

Tim Kennard River Run Dominated By DiGregorio and Stick

By George Banker

“Everything about the Tim Kennard River Run is always so well organized- from the communication to participants prior to the race, packet pickup, and the incredible post-race food selection. The course is always well marked and easy to follow. A big thank you to the race directors and volunteers who make this event such a success,” Sherry Stick of Sykesville, Md.

The race is to honor the memory of Salisbury resident Tim Kennard, who lost his battle with kidney cancer on March 4, 2004, at 48. It was Kennard’s wish to have a race to benefit children and animals. The first four years of the race was a 5K. In 2008 they changed it to a 10-miler and 5K.

On **Sunday, March 19, 2023**, was the 18th Tim Kennard River Rin 10-Miler and the 14th 5K.

10 Mile

Tim Synowiec of Salisbury, Md. set the event record for the 10-miler, (2022- 51:28). Megan DiGregorio of White Marsh, Md., (2017–1:01:36 set the female time).

Salisbury University Hall of Fame Doug set the master male record Mock, (2009–56:12).

Visually impaired runner Susan Graham-Gray of Greencastle, Pa. set the female record, (2009–1:02:26).

Last year was an alternative course which Tim Synowiec set the new record. This year four-time winner Graham Peck (2012-2015) with a best time of 52:47) was on the start line along with Nicholas Kratovil of Munson, Massachusetts. Salisbury resident Tyler Muse had joined the leaders off the start line.

All events started simultaneously, and they shared the same course. Going into the first mile, the course separated. The leaders pulled away from the trailing runners. The leaders took advantage of the ideal weather. As the race unfolded, Muse pulled away, and the move was not covered.

Muse had put the race out of touch and took first in a time of 55:55. Peck held in for a second place in a time of 57:34, with Kratovil taking third in 1:04:46.

Cody Donovan of Baltimore was the winning master in a time of 1:09:00 (5th place). Phil Shields of Salisbury took the second position in a time of 1:10:46 (6th place).

The competition at the front of this race can be small but fierce. I think the special thing about this race is that the camaraderie makes it all the more motivating, and of course the crowd support is outstanding,” stated **Donovan**.

This year, I had no intention of running very fast. I was content with last year’s performance, and haven’t been running very much these days, mostly sticking to cycling and swimming. The day before this year’s race, I set out on a swift and windy 45 mile bike ride in Centreville, MD, on the way to Salisbury for Saturday’s packet pick up. As always, I was just happy to be there more than anything else.

“At the start of Sunday’s race, I set out running alongside my Falls Road racing team partners, Erin, Jodi, and Kaylyn, at what felt like a fast but comfortable pace. It was a speed at which I felt I could maintain, especially with their company, for the duration of the run,” added Donovan.

Donovan added, “I suppose I was distracted, or maybe it was just so windy that it was hard to hear the course marshals, but I ended up running in the wrong direction for a considerable length before my friend, teammate, and 5K master’s winner Ryan yelled out, ‘Cory! TURN AROUND!’ “. I made a quick U-turn and found myself kicking into high gear.”

Trailing behind the fifth male was the top female, five-time winner, Megan DiGregorio of Baltimore. Erin Surette of Towson holding in second place. Surette, in 2022 placed fourth (1:09:52). DiGregorio was holding fast to maintain first place for her sixth win in a time of 1:06:27.

Surette placed second in a time of 1:07:59 and was the first master. Jody Berinato of Lutherville placed third in a time of 1:08:08 and was the second master.

“The goal was to snag another win. My legs were pretty beat this year. I raced a lot of races back-to-back weekends and had just raced a 5K that Friday before the race. My legs were tired. So I was just going to go out at a pace that would keep me in the lead and if someone came up on me, I would push to run a little faster,” stated **DiGregorio**.

“I knew my competition for the most part. Other teammate and other women I’ve raced in the past. Unless there was a new woman that’s a sub 1:05 I didn’t see anyone I had a concern about. Our group makes the trip every year. We celebrate a friend’s birthday and run this race to support the community and honor Tim’s loss,” added DiGregorio.

“Right now, I have been doing a lot of half marathons. I like all distances short and long and I mix it up all the time, so I don’t burn out! I have been running for 25 years,” stated DiGregorio.

“There are several reasons I continue to run this race every year. First is the hospitality extended by Henry Peck; having everyone together for dinner the night before the race is always a good time. Second, the race directors are great people and I like to support their event. Third, I went to Salisbury University, so it’s always nice to return for a visit. It’s just such a well-run event,” stated **Surette**.

Surette continues. “I did not really have a strategy going into the race, although I was hoping to work together with my friends Jody Berinato and Kaylyn Peck, and we had a good pack for the first half of the race (unfortunately Kay had to stop to tie her shoe). In past years, this hasn’t been a goal race for me, but just a race I’ve done for fun. This year I was hoping for a PR (which is increasingly hard to do as I get older) and was thrilled to do so; I ran 1:06:58, which is a PR, by almost a minute.”

Surette continued, “Jody, Kay, and I ran together and for the first few miles there were 2 women in front of our group (Megan DiGregorio and Maria Miller). Around mile 4, Jody and I passed Maria, so only Meg was in front of us. We worked together the rest of the race, trading places to

share the work while running into the wind (though, if I am being honest, Jody did more of the work than I did). With about a half mile to go, I picked it up and finished a few seconds ahead of Jody, who had raced a 5K 2 days prior and was still a little fatigued.”

