

## 2011 Year In Review

The past year for the Club has been one of achievement and growth. Starting from an idea in my head three years ago (one which I'm confident was also germinating in many of yours), our group has now grown to 140 runners scattered across 39 states and Washington DC. When the Club was initially conceived, my thought was that, at a maximum, there would be maybe 100 others out there chasing the ambitious goal of running a sub-4 hour marathon in as many of the states as possible. I've since discovered that I underestimated this number as we now have 140 members and still growing by about 5 new members a month - primarily thanks to positive word-of-mouth from our members.

A few of these new members are luminaries in the US running community. They include **Steve Boone** - serial marathoner and founder of the 50 States Marathon Club, **Benji Durden** - one of the greatest marathoners in US history (25 sub-2:20 marathons) now chasing the 50sub4 quest and **Michael Wardian** - one of America's greatest current runners. We're honored to have them as members and, coincidentally, all three of them will be in Houston this weekend for the US Marathon Olympic Trials. Benji will be celebrating his 1982 Houston Marathon victory with a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary running of it (maybe a couple of minutes slower) while Michael will be competing in the Trials.

During the past three years, I've discovered that our members share a number of common characteristics. Not surprisingly, we all love to **travel**. While we use running to justify our trips, it seems as though the primary motivator is our curiosity to explore other places and cultures. In addition, most of us seem (not surprisingly) to be **competitive** Type-A personalities that enjoy challenging ourselves not only in running but in our professions and other activities. That being said, even though we may be competitive, I can also state that, most importantly, we are also a really **nice** group of people and I'm looking forward to running (no pun intended) into many of you as I ramp my running back up over the next couple of years in a last pre-50 attempt to get a sub-3 hour marathon in the books.

Finally, before I share some of our achievements during the past year, I wanted to share a personal anecdote that seems to capture the essence of our group. Last January, I was dealing with my first-ever running injury - tendonitis in my knee. I had tried a variety of approaches from total rest to ice to cross-training - all to no avail. I had entered the Houston Marathon but was considering backing out for fear of aggravating the injury and missing Boston. I was still contemplating this when I went to pick up my bib at the Expo and ran into 2011 50sub4 finisher **Suzy Seeley**. She asked me how I was doing and I launched into moaning about my injury. After making sure that a doctor had told me there was nothing structurally wrong with the knee, she took off her "Mom" hat and put on her "Tough as Nails" hat. She looked me in the eye and said "Jeff, you're just going to have to run through it!" With that little push, I was at the starting line the next day, got a sub-4 in, and haven't looked back. Thanks Suzy!

## Notable Achievements in 2011

Most importantly, we had **9** finishers of 50sub4 in 2011 after having only 3 during 2012. Those who completed the quest during 2011 were **John Van Steenbergh (GA)**, **Steve Supkoff (WA)**, **Gordon Bennett (CT)**, **Chuck Engle (OR)**, **David Holmen (MN)**, **Richard Johnson (MO)**, **Suzy Seeley (TX)**, **Mark Ott (MI)** and **Robert "Cowboy Jeff" Bishton (FL)**.

Suzy became our 2<sup>nd</sup> female finisher (with several other talented ladies expected to join her this year) while Cowboy Jeff became our oldest finisher at 61. In addition, two of our runners joined a VERY elite club - with **Gary Krugger (AZ)** and **Chuck Engle (OR)** becoming two of the four people to ever run a sub-3 hour marathon in all 50 states.

**Chuck Engle** - 2011 was another big year for the one and only Marathon Junkie. In addition to completing both **50sub4** and **50sub3** this year, he also was the overall winner in 33 marathons, 2<sup>nd</sup> in two more and 3<sup>rd</sup> in two more. His personal best for 2011 was 2:34:59. Chuck has an uncanny ability to consistently produce excellent results while staying injury-free.

**Gary Krugger** - Similar to Chuck, Gary had an excellent year on the podium with twenty-five Top 5 finishes and five overall winner results. In addition, Gary completed **50sub3** on October 9<sup>th</sup>. He is now focusing on getting faster and his results at the most recent Tucson Marathon (2:43:08-4<sup>th</sup> overall) indicate that he's on the right track.

**Traci Falbo** - compiled 7 overall winner results, one 2<sup>nd</sup> and one 3<sup>rd</sup> in a year in which she ran 23 marathons and four weekends where she ran doubles (back-to-back marathons). Traci is at 34 states and closing in....

**Doug Britain** - one of our earliest 50sub4 finishers (#2), Doug had a personal goal of getting a sub-4 as a Masters runner (over 40 years of age). After he finished that, he decided that it was so much fun that he wanted to do it again, this time as a Grandmasters Runner (over 50 years of age). As far as I am aware, Doug is the first person to achieve 50sub4 TWICE, when he crossed the finish line at the Honolulu Marathon in December. Doug has been putting up consistently excellent results for a long time and his record reflects discipline, dedication and perseverance.

