

History of the Forks XV Race

by Jim Bilik, 1982

[Editor's note: Jim Bilik wrote this history of the Forks XV in 1982 for the Triple Cities Runners Club (TCRC) newsletter. A few years earlier he wrote a history of local road racing which was published in the *Sunday Press* section *Susquehanna*. Alan Jones]

For some people it's seeing their first robin; for others it's the sound of a baseball striking a mitt. But for Triple Cities Runners Club runners, the unmistakable sign of spring is the Forks XV. Boasting a fast, certified course and near-perfect race organization, the nine-year old 15-kilometer race has become one of the most popular races in the area. As the first event on the schedule, the Forks XV offers area runners the opportunity to shed their bulky winter sweat clothes and to renew the friendships and rivalries that were suspended over the winter.

The Forks XV was conceived in 1973 by Dale Held, who has served as race director since the race's inception, and his neighbor, Broome Community College teacher Keith Hartman. Held, who had begun running for health reasons in 1968, and Hartman, an experienced and capable road racer (before leaving the area he would run a marathon in the neighborhood of 2:25, a nice neighborhood), agreed that the gently rolling terrain near their Chenango Bridge homes would be an ideal site for a road race. Held contacted Alan Jones, president of the two-year-old TCRC, and asked him what he thought of the idea. Since there were few races in the area, Alan was very receptive to the idea, especially when Dale volunteered to serve as the race director.

The first Forks XV was held on March 31, 1973. Keith Hartman, who had played a prominent role in laying out the course, graciously showed the way to 76 other runners. Corning policeman Don Brown finished second in 49:52 with SUNY-Binghamton grad Gary Wallace third in 50:08. Hartman's time of 49:01 clocking still stands as the tenth fastest in the race's history. Fourteen-year-old Diane Held was the women's winner, clocking 1:10:57.

A year later, Catholic Central grad, Pat Maher won the first of his two titles. A freshman at Edinboro State, Maher beat a flu-weakened Keith Hartman by 84 seconds with a time of 50:25. Don Brown (52:27), Pete Tylenda (53:21) and Bob Congon (53:37) completed the top five. Ithaca's Tim MacNeil (6th in 54:01) took high school honors, John Reppy of the Finger Lakes Runners Club (FLRC) won the Masters Division (56:43, 14th overall), and Diane Held repeated as women's champion in 1:15:12.

Construction on the course forced cancellation of the race in 1975. Pat Maher, after waiting two years to defend his title, pulled away from Gary Wallace after three miles to win in 1976 in 49:15. Wallace (50:43), Alan Kleinwasser (51:15), Pete Tylenda (51:53) and Catholic Centra's Mike Morris (52:01) followed Maher across the line. John Reppy successfully defended his Masters title, finishing 10th in 53:59. Ithaca High School teammates Martha Stinson and Karin VonBerg ran together, lowering the women's record to 1:09:01.

The 1977 race featured a duel between Tom Carter and Gary Wallace. Carter pulled away after seven miles and went on to break Keith Hartman's four-year-old course record by over two minutes with a 46:58 clocking. Wallace also shattered the old mark with a 47:30. John

Kaufman of the Greater Rochester Track Club finished third in 49:30 followed by Allentown's Mark Webber in 50:04 and Pete Tylenda in 50:20. Pam Tomek, third behind Stinson and VonBerg in 1976, knocked nearly five minutes off her time to take the women's honors in a record 1:07:53.

Between 1977 and 1978, the race doubled in size. From 101 starters and 96 finishers (both records) in '77, the field swelled to 208 entries in 1978. Chip Boehm, running in his hometown race for only the second time, scored an impressive victory in 48:29. Susquehanna Valley grad Tom Kinsman (50:03) and two-time winner Pat Maher (50:30) finished 2-3. A record 24 women competed, five of them breaking the course record. For the second consecutive year, Pam Tomek improved her time by five minutes, but her fine 1:02:48 clocking left her 78 seconds behind Maine-Endwell teammate Suzanne Girard who lowered the record to 1:01:30. Sue Bolles of Montrose, Endicott's Margaret Weaver, and Jennifer Sunden (FLRC) also better Tomek's year-old mark. Girard, Tomek, and Weaver won the National Road Runner's Club of America Postal 15 kilometer championship women's team-championship with their times in this race. TCRC president Alan Jones won the 40-49 age-group in 58:15.

