

SPECIAL EDITION: THE FRIGID FIVE SPECIAL

I really should know more about the Frigid Five. After all, I may be the only club member to be at all 15 . . . I'm sure I'll hear if anyone else was. The race was not my idea. According to Steve Turk, the race was brainstormed for the name and the distance before the race was run in February of 1996. I only went out that first race day because I was new to the club and was guilted out.

In those days, the course began at the park and went directly out Covell west and right/north on Santa Fe for a couple of miles and then into a neighborhood for the water station at a member's house and back to the park. The first turn out was 124 frozen runners with 15 volunteers. The awards ceremony was held at one of the picnic pavilions inside the park and the results were very slow (something we haven't improved much in much over the years, by the way). The first shirt, which I have but can't find, was white with a tic-tack-toe motif featuring various winter things like a snowflakes in the 9 boxes.

The best move we make- we being any number of race directors who will probably remain nameless since I can't remember everyone who volunteered/suffered the duty- was using Glen's Road Race Service until Glen's death. Glen liked us. He always told me that we were the best organized race in the state. We always got his reduced rate.

The race prospered over the years. For the next several years, our shirts featured another snow flake for every year. The race got larger each year and the weather has never been as cold and windy as that first race. We've had snow on the ground, but never had ice or snow on the trail. And this Saturday looks good.

The biggest change has been in the course. There have been 5. I've always thought it was neat that our race is 5 miles long, but that distance has been a problem inside Mitch Park. Heavy traffic on Santa FE forced us more into the park around 2001/2003. WE still ran a couple of miles on Covell until the neighborhood across the street opened up. I handed out fliers the last year in the neighborhood begging people not to leave their houses between 10:00 and 10:20 on race day. Fortunately, the addition of the bridge and the west loop have allowed us to run the entire race inside Mitch...it's a tight fit.

As the course guy the last several years, I'm not totally happy with the narrowness of the trail and the traffic poles right in the middle of the trail. But what we do have is a challenging and scenic run which features an indoor facility, good food, great organization, and a fun run at a very reasonable price. I do really miss the hot dogs we used to serve after the run, however.

Every year, it seems, we grow and try to add new perks. Alas, the poor director/victim-this year Marc Whit, has to wonder whatever caused him to volunteer for this position. It's a pretty tough job. I would sincerely like to thank all the directors and members who volunteer for the many jobs which are done to make our race the absolute best. I wrote this excerpt from the Oklahoma Runner in an article titled Volunteering for Dummies back in 1990 before the magazine turned to the dark side.

A lot of prep work is done for any race. There are city permits, insurance, brochures, sponsors, food restroom facilities, advertisement, art work door prizes, t-shirts, registration, packets, police and medical support...Lee (Kessinger) handles these jobs. my main task is to pick out awards and avoid phone calls from Kessinger from December until race day in mid February. The first year he really sounded desperate on the answering

machine, but lately he's stopped pleading and just updates me on his progress. (Lee and I directed the race for 3 years in a row, Marc)

The Frigid 5 will go off this Saturday at 10:00 for the 15th time. It's a good opportunity for those club members who are not exactly active to come out and help...just ask for Clyde and he'll find something for you to do. We are expecting over 1000 racers and I will once again beat them all to the finish line...on my bike as usual. Who knows? Maybe this year I will actually fight some soccer dude who parks his truck on the race course or something equally stupid. What I do know is that 1000 runners and their vehicles are going to fill the park to a magnitude that none of us imagined 15 years ago.

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Editor