**Shannon Hays** - Shannon (34) is attempting to become the youngest female 50sub4 finisher and ran 23 quality marathons in 2011, racking up two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, a 3<sup>rd</sup> and a 4<sup>th</sup>. She currently sits at 37 states and is taking a well-deserved hiatus early this year in order to recharge and get her "mojo" back. Those of you who have met Shannon know her to be a positive and encouraging person. Good luck to her in finishing her quest.

**David Nemoto** - Demonstrating that you're never too old (48) to be fast, David finally achieved a personal goal by cracking the 3-hour barrier at the Hartford Marathon (2:54:29). He followed that up with a 2:56:46 at the NYC Marathon which, depressingly, only netted him 797<sup>th</sup> (!) place. He will

be leading one of our 50sub4 teams at this year's Houston Marathon Team Challenge, where I'm counting on another sub-3 from him!

**John Van Steenberg** - After completing the 50sub4 quest in May, John could have retired to his rocking chair and rested on his laurels. Deciding he was too young (45) for that, John cranked it up another gear and got even faster. He finished 2011 (after 50sub4 was complete) with four sub-3 marathons, with two of those sub-2:50. That's seriously fast for an old guy! ☺ John started 2012 on a bang as well with an overall victory at the Running from an Angel Marathon. He has won the last two marathons he has run in (North Carolina Marathon and Running from an Angel).

**Massoud Messkoub** - Proving that it's never too late to start chasing big goals, Massoud (65) finished his 50 states at Honolulu in December and is 35 states into his 50sub4 quest. Keep it up Massoud!

**Mark Ott** - Another of our 50sub4 finishers that refuses to stop running, Mark finished on October 15<sup>th</sup> of this year at Hartford. Mark's wry observations on life on his Facebook page always make me laugh (and think) and he recorded some of the fastest ultra times in the US last year to go along with his low-3 marathon times. His self-filmed video while he was running a 100-mile race **in the snow** is jaw-dropping.

**Jerry Rief** - In contrast to the strategy of banging out as many sub-4 races in as short a time as possible, Jerry annually runs several QUALITY marathons - all of them under 3 hours. As far as I am aware, Jerry has never run a marathon in a time OVER three hours, stretching back to 1987 (that's a quarter-century). Jerry now has 41 sub-3/sub-4 states and totally captures our group's emphasis on quality over quantity.

**Bob Kennedy** - Bob is attempting to become the first runner to start and finish the 50sub4 quest over the age of 60. Good luck Bob!

In addition to the above, there were a number of other pretty extraordinary accomplishments in 2011. I am humbled to be part of this group - really a collection of impressive athletes.

## General Club-Related Stuff

- Going forward, I will be updating everyone stats, as recorded on [marathonguide.com](http://marathonguide.com), on a quarterly basis. That being said, I will be publishing updated club records on the website every 1-2 weeks (depending on how ugly tax season is for this CPA). If you want your stats to reflect your current results, please just send an email to [50sub4@gmail.com](mailto:50sub4@gmail.com) and I'll get your individual record updated. If it doesn't really matter, then I will be updating on 3/31, 6/30, 9/30 and 12/31.

- If your point total is more than 150 points and you do not yet have a Club t-shirt, send me an email with your size (they are Brooks Podium technical t-shirts) and I'll put one in the mail to you. Also, if you have changed speed classifications (see bottom of the member roster for how classifications are determined) and I haven't updated you, please let me know.
- Some of you have noticed that the Club website is slightly reformatted - with a new Members section that requires an initial password (50<4) to get in. You only need the password the first time you enter the Members section. E-mail addresses can now be found only in the Members section at the top of each member's results page.
- In 2012, I would like to begin a "Taking 10 with....." member profile section where various members are asked 10 standard questions. You will see a placeholder for this in the Members section. Anyone who would like to volunteer to send out about 5-10 questionnaires to members, collect them and send them to me would be welcomed.
- Please update your 2012 race calendar at the Google spreadsheet on our website - [www.50sub4.com](http://www.50sub4.com) - if you get a chance. I have everyone's names on the left-hand side of the sheet. No password needed.
- Some of you may be aware that our Club was the 2010 ABB Team Challenge champion at the Houston Marathon. We were 5<sup>th</sup> last year and are hoping to reclaim the throne at this year's race. We have three teams entered - please send us speedy thoughts on Sunday morning (1/15/2012).
- We continue to improve our Facebook page and are always looking for contributions (photos, etc.) The group is "closed" - not open to the general public - but please just send a request to join and we'll quickly add you. It's a good discussion database for logistics surrounding various races, nutrition, etc.
- Volunteers - With the group approach 150 members, I'm looking for volunteers in the following areas - 1) "Taking 10 with...." Coordinator (this basically involves emailing a brief questionnaire to 5-10 members, doing some basic editing and emailing to me; and 2) Stats Coordinator - Working with me to keep stats updated by doing quarterly updates for a portion of the membership (takes about an hour every three months);

Finally, in the interest of helping you all get faster, I'm attaching an article on what seems to be the latest legal performance enhancer - at least down here in the South!

