

History of Greater Philadelphia Track Club Teams in USATF LDR Championships

The nucleus

In November 2000, several friends got together to compete at the 2000 USATF Masters 5K XC Championships at Holmdel Park in New Jersey. Although they failed to recruit the necessary 5 scorers, Jim Cuono, Keith Davies and Chuck Shields competed for Philadelphia Masters as the nucleus that would later become this club.

Later, in 2002, this same group plus Fred Kenney and Doug Baranek again competed in the 5K XC Nationals, again at Holmdel, and were able to score a team as Bryn Mawr RC. The squad placed 6th of 7 teams in M40. Also in 2002, hopes were high that Bryn Mawr would field a strong team for the Masters 8K XC Nationals in Rochester but half the team withdrew weeks before the race leaving us with less than the necessary 5 scorers.

The beginning

Frustrated with the inability to field scoring teams, the guys started thinking about the possibility of starting our own club. In 2002, Dave Thomas formed Philadelphia Athletic Charities, Inc., a non profit organization. Dave suggested that we form a team under his banner and Philadelphia Athletic Charities Track Club (PACTC) was born in June 2003.

The club went about recruiting like-minded XC masters runners and again entered the 2003 5K XC Nationals at Holmdel Park. In its' first attempt, PACTC surprised with a 3rd place finish in the M40 division. Back then, the Masters team XC results were based on the cumulative time of the 5 top runners.

Running Company placed first with 1:25:05, Genesee Valley Harriers were 2nd in 1:27:43 while PACTC scored 1:27:53 ahead of 7 other teams. The PACTC team was comprised of Tom DeSchriver, Mike Scythes, Mark Wenneker, Keith Davies, Chuck Shields, Jim Cuono, Paul Hines and Bob Reynolds. A great beginning !

Starting in 2004, the USATF 5K Masters XC Championship would be held in Saratoga Springs, NY for the next 4 years. In that year, PACTC again entered an M40 team which placed 4th out of 6 clubs. Team Runners High from California won in 1:19:03, 2nd was Genesee Valley in 1:22:07, 3rd was Adirondack in 1:22:22 with PACTC scoring 1:25:42. The 6 PACTC runners were Chuck Shields, Mike Scythes, Keith Davies, Jim Cuono, Fred Kenney and Pete Heesen.

In 2005, USATF decided to change the Masters team scoring to the traditional "points" method, low score wins. This was beneficial to us as our cumulative time was 4th but we placed 3rd by 3 points over Taconic using the new scoring. Genesee Valley won this edition with 29 points, Adirondack 61, PACTC 74, Taconic 77 followed by 2 other teams. The 2005 squad was Chuck Shields, Jeff Hayes, Keith Davies, Adam Prince, Bob Rimkis, Jim Cuono, Bryan Carr and Greg Green. PACTC women competing in W40 included Lynne Andersson and Mary Pat McFarland.

In February 2006, our club made its' first appearance at the USA XC Championships. This is not the Club Championship, but rather, it is the National Championship which is used to select the International Open teams for Worlds, etc. It was held in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. PACTC fielded an M40 team which placed 5th of 6 teams. The scores were Team Runners High 24, Genesee Valley 57, Chester County Running 72, Central Park 82, PACTC 103 and Essex RC 195. Club members included Jeff Hayes, Larry Levy, Chuck Shields, Keith Davies, Andy Shearer, Kevin Forde and Bob Reynolds.

In the Fall of 2006 the Masters 5K XC returned to Saratoga, the PACTC M40 squad placed 3rd behind Dirigo (48), Genesee Valley (76). PACTC scored 79 ahead of Chester County (87) and 4 other teams. The M40 team was Steve Metraux, Jeff Hayes, Chuck Shields, Scott Landis, Jim Cuono and Keith Davies. This was also the first time that the club fielded a women's team. The PACTC W40 team placed 5th of 8. Shore AC 20, Finger Lakes 21, Willow Street 28, Westchester 29, PACTC 49. The squad was Sarah Tabbutt, Mary Pat McFarland, Suzanne Pacitti and Joan Affleck.