The race's incredible growth continued as 301 runners went the distance in 1979. Vestal grad Jim Knight, in his senior year at Bucknell, won in 48:55. In hot pursuit were Bill Huff of Morrisville A&T (49:13) and TCRC's Tom Prorock (49:17). Forty-year-old Terry Merritt clocked an excellent 51:15, good for tenth place. The race's oldest finisher, 63-year-old Andy Malanchuk, ran a remarkable 1:05:28. But, despite these outstanding performances, the men were upstaged by Suzanne Girard. All Girard did was repeat her 1978 victory, knock 5:01 off her own course record, and set a National age-16 record in the process. Terri Merritt (1:02:30), Laura VanDenburg (1:04:05), Sara Smith (1:06:13), and Jody Skinner (1:07:01) rounded out the top five women.

Few Triple-Cities area running buffs had heard of Pete Pfitzinger prior to the 1980 race even though the Cornell grad student's credentials included a Heptagonal Games 10,000 meter title and a fine personal record of 29:25 for 10,000 meters. Pfitzinger battled Bill Fisher for seven miles before pulling away on the hills to win in a record with a time of 46:35. Tom Carter (47:40), Chuck Ellis (49:04), Pete Tylenda (49:34), and Cliff Bills (49:56) all broke 50 minutes in the biggest XV ever. After his win here, the 22-year-old Pfitzinger achieved national acclaim with a series of high finishes in elite races (e.g. third in the 1980 Peacetree 10 km). In 1981 a 43:37 15 km (find that one on your pace chart!), a TAC 30 km title, and a 2:12:41 marathon were the highlights of a year that would have made Bill Rodgers proud. [Editor's note. After Jim wrote this history, Pete went on to run in two Olympics. He came in 11th in the marathon in the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 and 14th in the Seoul games in 1988. He also won the San Francisco Marathon in 1983 and 1986.]

Suzanne Girard, now a high school senior and holder of numerous Intersectional girls titles, crowned her 3-year dominance of the women's competition with her third consecutive course record, a brilliant 55:39. Fine performances were also turned in by Owego's Jo Burrell (second in 1:01:35) and Ann Miller (third in 1:01:40).

The race's rapid growth had created some difficulties in 1980 when some of the front runners became entangled with some slower runners whom they had lapped during the two and two-thirds laps of the school parking lot at the start of the race. Race director Dale Held

redesigned the start, eliminating the troublesome laps around the school lot. That problem put to rest, the 1981 race was a model of efficient organization.

Two former champions, Jim Knight and Tom Carter, broke from the pack and reached the two-mile mark in a torrid 9:30. Midway through the race, Knight began to pull away. He won in 46:35, the second fastest time ever run on the course. Carter clocked a fine 47:13 in second place. Windsorites Bob Pulz (49:35) and Pete Tylenda (49:58) finished 3-4 with 39-year-old Ray Kneer of Homer fifth in 51:02.

With Suzanne Girard doing her running for national power North Carolina State, the women's title was up for grabs. 1980 runner up Jo Burrell, running for SUNY-Binghamton, held off Maine-Endwell senior Karen Zanni to win by 12 seconds. Burrell (59:05) and Zanni (59:17) joined Suzanne Girard as the only women to break 60 minutes. Lori O'Connor took third in 1:03:08, 44-year-old Margret Betz of Conklin ran an impressive 1:05:08 in fourth place, and Ronnie Goldberg took fifth in 1:08:24. Thirty-two women finished.

The ninth annual Forks XV will be held Sunday March 21. Mail your entry inearly; it's a great way to get your mind off wintertime.

Post Script: In 1982 Tom Carter set a course record of 46:15 which still stands to this day. Chip Boehm was second in 47:20 and Pat Maher was third in 49:48. They were followed by Pete Tylenda (50:00) and Terry Merritt (50:48).

In 1994, Cindi Girard broke her sister's 14-year-old record with a run of 54:01. That record still stands.

