



NORTH FLORIDA NEWSLETTER:
NOTES FROM THE ROAD
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Michael's Moment: *READY, IN SEASON OUT OF SEASON...*

Hello, North Florida! The Bowens are back from a brief out-of-town visit. Suzanne & I participated in the inaugural Rock n' Roll/Mardi Gras Half Marathon. Originally, this event was Suzanne's way of having a "girl's weekend" with one of my former athletes. Suddenly, they both figured it would be a cool idea to suck in (I mean, *involve*) the husbands. Rather than try to find an excuse (My old coach would say *one excuse is as good as another if you don't want to do something...*) to back out, I justified it as a training run for my target event in six weeks. It also doesn't hurt having very close friends in NOLA. So, road trip it was.

This was my first time running Mardi Gras, but not my first time doing a Rock n' Roll/Competitor Group-run event, so I had a good idea what to expect. And the event did not fail to meet my expectations. Even for a guy who's run the Crescent City Classic seven times, there's nothing cooler than running through the streets of New Orleans – especially Esplanade Avenue, the meat of the CCC course – with the sounds of local music wafting through the air. Get out of earshot of one band & you're in range of the next. If you can't be reinvigorated by the sounds of zydeco it is probably because you're dead. Time to have your next-of-kin book the brass band for a jazz funeral.

Naturally, the time it takes for most of us to cover 13.1 or 26.2 miles is plenty of time to converse with (non-headphone-wearing) fellow participants. And every time I go to a race some place else my world becomes more small & more friend-laden. One young man used some extra energy encouraging me to come along with him as I walked through the mile 9 aid station. While I needed the extra hydration, what was I to do, say *no*? After the finish line, we got the chance to talk a little more.

He was a teacher from the New Orleans area. His girlfriend is a teacher at a school in Pensacola, which produces a 5K race I love to participate in every so often. He was looking for a club to join in New Orleans, folks to train with, & events he can run when visiting his girlfriend on holiday breaks. Oh, good...I get to kill two birds with one stone! So, I told him about the local RRCA club (New Orleans Track Club) & the event calendar on my weblog (www.north-florida-rrca.blogspot.com).

So, the moral is: Be prepared to tell your story. Be prepared to market your club "*mano a mano*." Because you never know from what event your next member is going to come.

RRCA NATIONAL CONVENTION - ARE YOU REGISTERED YET?

Want to know more about RRCA's insurance & risk management for your event? Lobbying for your running club? How to put on a non-running event or what you can do to help build club camaraderie? How about effective club growth strategies, what it takes to make your club's showcase event an RRCA Championship, or working with other charitable organizations?

What would you give for three days of group runs, social functions & networking opportunities? It's all happening at the RRCA National Convention, April 21-25 in Lakeland, FL. Convention registration fees are \$250, with a \$100 meal package available, which includes the Friday night social, Saturday's luncheon featuring Olympian Keith Brantly, & the RRCA National Awards Banquet. Online registration & more information on the sessions and speakers are available through the event website: <http://www.rrcaconvention.org>.

RRCA CONVENTION SILENT AUCTION

Part of the Saturday evening activity of the RRCA convention is the Silent Auction, which features many neat (and often one-of-a-kind) items up for bidding. Last year I was able to bid on & win a VIP entry to an event which would have cost me a pretty penny for the regular registration. Olympic keepsakes, training programs, autographed posters & books, running gear, wine, delicacies, condo weekends, & so on have been on the block. The proceeds go to support the RRCA State Representative program, which helps to decrease the expenses of your friendly neighborhood (volunteer) state representatives. E-mail me at northflorida@rrca.org if you have an item (doesn't have to be running related!) you or your club would like to donate toward the auction.

NORTH FLORIDA RRCA EVENT CALENDAR

The North Florida rep weblog (<http://www.north-florida-rrca.blogspot.com>) has an event calendar of all Florida events submitted to Running Journal, as well as any events submitted to me via e-mail or post. As always, the more information you can provide, the better. I also post events on the blog & submit links on social media sites (Facebook). So, as I have mentioned in e-mails...if it lands on my desk (in-box) odds are good it will get on the blog.

ADDITIONAL INSURED CERTIFICATES

Sometimes we have a sponsor or venue provider who wants to know our club event is insured (just went through this last week with my own event club), so we need additional insured certificates.

RRCA & Star Insurance have developed a new online request form for additional insured certificates. The new online form ensures quick processing of requests and replaces the Microsoft Word document which was formerly used (If your club still has copies of the MS Word doc, it's time to throw those out & use the on-line version.).

The form can be found at the top of the RRCA Insurance Information page (www.rrca.org/services/insurance). Please be sure to review the insurance FAQ's also found on the insurance information page to understand what will and will not be

covered with additional insured certificates. Members with questions for Star Insurance can direct inquiries to RRCA.insurance@starfinancial.com.

RRCA 101 - HOW MUCH DO YOU OR YOUR CLUB KNOW ABOUT THE RRCA?

Here's a brief quiz I put together a couple of weeks ago. I'm giving it as part of a presentation to a local RRCA club's board of directors. See how much you or your club members know...without referring to the RRCA web site. I'll post the answers on the North Florida RRCA weblog (<http://www.north-florida-rrca.blogspot.com>) after March 2nd.

INSTRUCTIONS: Choose the **single most-correct answer** to these eight questions about RRCA's mission, vision, goals & programming.

1. The RRCA is **NOT**:

- a. an educational & programming resource.
- b. a national organization of running clubs, events, & individuals.
- c. dedicated to develop & grow running, events, & recreational runners.
- d. strictly an insurance provider.

2. Persons with a passion for running & want to help individuals achieve personal fitness & athletic goals can become an RRCA-certified coach after they complete a two-day certification seminar, CPR & first-aid training.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

3. RRCA meets with member club reps, state reps & directors; hosting seminars to grow & strengthen individual club operations, improve event quality & motivate club volunteers. This year's national convention is being held in:

- a. Lake Geneva, WI
- b. Lakeland, FL
- c. Lake Tahoe, NV
- d. Lakewood, CO

4. Which of these are **NOT** included in RRCA's General Running Safety Tips?

- a. Always stay alert & aware of what is going on around you.
- b. Don't wear headphones.
- c. Look both ways before crossing.
- d. Run the same course on a consistent basis.

5. Donations to RRCA for Kids Run The Nation, Road Scholars, & the State Representative Fund are tax deductible.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

6. Clubs can recognize volunteer workers with an RRCA National Volunteer Award when they accrue this number of service hours:

- a. 1,500
- b. 2,000
- c. 2,500
- d. 3,000

7. RRCA designates state, regional & national championship races to help clubs:

- a. attract event sponsors.
- b. improve civic/media support for the event.
- c. recruit top-performing runners to participate in the event.
- d. All of the above.

8. RRCA State Representatives are compensated for their services.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

As always - stay safe. And...shut 'em off. Please.