

# Washington Running Club Bulletin



Special Bulletin

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## **ALL MEMBERS NEEDED FOR WORK ON THE GEORGETOWN 10K**

All members, their families and friends are needed to work on the Georgetown 10K on Sunday, Oct. 21. Call the club number, 455-0575, and leave your name and how many people you will be able to bring to help.

ALL volunteers will get the famed Georgetown 10K T-shirt, suitable for running wear, casual wear, going to the opera, or framing. Volunteers will be instructed in the finer points of race management by the ubiquitous Mark Baldino and his merrie men.

Ask your friends, threaten them with exposure, physical abuse, lie to them, but get them out to the race.

## **WASHINGTON RUNNING CLUB POLICY STATEMENT A Winning Club**

Our intention is to have the best teams in the Washington area and be competitive in top races in the Mid-Atlantic area and other nearby areas. This year the club has been performing very well. Our teams dominated the Hometown Run and individual members have won many of the local races. We are clearly the elite running club in the area and we intend to stay that way while making less competitive runners also welcome as members. One way that the club has maintained its competitive edge over a number of years is by providing expense money to members to compete for the club in out of town races. This motivates our members to train for races that they otherwise might not be able to get to and it attracts elite runners to the club. This policy statement examines how we support our runners and explains some recent adjustments in our policy.

### **Budget Allocation for Races**

WRC earns money from membership fees and from providing management services for local races. The earnings go into the club treasury to be used for club functions and for reimbursing expenses incurred by members who compete for the club in selected races.

The procedure for selection of these races starts with the competition committee. In January, this committee identifies races that would interest club members. Special attention is paid to races that have team competition. The list is then presented at the February club meeting where the races are discussed and a final selection is made. Next, the executive committee allocates a set amount of money for each of the selected races. The budget is kept flexible to reflect the availability of funds as the year progresses. Often the actual interest of club members in many of the

selected races will differ from the original estimates. Some races will require additional funds to meet the demand while some of the other races may have no interest when it is time for the members to sign up.

During the year, the competition committee will accept requests for races not on the original schedule. Support will be given to the extent that sufficient funds are available and that the race does not conflict with those already scheduled. For two races on the same weekend, there would be support only if the races are very different. An example of different races would be an ultra-marathon and a 10K, or a 10K and a triathlon. Support could also be available for two races the same day if no effort was being made to field teams for either one of them.

### **Efforts to Spread the Benefits**

While the club earns a considerable amount of money from its race management activities, the total is still not sufficient to reimburse members for all of their away-race expenses. Money remains a limited resource. The executive committee has developed criteria for disbursements that allow the budget to be extended to support many of our members for as many important races as possible. This means that races that are very far away and cost a lot to attend (e.g. Gasparilla, Crescent City, the LA 10K, London Marathon) will either not be on the list or support will be limited to a small percent of the total cost. In 1984, we supported our female members who ran in the Olympic Trials Marathon, but only up to 1/3 of the price of the air ticket. This was still a big help.

During the past year and a half, the executive committee has tried to spread out the race assistance budget over as many members as possible. If, for example, we had budgeted \$700 for a race that we estimated ten runners would enter, and 20 runners showed up, we would then give each runner \$35 instead of the \$70 originally planned. This suited the majority of the members and avoided complaints of discrimination even though the amount each runner would get could end up being quite small.

Recently, it has come to the attention of the executive committee that some of the better runners in the club were becoming disenchanted with this policy. We lost several of our top runners because they thought the club was not adequately supporting them while some other elite runners who remained with the club voiced their dissatisfaction with the existing policy.

### **Strategy to Increase Competitiveness**

In reviewing this problem, the committee realized that treating everyone equally did little to maximize

our competitiveness. If we give special support to our members who can bring home a trophy for us, all of the members share in the win.

The conclusion of the committee was that we would set a floor on the amount that a member of the "A" team would get for a race. The competition committee would determine the composition of the "A" team on a race by race basis. This would be done as much in advance as possible. Criteria for selection would be recent times and the interest of the member in being on the "A" team for that race. The "A" team would be the best possible men's, women's or masters' team that could win a prize. To qualify for support, an "A" team could not be just a casual grouping of members who happened to be the better runners among those who go to a race. Rather, it is a selected group of runners who target a race and train for it. By setting a floor for them, they would know that they would not be let down by the club after training for the race. Using the example above, the "A" team (or teams) members would each receive the full \$70. The remaining amount of money in that race budget would go to the other members attending the race (distributed evenly among those requesting support). We would budget enough for each race that the other members would still get a significant amount of support.

#### **Commitment from "A" Team Members**

While support is available for all club members, there are several situations in which a member might be denied support. If a person has been a member for more than six months and has never assisted at club-managed races or attended meetings, he or she might get support for one or two races but after that, support would be denied. This is because we need our members to put on races and earn the money we are paid. Another way to lose support is if a person is selected for the "A" team for a particular race and does not give the race coordinator adequate notice that he or she cannot attend. While a last minute injury or crisis at work may be excusable, reasons less serious than these would indicate lack of consideration for the club and its members. The club will make a commitment to support our "A" team members. We expect an equal commitment from them.

A big danger with the support program is that members start to see the club mainly as a financial resource and measure the importance of the club in

terms of dollars. This should be just a minor aspect of club membership but it has taken on special meaning whereby members base their allegiance to the club on the level of financial support they receive. Recently, some runners who attended a selected race ended up receiving a sum of money higher than that originally intended. This was due to an oversight by the executive committee. No ceiling had been placed on the amount each runner could receive. Fewer runners showed up than were expected and excess money was distributed among them. Some other members complained that the club had not been as generous with them and they wanted extra support as well. The lessons learned were (1) detailed criteria must be set on deciding who get how much support, and (2) a ceiling on support levels must be set for each race.

#### **The Needy and the Not-So-Needy**

Race support is made available so that our members can afford to make the trips. Many of our best runners are in their early to late 20s and are not established in their professional careers (and therefore may have limited financial resources of their own). Some of the older members may also have limited financial resources if they spend a lot of their time running instead of working. We would prefer not to write checks automatically to everybody who attends a selected race but rather only to those who specifically request support. Some of our members certainly do not need support and giving them money will reduce the amount we have available to those who need support. Each member will be responsible for personally and directly requesting support. The request is to be made to the race coordinator.

#### **Service for All Members**

We encourage all of our members to contact the race coordinators for any of the selected races they wish to enter. Some members may not wish to receive support money but should still contact the race coordinator if they want to be on one of the teams (regardless of their running skills), want help entering, want to share a ride or want to know what social activities are planned around the race. Some of the selected races are at home where the club pays the entry fee for any member who participates on a team (regardless of whether it is the "A" team or the "Z" team).