Forks XV age-group records

	MALE AGE GROUP 1 - 12	
Nichols, Benjamin	12 Endicott	NY 2002 1:02:59
	MALE AGE GROUP 13 - 14	
Backus, Bob	14 Chenango Forks	NY 1979 0:56:25
	MALE AGE GROUP 15 - 16	
Halstrom, Rich	16 Chenango Forks	NY 1978 0:53:20
	MALE AGE GROUP 17 - 18	
Huff, William	18	NY 1979 0:49:13
	MALE AGE GROUP 35 - 39	
Carter, Tom	35 Johnson City	NY 1988 0:47:31
	MALE AGE GROUP 40 - 44	
Merritt, Terry	43 Apalachin	NY 1982 0:50:48
	MALE AGE GROUP 45 - 49	
Kneer, Ray	49 Summer Hill	NY 1991 0:52:45
	MALE AGE GROUP 50 - 54	
Stabler, Ed	54 Syracuse	NY 1984 0:54:00
	MALE AGE GROUP 55 - 59	
Giambalvo, Bob	55 Delhi	NY 2005 0:56:21
	MALE AGE GROUP 60 - 64	
Cerminaro, Tony	60 Jermyn	PA 1997 0:58:56
	MALE AGE GROUP 65 - 69	
Morgan, Hubert	65 Sayre	PA 1987 1:09:14
	MALE AGE GROUP 70 - 99	
Cerminano, Tony	72 Jermyn	PA 2009 1:07:26
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 1 - 12	

Butterfield, Wendy	12 Pama Kids	NY 1973	1:23:10
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 13 - 14		
Bolles, Sue	14 Montrose	PA 1978	1:04:03
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 15 - 16		
Girard, Suzanne	15 Endwell	NY 1978	1:01:30
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 17 - 18		
Girard, Suzanne	17 Endwell	NY 1980	0:55:41
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 35 - 39		
Aldridge, Katie	35 Alpine	NY 2009	0:58:10
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 40 - 44		
Bryans, Emily	40 Schenectady	NY 2008	0:58:14
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 45 - 49		
Myette, Suzanne	45 Endicott	NY 2003	1:02:05
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 50 - 54		
Betz, Margret	54 Conklin	NY 1991	1:03:22
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 55 - 59		
Betz, Margret	58 Conklin	NY 1995	1:03:18
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 60 - 64		
Betz, Margret	62 Conklin	NY 1999	1:07:43
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 65 - 69		
Betz, Margret	65 Conklin	NY 2001	1:09:46
	FEMALE AGE GROUP 70 - 99		
Betz, Margret	72 Conklin	NY 2009	1:26:59

Single-age records

SINGLE AGE FEMALE BESTS FOR FORKS XV

Age	Year	Place	Name	City	St	Time
====	=====	=====	=====	=====	==	=====
11	1981	285	Murphy, Colleen	NYA	NY	1:25:09
12	1973	71	Butterfield, Wendy	Pama Kids	NY	1:23:10
13	1996	57	Aris, Andrea	Fayetteville	NY	1:05:55
14	1978	84	Bolles, Sue	Montrose	PA	1:04:03
15	1978	53	Girard, Suzanne	Endwell	NY	1:01:30
16	1984	92	Sierzant, Michelle	Apalachin	NY	1:02:05
17	1980	34	Girard, Suzanne	Endwell	NY	0:55:41
18	1979	105	Vandenburg, Laura	SUNY Binghamton	NY	1:04:05
19	1980	108	Burrell, Joann	Bucknell	NY	1:01:37
20	1981	70	Burrell, Joann	SUNY Binghamton	NY	0:59:05
21	2009	6	Radzik, Katie	Binghamton	NY	0:55:56
22	1991	75	Selleck, Stephanie	Guilford	NY	1:03:30
23	1988	71	Hush, Terri	Binghamton	NY	1:04:46
24	1990	47	Knapp, Mary	Ithaca	NY	0:58:37
25	1995	10	Wiegand, Patricia	Johnson City	NY	0:55:05
26	1992	43	Lyford, Charlene	Afton	NY	0:59:20
27	1985	36	Eich, Carolyn	Fayetteville	NY	0:56:51
28	1997	48	Vollweiler, Jill	Syracuse	NY	1:02:46
29	1992	86	Doyle, Heather	Binghamton	NY	1:05:20
30	2004	16	Danner, Katherine	Alpine	NY	1:00:11
31	1997	20	Lyford, Charlene	Greene	NY	0:56:47
32	1994	12	Girard, Cindi	Red Bank	MJ	0:54:01
33	1999	10	Lyford, Charlene	Greene	NY	0:56:07
34	1985	31	Burke, Andrea	Endicott	NY	0:56:40