I hope you all have a successful and healthy 2012. Hoping I get to meet many of you either at Houston or Boston!



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## THE PRE-WORKOUT COOLING ROUTINE

An easy, dramatic performance boost based on an old science is catching on. It's about time.

By: Gordy Megroz



Athletes who precool can maintain peak performance 10 to 20 percent longer. *Photographer:* Maisie Paterson

American cyclist Peter Stetina, a two-time national champion who rides for team Garmin-Cervélo, recently adopted one of the sport's more bizarre pre-race rituals: freezing his butt off. Before the starting gun, Stetina will drink slushies from the team's support vehicle, wear ice packs, and drape himself in wet towels. "I try to get myself as cold as possible," says Stetina. "That way I don't overheat as fast." He's not alone. In an effort to control body temperature, cyclists, triathletes, runners, and even race-car drivers have taken to slugging bottles of ice water, covering their arms in Liquid Ice (a menthol cream that cools the skin), blasting fans in their faces, even draping ice-filled panty hose around their necks.

The basic principle is simple: Most people's central organs—specifically the liver, kidneys, and intestines—rise above 101 degrees during exercise. When that happens, water and blood begin to leave your muscles and race to the skin in an attempt to cool you down. This depletes the muscles of oxygen and dehydrates them, causing fatigue. Yet while most athletes reach the 101-degree threshold after just 20 to 30 minutes of exercise, recent studies have shown that cooling beforehand can delay the process significantly.

"Endurance athletes who precool can keep their body temperature below that threshold and perform at their highest level 10 to 20 percent longer than those who don't precool," says Stacy Sims, a Stanford University sports physiologist who works with a number of professional athletes and is one of the nation's top authorities on thermoregulation.

While testing the effects of hydration on core temperatures last year in Hawaii, triathlete Craig Alexander, who has won

the Ironman World Championship three times, most recently in October, says he was able to improve performance simply by keeping his body cool. To do that, he drank cold water and slushies, then swallowed a microscopic thermometer and tracked his core temp on a handheld device. “The thing I noticed most,” says Alexander, “is that you don’t dehydrate as quickly, because you’re just not sweating as much.”

If this all seems obvious, it should: NASA confirmed the science as far back as 1986. But the sports community, usually keen to embrace any new (even unproven) theory in order to gain an edge, was slow to react. Icing was for after the race. Recent studies demonstrating just how dramatic the effect is, however, have rapidly changed minds in the endurance community, and now the freeze frenzy is spreading. In August, Sims published a report showing that athletes who do power sports—activities like weight lifting or rock climbing—also benefit from precooling. She found that people given water chilled to 40 degrees were able to jump as much as 15 percent farther than when they’d ingested room-temperature water. In another study, published last June by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), researchers found that the head, forearms, inner thighs, and neck are the places that respond best to external cooling. That study also found that cooling vests, a popular device now offered by a number of companies hoping to cash in on the cooling craze, are worthless. “They don’t work,” says Aitor Coca, a physiologist with the CDC, “because the best way to cool the core from the outside is by cooling areas with blood vessels close to the surface of the skin.”

That makes sense to Jeff Louder, a cyclist on the BMC Racing Team. He thermoregulated his core through 100-degree temperatures at the 2008 Commerce Bank International Championship, a bike race in Philadelphia, by “putting ice right on my groin, basically right on the femoral artery, so that cool blood was being pumped directly into my core.” Louder says it made riding in hellish conditions feel comfortable.

None of this is to say you won’t break the 101 barrier eventually. It’s inevitable, in fact, during longer races. Coca says it’s fairly easy to tell whether your core is too hot. In the summer you’ll experience profuse sweating, fatigue, and worsening cognition; in the winter you’ll deal with cold skin and swollen red hands. Sims has also developed a test for runners and cyclists looking for another use for their heart-rate monitors. “If your heart rate has remained steady or gone up, but your wattage on your bike or your running pace has gone down, you’re probably overheating,” she says. “It’s time to cool off.” Her recommendation? “A slushie works great.”

<http://www.outsideonline.com/fitness/endurance-training/Central-Cooling.html>



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