first time winner Brittany Wilson.

The winner of the male 25-29 age group is Patrick Ripberger. Patrick ran three WCC races in 2015 placing third in his division at the Fall Foliage 5K. In 2016 he ran all 8 races and placed second four times and won his age group at the season ending Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Patrick Ripberger.

The winner of the female 30-34 age group is Aubrey Hickey. Aubrey began her WCC career in 2014 running six races including an age group win at the Fall Foliage 5K. In 2015 she ran seven races and finished third overall in her division. In 2016 she ran 7 races again finishing fifth once, second once and first in the other five races, including her best time at the Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Aubrey Hickey.

The winner of the male 30-34 age group is Aaron Ervin. Aaron ran his first WCC race in 2010 when he completed all eight and finished second in his age group. He has only missed two races since, finishing 54 of 56 over the last seven seasons. He has finished no worse than sixth in his division, placing as runner up three times. In 2016 Aaron once again ran all eight races placing in the top four in his age group in each one, including three category wins. Congratulations to first time winner Aaron Ervin.

The winner of the female 35-39 age group is Daisey Logue. Daisy began her WCC career in 2013 running one race. She then ran two in 2014. In 2015 she ran six races and finished second overall in her division. She ran 6 races again in 2016 placing second five times and winning at the Flying Eagle 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Daisy Logue.

The winner of the male 35-39 age group is Dave Snow. This is Dave's fourth straight title for this age group and the seventh consecutive year he has completed all 8 races....56 straight. Dave finished third in his division twice, second four times and took the top spot at the Flying Eagle 5K. Congratulations to four time age group winner Dave Snow.

The winner of the female 40-44 age group is Anne Wissel. Ann has run three WCC races dating back to our first year in 2003 completing one each in that first year, one in 2007 and one in 2014. In 2016 she returned and ran all 8 finishing fourth in her age group once, second twice and first the other five races. Congratulations to first time winner Anne Wissel.

The winner of the 40-44 male age group is Brian Green. Brian ran his first WCC race in 2012 and missed only the Fireworks 5K that year finishing 7 of the 8 races. That's the only one he's missed since, completing all 8 in 2013, 2014 and 2015 finishing as runner up in his division all three years. In 2016 he once again ran all 8 and was finally able to take the age group title. He finished third in his division at the season opening Girls Inc. 5K then proceeded to win the age group at the last seven races, finishing with his best time of the year at the Frostbite 5K. Congratulations to first time winner Brian Green.

The winner of the female 45-49 age group is Kathy Shelley. Kathy began running WCC races in 2012 and has run every race all five years. She won her division her first three years and was the second place overall female in 2015. Over the course of her five years running WCC races Kathy has 31 age group wins, 6 second place finishes, 2 third place overall finishes and one second place overall finish. That continued in 2016 when she finished second three times and first the other 5 in her division. Congratulations to four time age group winner Kathy Shelley.

The winner of the male 45-49 age group is George Sowers Jr. George ran his first WCC race in 2003 in our first season. He returned in 2007 and has run at least one race every year since. In 2009 and 2010 he placed fourth in his age group. He moved up a spot to third in both 2013 and 2014. In 2015 he moved up another spot to second place. In 2016 he participated in all 8 races for the fourth straight year and took the age group crown for the first time. He placed third in his division once, second three times and took the top spot at the Flying Eagle 5K. Congratulations to first time winner George Sowers Jr.

The winner of the female 50-54 age group is Sabrena Bartram. Sabrena began running WCC races in 2011 when she finished two events. She followed that up by doing seven of the eight in 2012. In 2013 she finished all 8 and won her age group for the first time. She won it again in 2015 by doing all 8. She repeated both feats in 2016 by finishing second in her division three times and first the other five. Congratulations to three time winner Sabrena Bartram.

The winner of the male 50-54 age group is Jeff Chambers. Jeff started running WCC races in 2013 when he completed all 8 and won his age group in his debut season. He followed that up by again doing all 8 races in 2014 and 2015, finishing third in his division both times. He regained the title this year by doing all 8 races for the fourth straight year. He finished third in his division three times, second once and first three times. Congratulations to two time winner Jeff Chambers.

The winner of the female 55-59 age group is Tami Stevens. Tami ran her first WCC race in 2010 at the Girls Inc. 5K. She then ran all 8 races in 2012 placing fourth in her age group. She ran at least one race in 2013, 2014 and 2015. She once again ran all 8 in 2016 placing second in her division four times and first the other four times. Congratulations to first time winner Tami Stevens.