35	2009	11	Aldridge, Katie	Alpine	NY	0:58:10
36	2002	19	Lyford, Charlene	Greene	NY	0:58:15
37	1995	44	Myette, Suzanne	Endicott	NY	1:03:08
38	2001	33	Winslow, Christa	Binghamton	NY	1:01:19
39	2003	21	Winslow, Christa	Binghamton	NY	1:02:52
40	2008	13	Bryans, Emily	Schenectady	NY	0:58:14
41	1999	34	Myette, Suzanne	Endicott	NY	1:01:05
42	2000	30	Myette, Suzanne	Endicott	NY	1:00:58
43	2006	21	Dworak, Kelly	Carlisle Barracks	PA	1:00:31
44	2002	33	Myette, Suzanne	Endicott	NY	1:01:52
45	2003	19	Myette, Suzanne	Endicott	NY	1:02:05
46	2002	55	Fulgieri, Theresa	Endicott	NY	1:07:38
47	1995	124	Morrissey, Barbara	Owego	NY	1:14:54
48	1996	112	Morrissey, Barbara	Owego	NY	1:14:16
49	2007	25	Myette, Suzanne	Endicott	NY	1:03:08
50	1987	68	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:04:31
51	1988	81	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:06:28
52	1989	77	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:04:28
53	1990	88	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:03:53
54	1991	71	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:03:22
55	1992	99	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:06:58
56	1993	63	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:04:08
57	2009	65	Werthmuller, Nancy	Scranton	PA	1:12:15
58	1995	45	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:03:18
59	1996	68	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:07:27
60	1999	130	Tucker, Lennie	Baldwinsville	NY	1:16:05
61	2009	128	Morrissey, Barbara	Owego	NY	1:21:23
62	1999	75	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:07:43
63	2000	88	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:10:30
64	2003	102	Tucker, Lennie	Baldwinsville	NY	1:22:20
65	2001	62	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:09:46
66	2003	62	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:12:58
67	2006	112	Tucker, Lennie	Baldwinsville	NY	1:20:39
68	2005	77	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:17:02
70	2009	173	Tucker, Lennie	Fayetteville	NY	1:34:25
72	2009	145	Betz, Margret	Conklin	NY	1:26:59

SINGLE AGE MALE BESTS FOR FORKS XV

Age	Year	Place	Name	City	St	Time
====	=====	=====	=====	=====	==	=====
8	1979	236	Tomek, Danny	Endwell	NY	1:15:40
9	1980	149	Tomek, Danny	Endwell	NY	1:04:39
10	1981	170	Tomek, Danny	Endwell	NY	1:08:05
11	1980	127	Kronk, Chris	Binghamton	NY	1:03:05
12	2002	36	Nichols, Benjamin	Endicott	NY	1:02:59
13	1979	63	Browne, Dan	Chenango Forks	NY	0:59:21
14	1979	36	Backus, Bob	Chenango Forks	NY	0:56:25
15	1980	27	Backus, Bob	TCRC	NY	0:55:14
16	1978	10	Halstrom, Rich	Chenango Forks	NY	0:53:20
17	1980	10	Cattarin, Gary	Endwell	NY	0:51:50
18	1979	2	Huff, William		NY	0:49:13
19	1980	4	Ellis, Chuck	Rochester	NY	0:49:06
20	1979	1	Knight, James	Vestal	NY	0:48:55

