

TIM KENNARD DOMINATED BY MURPHY AND STICK IN THE 5K AND MUSE AND MILLER IN THE 10-MILER

By George Banker

The **19th Tim Kennard River Run 10 -mile/5K** (March 3, 2024) continues to improve each year. The legacy of the race is under the stewardship of Linda Mills and Harlan Eagle. Remaining loyal to the wishes (a race to benefit children and animal friends) of Tim Kennard, who lived long enough to witness the first race in 2004, the race continues. Kennard passed away on March 11, 2004.

The charities which are supported include Team 360, Coalition for Caring, and the Eastern Shore Running Club Scholarship Fund.

The race started as a 5-Miler from 2004 to 2007. In 2008, they changed the distance to a 10-miler along with a 5K. Until 2022, the University of Salisbury hosted the race. Then, they changed the location to the Salisbury Bible Fellowship and created an alternative course.

5K

Demesse Tefera of Ethiopia set the event record for the 5K for the male in 2009 at a time of 15:34. The master record was set in 2009 by Greg Cauller of York, Penna., with a time of 16:52. Cauller won the master's title seven times.

The female record is 17:40, which is shared by Cara Wettlaufer of Bel Air, Md., (2008), and Merrica James of Bethany, Del., (2009). The master record was set in 2019 (18:30) by Sherry Stick of Sykesville, Md. Stick is the only six-timer open winner of the 5K and the only three-time master winner.

John Ford of Phoenix, Md., the defending champion (18:24), competed against John Murphy of Salisbury, the fourth place finisher (21:17). The simultaneous start had the two events off at the same time as the runners parted ways at Woodland Road. As the race unfolded, Ford was going to be denied.

Going into the closing mile, Murphy captured the win with a time of 19:07. Ford trailed as runner-up with a time of 19:39. The third place and the first master was Tanka Magar of Nottingham, Md., with a time of 19:52. The fourth finisher and second master was Matt Sparacino of Nottingham, Md., with a time of 20:18.

Sherry Stick of Sykesville, Md., the defending champion (21:03) had to face off the 2023 runner-up, Lindsay Ford (22:21), age 13. Also, in the mix was the fourth-place finisher (23:49), Melissa Wiley of Ocean City, Md.

As the race unfolded, Stick was controlling the pace from the front. In the closing mile, Stick added another win with a time of 21:39 for the overall win and first master.

Ford kept the runner-up position with a time of 22:52, followed by Wiley for third and second master with a time of 23:13. Brooke Golba of Salisbury was fourth with a time of 25:09.

The second master was Laura Martin of Rehoboth Beach, Del., with a time of 27:43. Leigh Peck of Lutherville, Md., was the third master with a time 30:03.

I hoped to defend my title, but I know it is never guaranteed. My training has been going pretty well, and I was looking forward to the flat course. Since I knew the course was flat, I didn't have to save energy for any big hills later in the race. I started out quicker than usual and tried to keep even splits. I was running alongside two other female runners for about the first 3/4 of a mile and then gradually pulled away and take the lead," stated **Stick**.

Stick continues, "I could see I had a little lead at the turnaround area, but never feel the win is guaranteed until I cross the finish line. I felt the race was competitive and was thankful to have the other female runners to run with at the beginning of the race. They helped me get off to a good start. Sometimes I feel I'm working harder than my time shows, but if I know I pushed myself as hard as I could on that day, I am satisfied with the outcome."

"I had always been involved in sports starting at an early age and played softball, lacrosse, basketball, and field hockey. I was also on a summer swim team. I didn't get involved with formal running until my sophomore year in high school when I joined the track team. At that point, I thought I would be a sprinter and was running predominantly the 200m and 400m. I gradually progressed to middle distance events and switched over from field hockey to cross-country my senior year in high school. I continued my running career at Salisbury University (1996-2000) where I ran track and cross-country (Hall of Fame 2010)," stated Stick.

Stick adds comments about the race management, "The biggest change I have noticed is the location, since the race was moved from the college." I enjoyed the start/finish at my alma mater. I think the new venue (Salisbury Bible Fellowship) is also a great spot. It's especially nice to have the indoor space available in the event of rain. Spectators and volunteers provide plenty of support along the well-marked course. The cyclist that was leading the way was great and made sure we all stayed on course. The after party continues to be incredible and the pancakes are always delicious! This race is always so well organized and for an amazing cause. I also like the addition of the adoptable dogs at packet pickup and near the start/finish."