2007 5K XC Masters Nationals were again in Saratoga and this would be the last year that we would compete as PACTC. The W40 team of Joan Hunter, Audrey O'Brien, Sarah Tabbutt and Mary Pat McFarland finished 2nd of 5 teams, the highest finish of any PACTC team. The scores were Willow Street 8, PACTC 19, Greater Springfield 31, Genesee Valley 33, Central Park 43. Our M40 team placed 4th out of 8 teams. Genesee Valley 44, Greater Springfield 59, Westchester

81, PACTC 104 edging Central Park at 105. The M40 team was comprised of Chuck Shields, Bob Rimkis, Jeff Hayes, Jay Miers and Kevin Forde.

GREATER PHILADELPHIA TRACK CLUB is born

Although PACTC competed in track in the beginning of 2008, it was decided that PACTC and Dave Thomas's organization would part ways. Dave wanted to transform his organization into what would later become the Belmont Plateau Hall of Fame and the track club had grown to over 50 members, requiring a board and a more formal structure. Dave recommended the name and the Greater Philadelphia Track Club was born in the summer of 2008.

In 2008, the Masters 5K XC Championship moved to Greensboro, NC. This was the furthest the club had to travel so recruiting was difficult. Still the M40 team managed a 5th place finish. Team scores were Westchester 62, Asheville 63, Central Park 67, Atlanta TC 75, GPTC 101, Greenville 136, Twin City 144.

GPTC M40 runners were Kevin Forde, Chuck Shields, Bob Rimkis, Andy Shearer and Bryant Nix.

The W40 team of Joan Hunter, Chantal Reme and Joan Affleck placed 4th with 33 points behind Willow Street (11), Carrboro (16) and Asheville (27).

In February 2009, our club made its' second and (still to this day) last appearance at the USA XC Championships. It was held in nearby Derwood, Maryland. GPTC's only team was in M40 which placed 5th out of 10 teams. Team scores were Baltimore/Washington 29, Fluffy Bunny 35, Atlanta TC 56, Montgomery County (MD) 139, GPTC 140 followed by 5 other clubs. The squad was comprised of Kevin Forde, Bob Rimkis, Jeff Hayes, Chuck Shields, Andy Shearer, Matt Vavala, Mike McGrath and Bill Kampf. Colleen Forshee also competed as our sole female entry.

Unfortunately the Fall 2009 XC race was moved to Florida and wound up being canceled for some reason. So it was decided that the club would instead travel to the Syracuse Festival of Races for the USATF Masters 5K Road Nationals. The Road Championships were still using cumulative times for team scoring. GPTC fielded 4 teams including M50 and W50 entries (yes, we were getting older !). The highest GPTC team placing was the W50 squad of Mimi Newcomer, Cheryl Bellaire and Alison Suckling which finished second with a time of 1:02:52. Willow Street won with 1:00:03, Finger Lakes 3rd with 1:03:19. The W40 team finished 3rd. Team scores were Athena 54:31, Willow Street 55:40, GPTC 1:02:08 and Finger Lakes 1:02:28. The W40 squad was Julie Hankin, Joan Hunter and Chantal Reme.

The men's teams had a tough time. M40 finished 7th in 1:27:56 with Bob McGinty, Kevin Forde, Andy Shearer, John Costello and Bryant Nix. The M50 team placed 5th in 1:34:52 with Chuck Shields, Terry Permar, Rob Torchia, Bill Kampf and Anthony Pugliese.

Our first National Championship

In 2010, we entered only an M50 team for Syracuse but it was a good one! With Jeff Hayes leading the way, the GPTC #2 through #5 scorers were within 29 seconds of each other to score a total of 1:26:02, over 2 minutes under 2nd place Green Mountain. Atlanta TC was 3rd. GPTC's first LDR National Championship! Members included Jeff Hayes, Ted Trocky, Terry Permar, Peter Churchman, Chuck Shields, Bill Kampf and Bill King.

In 2011, we decided to go to both the 5K Road Nationals in Syracuse and the 5K XC race in Rochester, two weeks apart. This may not have been wise, as it ultimately "split our forces". First was Syracuse. USATF decided to reduce the number of scorers for men's teams to 3 instead of 5. We entered squads in M40, M50 and for the first time, M60. The M40 squad placed 2nd with Nick Berra, Kevin Forde, Neill Clark, Dave Brown and Bryant Nix. Scores were Atlanta 47:22, GPTC 50:03, Utica 52:23.