“I wasn't in super racing shape, and I had raced a 5K that Friday night on St. Patrick's Day, so I figured I would just go out and see what my legs/body felt like doing that day. During the race I was running with my friend Erin (who took 2nd place) and there was a woman ahead of us. I figured hey, why not try to pass her and see what we could do? So, I convinced Erin to continue on with me. We just work well together - keeping each other motivated and pushing during training runs and races. I had so much fun racing with Erin and pushing each other. Erin ended up getting a PR, which was really great,” stated **Berinato**.

My motivation for running the Tim Kennard stated Berinato, “I had a lot of friends that were going down to Salisbury to run the race and Henry invited me to join everyone. I don't really have any races on my schedule, so I figured it would be fun to jump in and enjoy being with my running friends. I signed up the week before the race.”

“I got tired around mile eight and slowed down, but Erin encouraged me to keep going. Then, with about half a mile to go, I was just tired. But it really was a great race where, for most of it, I felt strong and in the groove,” stated Berinato.

Berinato comments on running for place or time, “I guess it depends on the day and the circumstance. I do have time goals for races that I would like to run, and it is fun to run local races and place well either overall or in my age group. But at the same time, if my time for me is really good and I don't place than I'm still going to be happy.”

5K

The top runners in the 14th 5K were chasing after the records. Demesse Tefera of Ethiopia set the open record for the men in 2009 at a time of 15:34. Cara Wettlaufer of Bel Air, Md. holds jointly at 17:40 the female record. (2009), and Merrecia James of Bethany, Del. (2016). These are the only two females under 18 minutes.

Greg Cauller of York, Pa. holds the master records, at a time of 28:38. Sherry Stick of Sykesville, Md. set the female record, with a time of 18:30.

As the two-race parted, John Ford of Phoenix, Md, was in the lead. Ford placed second last year (17:27). In the mix were Martin Rodriguez of Selbyville and Bennett Brumbley of Laurel, Delaware. Brumbley placed third in 2022 (21:12).

Ford maintained a winning place to take first in 18:24 and Rodriguez was second in a time of 19:43 and was the first master. In third place Brumbley in a time of 19:49.

“It was definitely nice to run Tim Kennard this year. Some people know but others do not know, last year I was injured most of the year so I couldn't run at all and couldn't do any race so to run

once again injury free and pain free is a blessing and to do Tim Kennard again is like I'm heading in the right direction. I cannot wait for Tim Kennard next year," stated **Rodriguez**.

Rodriguez adds, "My only strategy was to get the 5K finished. I did not care about the time or place. I'm currently training for the Boston Marathon in April, so the day before Tim Kennard I had run 21.11 miles at a pretty decent pace, so my legs were tired, heavy, and sore. My fastest 5K time is a 16:47 on a track and 16:57 on the road."

"I was in second place along with one of the student athletes I used to coach on the Seashore Striders Youth XC Team by name of Bennett Brumbley and he now runs XC and track for Sussex Tech High School where I used to coach. Me and Bennett were shoulder to shoulder most of the race until after mile 2. That's when my legs finally woke up and my fast twitch muscles responded, and I picked up the pace until the finish line," Rodriguez added.

"Personally, for me, I care more about time. I no longer worry about placing or winning. I care more about becoming a better, smarter, stronger runner. I wanted to go faster since I know I can run faster in the 5K distance but like I said before I had done 21.11 miles the previous day and my legs were tired, heavy, and sore. Plus, when I am in marathon training mode, I only do one 5K to work on turnover," stated Rodriguez.

"My motivation for the race is that it benefits great causes. Team 360 is an awesome group as well as Wicomico Humane Society. My strategy was just to run a good race. This was my first race since high school cross-country season back in November," stated **Brumbley**.

"I was running with Martin Rodriguez and stayed in third place the whole race. My personal best 5K is currently 18:06. My time was more important. I was trying to run good times since I hadn't raced since November. I couldn't slow down. If I did, I knew that would give Martin a chance to run away from me and I couldn't let that happen," added Brumbley.

Defending champion (19:59) and four-time winner Sherry Stick of Sykesville was in the mix. L. Ford of Salisbury and Karen Cathell of Berlin, Md., were in the mix.

As the race unfolded Stick, added win number five in a time of 21:03 along with being the first master. Ford (Age 12) placed second in a time of 22:21. Cathell was third in a time of 22:42 and was the second master.

"I graduated from Salisbury University and really enjoy coming to this race each year to run on the roads I once trained on as a student athlete. It's great catching up with Coach Jim Jones, my college track and cross-country coach, after the race-who is always out on the course cheering me on," stated Stick.

"It is nice to know that the race supports several great causes each year. It was fun meeting all the adoptable dogs at packet pick up and before the race. My strategy was to run fairly even splits, hoping to pick up the pace in the last mile. It's always fun to run on a flat course, a welcome change from the rolling hills in Carroll County," added Stick,

Salisbury Bible Fellowship provided their support and their facility for the race start and finish. The presenting sponsor was Pohanka. There were many supporting sponsors with three since 2004 (Gaudreau Law Firm, Geiger Pump and Equipment, and Vernon Powell Shoes).

This run/walk is in his honor, with proceeds going, as Tim requested, to help children and animals. This year, the proceeds will help TEAM 360, which helps people of different abilities train and take part in mainstream athletic events; Coalition of Caring, a fund for our animal friends; and the Eastern Shore Running Club Scholarship Fund

To learn more about the Tim Kennard River Run, click on the link below.

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