The winner of the male 55-59 age group is Rick Moore. Rick began running WCC races in 2006 when he ran one race. He returned in 2009 and has competed in at least one race every year since. In 2013 he ran 7 of the 8 races and finished second in his age group. In 2014 he ran all 8 and took the top spot, then repeated both feats in 2015. In 2016 for the third straight year he ran all 8 races, finishing third in his age group twice, second once and first four times en route to his third consecutive age group title. Congratulations to three time winner Rick Moore.

The winner of the female 60-64 age group is Sarah Geise. Sarah ran her first WCC race in 2009 when she finished five events and took the runner up spot in her age group. She has run 53 of the 56 races since then and has run all 8 five times in that span, including once again in 2016. She won her age group in 2010 and 2011 and for the third time in 2016 when she placed third once and second twice in the closest age group competition which was separated by only 17 points. Congratulations to three time winner Sarah Geise.

The winner of the male 60-64 age group is Zach Rozelle. Zach began running WCC races in 2012 when he finished all 8 races and finished second in his division. In 2013 he ran all 8 again and won his first age group title. He ran all once more in 2014 finishing third in his age group. In 2016 he did all 8 for the fourth time in five years, placing third four times and second the other four as he took his second age group crown. Congratulations to two time winner Zach Rozelle.

The winner of the female 65-69 award is Ellen Johnson. Ellen ran her first WCC race in 2011 finishing five races as she placed fourth in her division. In 2012 she ran all 8 and won her age group. She missed two races in 2013 but still managed the runner up spot. She took the title back in 2014 running all 8 races again, a feat she repeated in 2015. In 2016 Ellen ran all 8 races for the fourth time and claimed her third straight and fourth total age group title as she placed second at the Turkey Chase 7K and won the other seven races. Congratulations to four time winner Ellen Johnson.

The winner of the male 65-69 age group is Jim Robertson. Jim ran his first WCC race in 2003, our inaugural season. In 2015 he ran all 8 for the first time as he won his first age group title. He ran 7 races in 2016 placing second at the Turkey Chase 7K and first at his other six events as he defended his age group crown. Congratulations to two time winner Jim Robertson.

**I'm going to flip the order for the last category.**

The winner of the male 70 and over age group is Dennis Mann. Dennis ran his first WCC race in 2005. In 2012 he ran 7 races and took his first age group title. He ran 7 races again in 2014 as he won another division crown. In 2016 he ran all 8 races for the first time as he won his third age group title. He placed in the top three at all 8, finishing third once, second three times and first four times. Congratulations to three time winner Dennis Mann.

The winner of the female 70 and over age group is Pat Bowers. Pat won her first age group title in 2008 and has won it every year since, nine years straight. This ties her for most age group wins, man or woman. During this period Pat has run 54 races and finished first in her division in 52 of those. The last time Pat was beat by someone in her age group was at the 2012 Frostbite 5K, 32 races ago. In 2016 Pat ran all 8 races for the fourth time. Congratulations to NINE time defending age group champion Pat Bowers.

Let's congratulate all of our age group and overall winners one more time. You may have noticed that many of the winners who were just up here ran all eight races. 29 of the 35 age group and overall champions completed each event this year. The WCC tries to encourage participation and consistency and many of the people who were just up on stage demonstrated both of these in 2016. In a moment we will give out awards to the 92 individuals who participated in all 8 races, many of whom will be making their second trip to the stage.

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 improved her time by almost fourteen minutes over the course of the season. 2016 was her first year participating in WCC races and she ran 7 of the 8 races, missing only the season opening Girls Inc. 5K. She improved with each race finish dropping 13:56 from her time at the Fireworks 5K to the season ending Frostbite 5K. It is my great pleasure to present the 2016 Wayne County Challenge most improved runner award to Wendy Liddell.

There's no award for this particular honor but we do like to recognize the holder of the longest race streak. For the 11<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 88 races straight. Congratulations Judy and thank you for your commitment and dedication to the WCC. Please stand to be recognized Judy.

We'll now present certificates and shirts to the 92 runners who completed all 8 races this season. To put this number into perspective the WCC began in 2003 but it wasn't until our fifth year, in 2007, that every race had at least 92 finishers. So to have that many complete all eight events is an impressive accomplishment. We appreciate the support these 92 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 of all of you.

Now I'm going to turn the mic over to our esteemed mayor, four time age group winner and seven time elite 8 honoree Dave Snow for a few words.

Thank you again for attending tonight's event and your support of the Wayne County Challenge and it's member organizations. We look forward to our 15<sup>th</sup> year and the season opening Girls Inc. 5K Saturday May 13.