Our M50 team placed 5th in 57:54 and was comprised of Chuck Shields, Paul Hines, Anthony Pugliese and Bill King. The M60 team of Gene Dykes, Tom Jennings and Rob Torchia placed 7th with a score of 1:04:09.

GPTC then sent an M40 team and an incomplete M50 team to Rochester for the XC Championship. The M40 team placed 3rd. Genesee Valley won with 29 points, Westchester was 2nd with 41, GPTC 69, Central Park 78. M40 consisted of Kevin Forde, Gene Tung, Andy Shearer, Chris Carroll and Dave Brown.

The M50 runners were Chuck Shields, Bob Rimkis, Keith Davies and Bill King.

2012 saw our last trip to Syracuse for Road Nationals. Both of the GPTC squads placed 4th. The M40 team was comprised of Nick Berra, Bill Gould, Delvin Dinkins, Kevin Forde and Andy Shearer. W40 team finishes were Atlanta 46:41, Genesee Valley 49:58, Syracuse 50:25, GPTC 51:12, Colonial 51:32, GPTC "B" 57:51. The B team consisted of Gene Tung, Bryant Nix and Craig Strimel. The M50 team included Chuck Shields, Bruce Rash, Paul Hines, Bill Kampf and Bill King. Team scores were Genesee Valley 51:45, Atlanta 52:49, Syracuse 54:56, GPTC 57:16 ahead of 3 other teams.

The Big Turnouts

In 2013, the Masters 5K XC Nationals basically became a home meet as it moved to nearby Flemington, NJ in Deer Path Park, the site of numerous NJ Association Championship races. GPTC entered 47 runners on 7 teams. Led by Sean Smith and with #2 through #5 scorers being only 16 seconds apart, the GPTC M50 team won its' first Masters XC title. Team scores were GPTC 49, Genesee Valley 74, Pike Creek 94 followed by 10 other teams. The B squad finished 10th. The M50 lineups were:

| A | B |
|----------------|----------------|
| Sean Smith | Brian Driscoll |
| Scott Brockett | Bruce Rash |
| Jeff Hayes | Duncan Smith |
| Bob Rimkis | Bob Lund |
| Chuck Shields | Bill Kampf |
| Jim Anderson | Ross Ellis |
| Sean Harbison | |
| Jim Cuono | |

In the M40 division, GPTC entered 3 scoring teams. The A team placed 4th with 115 points. Atlanta placed first with 27, Baltimore Washington 66 and Team Pearl Izumi was 3rd with 77. The B team placed 9th and the C team 13th. The M40 lineups were:

| A | B | C |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Nick Berra | Gene Tung | Matt Vavala |
| Joe Warwick | Delvin Dinkins | Andrew Albright |
| Bill Gould | Alan Cook | Steve Metraux |
| Scott Landis | Ross Felice | Craig Strimel |
| Mike Gross | Jim Rinker | Rob Schwartz |
| Andy Shearer | | Kevin Tofel |
| Eric Grevin | | |
| Neill Clark | | |

The M60 team squeezed out a 3rd place nail biter by 1 point. First was Shore AC with 40, Genesee Valley 45, GPTC 112, Raritan Valley 113 followed by 3 other teams. The M60s were comprised of Don Morrison, Tom Jennings, Denny Mellish, Steve Fidler, Steve Sawyer, Fred Dedrick, Steve Rook, Vince Aloyo and Rob Torchia.

Our W40 team placed 5th of 12 teams with 41 points behind Central Park (26), Runners High (29), Garmin Runners (31) and Athena (37). The team was Sheila Regan, Joan Hunter, Joann Klempner, Lynne Andersson and Chantal Reme.

Our first club appearance at USATF Club XC Nationals was in December 2014 at Lehigh University. GPTC entered 60 individuals and 9 scoring teams. This would also be a very first entry for an Open Women's team.

Our top team finish was in M50 where GPTC finished 5th out of 25. Our B team finished 15th. Top scores were Club Northwest 62, Cal Coast 86, Playmakers Elite 102, Genesee Valley 103, GPTC 137, Pike Creek 173. GPTC M50 rosters were:

| A | B |
|----------------|----------------|
| Ken Barbee | Steve Metraux |
| Andy Shearer | Bob Reynolds |
| Scott Brockett | Jim Cuono |
| Mark Carver | Brian Driscoll |

Chuck Shields
Jeff Hayes
Mike Precopio
Kevin Forde

Larry Rechten
Anthony Pugliese
Nick Simonetti
Duncan Smith

The GPTC M60 team of Terry Permar, Gene Dykes, Don Morrison, Tom Jennings, Fred Dedrick, Vince Aloyo, Denny Mellish and Steve Sawyer placed 6th of 13 teams. Top scores were Atlanta 78, Ann Arbor 82, Cal Coast 95, Shore AC 99, Genesee Valley 125, GPTC 133.