10-Miler

Tim Synowiec of Salisbury set the 10-mile open event record in 2022 with a time of 51:28. Synowiec is the only runner under 52 minutes in the race's history. The master record was set in 2009 (56:12) by Salisbury University alumnus and Hall of Fame inductee, Dock Mock. Mock is the only master under 57 minutes.

The female record was set in 2017 (1:01:36) by Megan DiGorgio of White Marsh, Md. DiGregorio is a six-time open winner. The master record (1:02:26) was set in 2009 by Susan Graham-Gray of Greencastle, Pa. Graham is legally blind and has a marathon time of 2:45:32 and has competed in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials.

Tyler Muse of Salisbury was out to defend his 2023 title (55:55). In the mix, to keep things interesting was four-time winner Graham Peck of Baltimore. To add balance, Neil Saddler of the Georgetown Running Club (DC) was coming off a 2:18:53 (41st place) at the California International Marathon.

As the events parted at Woodland Road, the race was on as the runner jockeyed for positions. Muse kept focused on his plan and, in the closing miles, he was in position for another win. Muse took first with a time of 54:25. Saddler took runner-up at 55:10. The third finisher was Peck with a time of 59:51. The fourth finisher was Riley Bozeman of Salisbury with a time of 1:07:13.

“I enjoyed my first experience at the Tim Kennard River Run. The Tim Kennard River Run provided an extremely well-organized experience, with a great course and friendly volunteers before, during, and after the race. A friend recommended the race to me as an early in the year race to test my fitness,” stated **Saddler**.

Saddler adds, “The result was not a PR for me (50:43 from the Army 10 Miler last year), but I am satisfied with my time overall. At this point in my running career, I am happy to compete in local races and continue to train hard with my friends. Placing competitively in races or any PRs is just icing on the cake. I look forward to coming back for next year's edition and supporting a noble cause. I highly recommend the event to anyone considering it!”

“I was 56:40 last year and knew I wasn't in that good of shape. I figured 58:20 (5:50/mile) or so would be a wonderful goal, so I set out with that in mind. I squeezed out a few slightly faster miles at the end to beat that goal time. It's great to have two heavy hitters at the top running in the low 5:00's per mile. It'd be nice to have a bit more depth since there is prize money at stake and a fabulously well-organized race. I knew 50 yards into the race that the top two were in a separate class,” stated **Peck**.

Peck was not concerned about any runner behind him. “I'm not one to blow up in races, so once I saw nobody was close behind in fourth by the first mile, I figured I was stuck in third. The race operates like a well-oiled machine. The race management team has executed the race flawlessly, from packet pickup to the kids' race to the finish line party and course markings.

There is a balance which Peck follows to sustain his performance level. “My performance is slower than it has been, but I've never been more satisfied with life, so I'm very okay with that! My wife and I had our 2nd kid in the fall, so things are busier than ever at home. I do 90% of my weekday training at lunch hour. The kids are growing up right in front of me, so I like to spend as many waking hours as I can with them during the week. As long as I can run ~6:30/mile for a marathon on a whim, that's good enough for me.”

The reality for Peck is in the results, “I try to keep a continuous improvement mindset, so when my result doesn't match my expectation, I don't get too down on myself for more than a few hours. It's always, "what can I do better next time?" I ran slower than I wanted to at the JFK 50 last fall and my takeaway was that fitness trumps experience. I wasn't in the best of shape, but thought that toughness and years of extra experience would bridge the gap to a faster race. That stuff helps to a degree, but just being plain fit sure helps!”

Mike Synowiec of Salisbury was the fourth finisher and first master at a time of 1:08:30. The second finisher was Sebastien Truchi of Salisbury at a time of 1:09:30. Mikhail Petrovskikh of Lutherville was the third master with a time of 1:13:09.

Synowiec's motivation for running the Tim Kennard, "My family is always first- two kids (They attended Bennett High School) that run competitively and inspire me every day to keep doing it as long as I can and an extremely supportive and loving wife to put up with the training schedule. This year was extra special because several of my coworkers also ran the event and they each really inspired me! Love my teammates!"

There was a move by Synowiec along the course to change positions, "It was very close to the end of the race as Sebastien Truchi pulled me along for much of the race. Sebi, who had just finished a 50k, impressed me with his effort and determination to surge each time I tried to overtake him. It was Sebi and I together for almost the entire race as the first 3 runners were off and chasing our own local elite runner Tyler Muse and Riley Bozman (local elite triathlete) had passed us at around mile seven."