21	1978	1 Boehm, Chip	Chenango Forks	NY	0:48:29
22	1980	1 Pfitzinger, Peter	Ithaca	NY	0:46:19
23	1981	2 Carter, Don	Lechner's Service	NY	0:47:13
24	1977	1 Carter, Tom	Vestal	NY	0:46:58
25	1982	2 Boehm, Chip	Chenango Forks	NY	0:47:20
26	1990	1 Bunsey, Mike	Ithaca	NY	0:47:35
27	1977	2 Wallace, Gary	SUNY Binghamton	NY	0:47:34
28	1985	2 Leonard, Thomas	Endwell	NY	0:48:57
29	1980	5 Tylenda, Peter	Windsor	NY	0:49:36
30	1982	1 Carter, Tom	Lechner's Service	NY	0:46:15
31	1984	1 Carter, Tom	Endicott	NY	0:47:44
32	1985	1 Carter, Tom	Endicott	NY	0:46:57
33	1991	2 Anderson, Lee	Endwell	NY	0:50:01
34	1995	1 Nugent, Bob	Binghamton	NY	0:49:12
35	1988	1 Carter, Tom	Johnson City	NY	0:47:31
36	1989	2 Carter, Tom	Binghamton	NY	0:48:39
37	1990	2 Carter, Tom	Binghamton	NY	0:49:03
38	1991	1 Carter, Tom	Binghamton	NY	0:48:17
39	1981	5 Kneer, Ray	Syracuse	NY	0:51:02
40	1979	10 Merritt, Terry	Vestal	NY	0:51:15
41	2007	2 Derick, Jim	Big Flats	NY	0:51:43
42	2008	1 Muchow, Marty	Fort Drum	NY	0:51:56
43	1982	5 Merritt, Terry	Apalachin	NY	0:50:48
44	1997	3 Carter, Tom	Johnson City	NY	0:51:25
45	1981	15 Bakely, Jack	Ithaca	NY	0:53:08
46	2008	5 Fancher, Gary	Windsor	NY	0:55:36
47	1988	18 Groome, George	Vestal	NY	0:56:49
48	1992	22 Natelli, Paul	Endwell	NY	0:55:49
49	1991	10 Kneer, Ray	Summer Hill	NY	0:52:45
50	1993	19 Smith, Jerry	Manlius	NY	0:56:20
51	1995	20 Natelli, Paul	Endwell	NY	0:57:07
52	1984	32 O'Brian, Bill	Syracuse	NY	0:56:45
53	1990	40 Graceffo, Sam	Syracuse	NY	0:58:03
54	1984	12 Stabler, Ed	Syracuse	NY	0:54:00
55	2005	6 Giambalvo, Bob	Delhi	NY	0:56:21
56	2006	7 Giambalvo, Bob	Delhi	NY	0:56:26
57	1994	24 Cerminaro, Tony	Jermyn	PA	0:56:47
58	2009	16 Wood, Doug	Canastota	NY	1:02:41
59	1989	26 Stabler, Ed	N. Syracuse	NY	0:56:59
60	1997	30 Cerminaro, Tony	Jermyn	PA	0:58:56
61	2008	43 Yoon, Bong Joon	Vestal	NY	1:04:40
62	1991	48 Rubin, Howard	New Hartford	NY	1:00:53
63	1992	58 Rubin, Howard	New Hartford	NY	1:01:47
64	1993	57 Rubin, Howard	New Hartford	NY	1:03:09
65	1987	97 Morgan, Hubert	Sayre	PA	1:09:14
66	2006	75 Flynn, Brendan	Binghamton	NY	1:13:45
67	1988	115 Russell, Philip	Kirkwood	NY	1:11:32
68	2002	104 Verwys, George	Vestal	NY	1:19:34
69	1990	137 Russell, Philip	Kirkwood	NY	1:09:19
70	1991	131 Russell, Philip	Kirkwood	NY	1:10:41
71	1991	153 White, Nate	Fayetteville	NY	1:13:15
72	2009	43 Cerminano, Tony	Jermyn	PA	1:07:26
73	1993	133 White, Nate	Fayetteville	NY	1:13:44
74	1981	230 Hackenheimer, Charlie	Syracuse	NY	1:13:58

75	1982	187	Hackenheimer, Charlie	Central Square	NY	1:14:28
76	1997	195	Russell, Philip	Kirkland	NY	1:32:04
77	2000	182	Schweizer, Bill	Owego	NY	1:36:01
80	2004	145	Familo, Joseph	Oswego	NY	1:55:11
81	2005	117	Familo, Joseph	Oswego	NY	3:00:00