Our W50 team finished 13th of 23 teams. The GPTC B team finished 21st. The A team was comprised of Michele Keane, Stephanie Saucy, Michelle Pollio and Christine Kelley. The B team was Alicia Luba, Sandy Folzer, Carla Crosby and Diane McManus.

The GPTC W40 team of Julie Deery, Joanne Klempner and Joan Hunter placed 16th of 32 teams. The club had two entries in M40 with the A team placing 19th and the B team 36th out of 40 teams. The M40 rosters were:

| A | B |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Mike Padilla | Paul Patterson |
| Mike Gross | Jamie Steen |
| Joe Warwick | Andrew Albright |
| Butch Oberlander | Neill Clark |
| Bill Gould | Carl Stocking |
| Gene Tung | |
| Chuck Kruelle | |
| Jim Rinker | |

The Open Women's team placed 29th of 38 teams and consisted of Margaret Diacont, Traci Tempone, Nicole Danielewicz, Megan Shah, Liz Stocking, Rachel Wise and Jenn Hawkes. Due to some late no-shows, we were unable to field an Open's Men team but John Goldthorp, Ken Hite, Mike Kaucher and Kevin McLaughlin represented GPTC. This event was (and still is) the biggest participation of GPTC membership in club history.

In 2015, the 5K XC Masters Championships returned to Saratoga Springs. We fielded complete teams in M50, M60 and W50. We had an incomplete team in W40. Our top finish was in M50 where we placed 2nd. Top team scores were Genesee Valley 19, GPTC 58, Adirondack 71. The team was made up of Kevin Forde, Larry Rechten, Chuck Shields, Jim Rinker and Carl Stocking.

Our M60 team placed 7th of 9 teams. The team was Don Morrison, Tom Jennings and Fred Dedrick. Our W50 placed 6th of 7 teams. Scorers were Colleen Forshee, Mary Pat McFarland and Michele Pollio. M40 runners who competed included Paul Vandegrift, Mike Gross, Gene Tung and Chuck Kruelle.

In 2017, the 5K XC Masters Championship returned to the Northeast and were held in venerable Franklin Park in Boston, MA. We fielded teams in W50, M40, M50, M60 and for the first time, M70.

The M70 team of Tom Jennings, Vince Aloyo and Jim Assal debuted in fine form, capturing 3rd place. M70 scores were New England 11, Genesee 14, GPTC 28, Atlanta 30, Atlanta B 51. Our M60 team placed 5th of 9. Team scores were Shore AC 17, Atlanta 19, Greater Lowell 22, Dirigo 32, GPTC 35 followed by 4 others. M60 team, in order of finish, was Bob Reynolds, Phil Reilly Sr, Don Morrison, Denny Mellish and Bob Lund. Fred Dedrick also ran undeclared.

The M50 team placed 6th of 7 but only 5 points away from 4th place. The M50 team, in order, was Ken Barbee, Dan Mazo, Andy Shearer, Chuck Shields, Larry Rechten, Scott Armstrong, Anthony Pugliese and Carl Stocking.

GPTC M40 placed 8th of 11 teams and included Dante Zappala, Paul Vandegrift, Phil Reilly Jr, Delvin Dinkins, Leo Kolshorn and Chuck Kruelle. The W50 team of Mary Pat McFarland, Mary Fanelli Lund and Michele Pollio placed 9th of 10 squads. In all, 26 GPTC club members raced, making it the biggest LDR contingent to travel to an "Away" Championship.

In 2018, the 5K XC Masters Championship was held in Buffalo, NY at Delaware Park, a two loop, very fast and flat course. Consensus was that the course was long by about a tenth of a mile. The race was held very early in the season, third week of September. The weather was perfect, sunny but not too warm. We sent 19 runners and fielded 4 teams in M40, M50, M60 and M70.