Synowiec adds, "Thanks Tim Kennard- this is a well put on race for a good cause! If you haven't done it before, put it on your calendar for next year! At this point in life, staying healthy and having a ton of fun is my motivation to stay in the sport."

Two of the top 10 athletes from 2023 were on the starting, Marie Miller (1:10:00) of Tyaskin, Md., and Susan Dunn (1:17:30) of Laurel, Del. Miller was the master winner from 2022 (1:09:08).

As the race unfolded, Miller maintained a slight edge over Bryn Burkholder of Lutherville. Off the leaders was Denise Knickman of Baltimore, who is the holder of eight master's wins and three open wins. If there were any mistakes, Knickman would seize the opportunity.

Burkholder was holding in for close second place. In the closing mile, Miller could hold on to take the win with a time of 1:14:01 and the first master. Burkholder was runner-up with 1:14:08 and the second master. The third finisher was Zuleyka Martinez of Wilmington, Del., with a time of 1:15:58.

Knickman was the fourth finisher and third master at a time of 1:18:15. The fifth finisher was Tabith Enciu of Princess Anne, Md., with a time of 1:18:29.

There were only two female runners under the age of 40 in the top 10 females.

Burkholder comments about the race, "I had run a hard 10-mile race (The RRCA Club Challenge) the week before Tim Kennard, and I knew I wasn't totally recovered, so I was going into this race just looking to work hard and see what I had in my legs. I could see" I could see the first-place woman about five seconds ahead of me as we approached the eight-mile marker. Unfortunately, I tripped and fell at that point and lost some momentum. I'm grateful that

I was able to come away from the fall with only some road rash and bruises and could finish without losing too much time.”

“I’ve done this race twice before and really enjoyed it. It’s a fun race for a good cause. Plus, the post-race pancakes really hit the spot! It surprised me to come in second place! My best 10-mile time is 1:10:06 at the Broad Street Run last year,” Burkholder added.

Burkholder continues, “Running brings balance to my life. It’s my favorite thing to do at the end of a workday. When I’m stressed, it helps me clear my head and feel better. It’s also a big part of my social life, since many of my friends are runners, too. I try to learn from the running experience; in particular, I try to understand what I could have done better.”

“Finishing the race was most important because I wasn't able to run last year since I was recovering from surgery on my heel. I had a time goal, so I guess time was more important than place and my strategy was to run a steady pace. The level of masters competition in all the races impressed **me**,” stated Knickman.

Knickman continues, “It started in a different place than previous years, but mostly I notice what is the same. This is a great race that supports the community, and the community, in turn, supports it. The weather was really nice this year. This was an outstanding event and I hope they have the highest level of participation next year, which will be the 20th anniversary.”

“During the race, my first mile was slower than I expected. I hoped as I warmed up more, I could pick up the pace and I focused on other runners going a little faster and tried to run with them. I moved into fourth place as we started down Main St in the sixth mile. I think I moved into fifth place in the third mile,” stated Knickman.

Going into the last mile, there was an uplifting sign to for the runners. There was one mile to get to the pancakes, which were provided at the Salisbury Bible Fellowship.

“I've taken part in the Tim Kennard 10 miler for almost 10 years, and it's a race I look forward to every year. I love the spirit of the run, its origins, and its charitable trademark. The competition can vary from year to year- some years you're up against a fiercely fast field, and other years the overall pace is a little more relaxed. It's the community that is the best part- from the runners alongside you to the volunteers offering support and the Salisbury neighbors cheering you on. It's truly a special atmosphere,” stated **Cory Donovan**, 2023 fifth place finisher (1:09:00) and first master in the 10-miler.

Donovan adds, “My most memorable Tim Kennard moment has to be from last year's race- despite having run (nearly) the same course every year since 2015, I somehow took a wrong turn where the 10-mile and 5K run split. It was a very blustery day, and the wind muffled the sounds of the shouts from the volunteers yelling directions. It wasn't until a fellow teammate who was in fact running the 5K screamed out that I was going the wrong way that I realized my error, turned around, and tried to make up for lost time. I ended up winning first place in the 40+ Men's category and was close to a personal course record.”

The continued success of the Tim Kennard is because of the continued support from the sponsors to include Pohanka of Salisbury, Chesapeake Urology, Chiamulera Family, The Gaudreau Law Firm (since 2004), Vernon Powell Shoes (Since 2004), Geiger Pump (Since 2004), and others. The volunteers add the icing to the cake.

Full race details are at <https://timkennard.org>.