

Poker Run Race Report, Saturday February 7th 2015

You've heard of Tough Mudder races; well this year's Poker Run was a Wet Mudder! For most of the afternoon the rain fell. Not that anyone minded, judging from the smiles I saw on the faces.

Forty one runners headed off to complete as many circuits of the three courses on offer as could be squeezed into an hour. The short, (0.5km) flat course was favoured by many early on but gradually the field started venturing onto the slightly undulating intermediate (1.5km) track and a gratifyingly significant number took a right turn and headed up the steep "Blacksnake" section of Run #3.

From a spectator point of view, there was much to see. There was.....

Chivalry... Chris Simmons gallantly escorting Colleen Harisson across Atika Creek (even sheltering her with an umbrella). Top marks, Chris!

Clowning around... Lesa Hansen "lying down on the job" in (literally) Atika Creek.

Poise... Karen St Amand avoiding puddles with such flair.

Speed... Glen "Robbo" Robinson, David Moreno, Chris White and Montanna McAvoy flew around the courses despite the weather and condition of the tracks. Actually the tracks held up very well considering the number of runners. If anybody would like a little "cross training", the Cairns Mountain Bike Club welcomes anybody who can help with a bit of track maintenance. I met one such man (a cyclist) who was out there in the rain fixing the track while I was track marking on race day morning.

So, on to the winners. The winner of the Poker Run is the person who can make the best Poker hand after exchanging rubber band tokens for playing cards. This year Colleen Harisson took away the prize of a trail running tee shirt with the best Poker hand of the day. Kali Houlihan is off to the movies after collecting the best Poker hand by a Junior Runner and Montanna McAvoy also received a movie pass after completing an amazing 19 circuits.

A Race Director's job is made so much easier when there are people to help share the work load and this year an abundance of people offered and got involved.

Firstly, a huge thank you to Mel Akmentins for her pre-race work on Registration. The "General" was also very active on race day, getting runners involved. Thanks to Colleen Harisson who also helped with Registration and for mentoring some "newbies". This is the best situation we can get; volunteers taking on new tasks with a mentor to help. We hope that most of you will take on the challenge of helping out in a new role in 2015. Remember that "many hands make light work" and there will always be someone around to guide you.

Thank you ladies (Deb Drummond, Alena Scurrah and Michelle Farkas) for help with Registration and to Deb and Alena for handing out tokens and playing cards at the appropriate times.

Set up was possible thanks to Anthony Ralph, Nejo Ferik, Alex Farkas, and several others. Also, we are lucky to have such an active President at Road Runners and Glen Robinson was in the thick of it. Good ideas and willing hands are "Robbo's" trademark. It was very gratifying to have so many people pitch in and help at the end of the day too. I heard one experienced "Roadie" say it was one of the fastest "pull-downs" they had seen. Thanks everyone!

Thanks also to our "guardian angel" at Atika Creek. Chris Simmons stood out there in almost constant rain as marshal to ensure runners made a safe crossing of this rocky, watery obstacle.

Road Runners are grateful for the financial assistance given by our sponsors and this year we thank HM Health Management for their sponsorship. Located at 4/194 McLeod St (near the Pioneer Cemetery) the HM team offer dietary advice to athletes, the aged, children and those with eating disorders and weight challenges. Please support our sponsors.

The Poker Run was the club's introductory trail running event for 2015. We look forward to seeing you at our next trail run, The Blacksnake Trail Race on Sunday April 26th. Safe running, everyone. David OBrien