

RUNNER'S PROFILE

by Joe Howell

If you have participated in any of the traditional local running events over the last 20+ years, you are bound to recognize Ralph Philbrick. If you want a great look at some of the more interesting races in Santa Barbara, check out Ralph's recollections like the Sri Chimnoy weekly run, the Stagecoach Road Run (which he helped organize) and the Are You Tough Enough? 100K Relay. Ralph is now consistently demonstrating his discipline at each Tuesday night SBAA track workout at Santa Barbara City College, and he was runner-up in his age group in the Grand Prix competition in 1998 and 1997. His marathon experience ranges from the Santa Barbara Marathon (how many of you even knew one existed in the old days?) to the 1996 San Francisco Marathon.

Basic Information

Name: Ralph Philbrick

Age: 65

Employment/Family: Botanical Consultant and Back-of-the-Pack Runner.

Other Sports/Interests: Conservation, family history, mutual funds, LA Lakers, creative writing, undisturbed countryside and bike touring.

Running Highlights

Favorite Distance & PR at same: Think my fastest State Street Mile was 5:59 in 1985. More legitimate PRs were all in 1982: 20:50 Tenants' Relay 5K, 42:26 Architects' 10K, 1:37 Lompoc Half Marathon, 3:43 Santa Barbara Marathon. It's been gradually up-hill since.

Average Weekly Mileage (last 12 months): 1998 average less than 20 miles per week, plus bike. Much of running on treadmill with some mountain roads near home and race or intervals most weeks.

Goals (Realistic) for 1999: Goals are nothing without action. Just get out and run. Would like to enjoy another Grand Prix season, Adventours series, most of the Nite Moves, and Jim Triplett's Tuesday night track intervals.

Additional Information

Why I Run: Healthy exercise, competition, friendship.

My Runner Hero & Why: My first hero is everybody's hero; he gave us organized races in Santa Barbara and continues to rank nationally well into his 60s. Today I'm also thinking of my three children. Daughter helped to get me started and shares her

logging road trails. Older son was perhaps the fastest in the family but now sticks to single-skiing. Younger son is not quite the biker he once was but now can be competitive in sprint triathlon or slow to pace me in a duathlon. A special thanks to Paul Gilbert who measured and chalked nearly all of our local courses and then ran them at his slow steady pace. Thanks also to running shoes for support - originally Souls & Resoles, then Second Sole, and now for many years Frank at Outfooters.

Suggestions for local races: Multi-sport races that don't require swimming in the cold ocean.

I Remember: Starting on Mountain Drive and city blocks in crepe soled street shoes. Getting faster each race. Gagging on my morning banana at Moorpark 10K. Getting lost with others at the Carp Bluffs turn around in another of my first 10Ks. Carrying a course map during my next race. Starting in the dark at Toro Canyon for relay race to Nojoqui Falls.

Friendly Sri Chimnoy weekly 3-26 mile runs on one mile legs. Lompoc 1/2 Marathon PR on base training only (paced by son and locked onto a faster competitor for the last couple of miles). Late to start line to get son's bike tag-off for start of my running leg in S.B. Triathlon relay. Once being consistently able to run 1:45 1/2 marathons. Seeing an after-race runner slumped at the wheel of his car and later learning that he had died. Stopping to take the orthotics out of my painful first pair of airsoles as I neared the Hendry's Beach finish of a longer Hope Ranch race.

Students good-naturedly called out "Fountain of Youth" at the I.V. Turkey Trot award ceremony and that was before my beard really turned gray. I also remember finishing last in downtown Mazatlan after two hours of warming up for an unknown starting time (the winner ran the first half in flip-flops and the second barefoot). Worked with friends to organize the Stagecoach Road Run, usually from the Tavern to Paradise Store and back (an unusual course and festive event, but spectators hanging from the Cold Springs Bridge, nails in the muffins, and a runner passing out on the uphill finish got to be too stressful). Finished the first half of the Avenue of Giants Marathon on the figure-eight course as winner Bill "Mad Dog" Scobey was crossing the finish line, and I learned that the last few marathon miles are like nothing else. Then ended the S.B. Marathon on the City College track and embarrassed a dressed-for-work friend with an exhausted and very sweaty hug. Another extreme finish was for the Guadalupe point-to-point 10 miler; it was a cold after dark award ceremony with even my shirt back at the start. First cross country was through the weeds of Las Positas Park before it was finished. The only time I can remember walking in a race was at the Ventura Twilight

cross country—if you include scrambling up a nearly vertical dirt trail.

More recently, the '96 San Francisco Marathon was run for the Leukemia Society. The physical aspects of this effort were made possible by Pete Dolan's coaching and Hans Mortensen's physical therapy, even so it took just over 5 hours.

SBAA Member since 1980 (I think): Took one year off racing when my times stopped getting faster. Now enjoying competition with Ed Graper, Lynn Goebel, Charles Rockwell, Gene Welch and my watch in as many races as I can.



MOVING UP IN AGE CATEGORIES

by Kalon Kelley

A few months ago I turned 60. In contrast to most of my friends for whom becoming a year older rarely entails anything happy, these five year intervals have always had a bit of a silver lining. The competition in my age bracket category is weaker, isn't it? (a happy thought which always ignored my own lengthening times.) And my qualifying time for Boston is not as tough now.

But this particular change in age bracket was unlike any I've experienced before. It was as though I've moved into a bracket that can best be described as "**finishing-times-don't-matter-anymore**". After my last race no-one even asked about my finishing time: it was as though I had moved to the point where finishing (or maybe just even participating) was the only issue. Now as a runner of rather limited ability, this shift into a category where virtue is defined as participating rather than speed is not at all a bad thing. It certainly reduces the effort that used to be required in making excuses ("I haven't been able to train very well because ...", or, "I've been fighting off a fever for ...").

A word of caution however: it is not the case that one enter this bracket (FTDMA) automatically at age 60. After the last race I heard John Brennand talking about his race, and it's clear he's many years from moving up to this age bracket. So my advice to those of you who look forward with anticipation to participating in this bracket is to start running slower earlier in your career, as only this will affect when you can move up and be eligible to join this rather elite category.