The M70 team of Gene Dykes, Tom Jennings, Fred Dedrick and Jim Assal placed 2nd in a very tight race. Gene Dykes handily won the M70 division while Jim Assal placed 2nd in M75. M70 scores were Ann Arbor 9, GPTC 24, Genesee Valley 25, Atlanta 26, Atlanta B 50, Central Park 63.

Our M50 squad also placed high with a third place finish. Tim Harte placed 3rd in M50 while Dan Mazo also placed 3rd in M55. The M50 team, in order, was Tim Harte, Dan Mazo, Chuck Shields, Keith Davies, Tom DeSchraver and Brian Lundberg. Team scores were Central Park 38, Genesee Valley 54, GPTC 76, Checkers 93, Eastern Buckeye 100.

The M60 team place 5th of 8 teams. The M60 team, in order, was Bob Reynolds, Phil Reilly, Don Morrison and Bob Lund. The M40 team placed 4th with Matt DiPretore, Delvin Dinkins, Brian Turdo, Donovan Rebecchi and Neill Clark.

Return to Lehigh!

On December 14, 2019 the USATF Club XC Nationals returned to Lehigh University and produced the biggest participation (over 2,000!) in the meet's history surpassing its own 2014 mark. GPTC sent 67 members to the start line and fielded 10 full scoring teams making it the biggest GPTC participation in any USATF event. The club's efforts yielded two podium positions for teams and Gene Dykes placed 2nd in M70.

M70 and M60 ran in the first race of the day which was 8K. The M70 team was Gene Dykes, Seth Bergman, Tom Jennings and Jim Assal. GPTC placed 3rd of 9 clubs. Top scores were Ann Arbor TC 22, San Diego Striders 25 and GPTC 29. In M60, GPTC yielded 3 full teams of 5 and Tom DeSchraver also competed as undeclared. The A team placed 3rd of 41 teams while the B team was 23rd and the C team 28th. Scores were Greater Lowell 23, Run N Fun 33, GPTC "A" 43, Athletics Boulder 63 and Club Northwest 64. GPTC "B" scored 252 while "C" was 316. GPTC M60 rosters were:

| A | B | C |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| Chuck Shields | Brian Driscoll | Nick Vetere |
| Tim Conheady | Nick Simonetti | Bob Lund |
| Bob Reynolds | Fernando Moura | Denny Mellish |
| Keith Davies | Anthony Pugliese | Frank Angiolillo |
| Terry Permar | Duncan Smith | Tom Wise |

The second race was the Masters' Women 6K. GPTC fielded teams in W40 and W50 and Alison Schwalm competed as undeclared. The W40 team of Justyna Wilson, Sue Delfidio, Jenn Lippincott and Sheila Regan placed 10th of 25 teams. The W50 team of Mary Pat McFarland, Becky Montini, Alicia Luba, Michele Pollio and Christine Kelley placed 21st of 25 teams.

M50 and M40 ran in the 3rd race which was a 10K. GPTC entered A and B teams in M50 as follows:

| A | B |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Tim Harte | Bruce Weber |
| Ken Barbee | Scott Brockett |
| Paul Vandegrift | Lee Woolley |
| Kevin Cooke | Stan Hatch |
| Dan Mazo | Mike Gross |
| Scott Armstrong | Larry Rehtin |
| Mike Dechnik | Jim Narron |

Paul Montini
Andy Shearer

Jim Rinker
Marty Palmer

The M50 "A" team placed 4th of 24 teams while the "B" was 15th. Top scores were Greater Springfield 51, Club Northwest 67, TC Running 104, GPTC "A" 142, Garden State 144. GPTC "B" scored 431 points.

The M40 team of Brock Butler, Mike Padilla, Dave Scholl, John Becker, Josh Irvan, John Goldthorp, Josh Finger, Dante Zappala and Paul Patterson placed 7th of 32 teams. Reza Manavi, Seamus Cummins and Andrew Albright also ran undeclared. Top scores were West Valley 31, Cal Coast 97, Bowerman 139, Run MN 164, Boston AA 192, Central Mass 253, GPTC 297.

Rachel Wise and Colleen Tozer raced in the fourth race, Open Women 6K, while GPTC fielded a Men's team for the final race, Open 10K. The team was comprised of Brian Dreibelbis, Scott Burns, Paul Springer, Mitch Schlegel and Tim Pappas.

To be continued.... Boston, October, 2020!