

# Report on RRCA Convention - Chad Holmes

@RRCANational, #RRCAConvention

## Thursday April 23:

Thursday included a one-hour Round Table Session on various topics, followed by the Welcome Reception for the Convention.

### Round Table Session: Engaging Younger Members in Clubs

- All seats at this table were full with some additional bystanders (author included) standing around the perimeter to listen in. Discussion was lively, although interesting to note the demographics of the table leaned very heavily toward the more experienced club participants rather than the target group they were addressing
- Heavy emphasis placed on **beer** - pub runs, beer post races, engage 20-something members through stouts and ales.
  - Issue of insuring beer crawls or even actively advertising them as official club activities was raised. Suggestion that these more social outings be managed by club members themselves without full club marketing.
- Mix up group run/social activity **days and start times**. Weeknight events as well as weekends. Early evening (e.g. 4-5 pm) for those who can get out of work early, later evening (~7 pm+) for those who work later.
- Mix up run **locations** to cover broader area and keep things interesting.
- Group runs for **mothers**, strollers welcome. Could be late morning/afternoon for those who are not working 9-5.
- Engagement in unique and creative ways. Pittsburgh group recently started a **pace team**. They volunteer to provide pace runners at all races, including 5ks. Gives the club free visibility, and free entrance into races for the pacers.
- Same club worked out an **indoor workout** deal with local YMCA to allow runners to pay al la carte style - \$5/day to work out on pre-determined mornings before the YMCA opens for normal members. Treadmill time to avoid snow/ice during deep winter months in PA.
- Social Media! Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Meetup.com, others...

## Friday April 24:

Friday commenced with a morning run, followed by the official Convention Welcome, General Session (Insurance), Regional Meetings, 1 round of sessions, the official RRCA Annual Meeting of the Membership, and Expo time. The night was capped with a drizzly night at the Drake Relays.

## Convention Welcome

- Addresses by Jean Knaack (RRCA Executive Director), Chris Burch (Convention Chair), Governor Terry Branstad, and Mayor Frank Cownie.
  - Des Moines has embraced the Governor's Healthiest State Initiative, with ~50 miles of hike, run, bike trails in the city limits and direct connections to ~500 miles of trails beyond the city.

## General Session - Insurance And Risk Management (Terry & Trent Diller)

- Key comprehensive resource online documents the insurance coverage through RRCA: <http://www.rrca.org/services/insurance/>
- Some Highlights:
  - Updates on General liability Insurance
    - \$1MM coverage for runners
    - \$500k limit for sexual abuse (targeting overnight events)
    - \$25k/club for crisis response, e.g. get out in front of a media story
  - Updates on Accident/Medical Coverage
    - \$10k/person medical claim payout - excess coverage above personal health insurance coverage, a.k.a. "goodwill coverage" (please don't sue)
    - can buy coverage for equipment (tents, etc.)
  - Updates on Director/Officer Liability
    - coverage for non-bodily injury, non-property damage situation, i.e. "mental injury" of director/officer
    - defense costs for lawsuits
    - \$25k coverage for employee dishonesty, e.g. volunteer stealing
- Biggest claims: **overnight relays**, \$1MM paid out after a runner was hit and killed during a runner exchange with a van.
  - **Coverage change: RRCA now will not protect overnight events unless they are on a closed course.**
- Take Aways:
  - Coaches being paid need to have their own extra policy - ask for certificate of coverage form as proof.
  - Race directors being paid need to provide certificate of coverage form, they will not be able to piggy-back on club's RRCA coverage.
  - Avoid frivolous lawsuits by adding personal property line to race waivers (e.g. given: possible lawsuit for broken iPhone due to tripping over dog leash at event).
  - Risks extend to youth involvement - watch for young people in pictures posted for global viewing/sharing. Make sure waiver covers photography and permission is granted.

## Breakout Session 1 - Security Planning for Events

- Presented by Sgt Jack Beardsley and Kandi Reindi, Asst. to the City Manager's Office.

- Focus is on Des Moines Marathon and how security has been managed as awareness and reaction fades post-Boston bombing.
  - Des Moines hosted 215 events in 2014, 49 of which were timed runs/walks. Other events include Iowa Caucuses where world-renowned politicians are in town.
  - Implemented a “Street Use” team to manage securing the rights to street use and managing coordination between event directors, local government, and public safety organizations.
  - City of Des Moines Street Use Permit Application and Agreement - generic form that captures all key information on the event, including high level supplemental questions for items like:
    - pyrotechnics
    - food/beverage sales
    - alcohol presence
    - amplified sound
    - hanging signage (banners)
    - post-event sanitation clean-up
    - use of city property
    - EMS/EMT service needs
    - etc.
  - This questionnaire quickly identifies the need for any additional supplementary permits (banner hanging, graffiti for race markings, street use petition, etc.)
  - Allows simplified coordination with Police Department and Public Works for:
    - hooding parking meters
    - streets closures
    - placing barricades
    - live traffic control
    - detour route signage
    - traffic cone management
  - Also keeps on record certificate(s) of liability insurance for reference
  - Des Moines permit fee is \$250, which including police service. This aligns with trail use fee.
  - Permit process allows business owners to be alerted early on, as well as apartment landlords so residents can know of disruptions beforehand.
- Some key security considerations:
  - Size of event
  - Internationally known participants
  - Number of non-participating attendees
  - Weather risks
  - Known terrorist activity
  - Attendee intoxication

- Weather cancellations are tricky. The police department doesn't make the call - up to race directors. Best strategy: race director and PD in communication to make a clear and agreed-upon call together.
- Security procedures post-Boston are starting to reduce in intensity, but still relevant for big events like marathons. Focus on projected number of people, especially if concentrated in one area like the finish line.
  - Use clear plastic bags for runner bag check
  - Understand emergency resources. For Iowa, only 2 trained bomb squads - one in Des Moines, and one at state-level
  - Number of officers assigned to event depends on number of controlled streets.
  - Additional officers are deployed to follow runners
  - Use Reserves in Des Moines - people who go through Police Academy and are paid \$1/year. Off-duty officers are more expensive but available at ~\$45/hr

## Saturday April 25:

Saturday commenced with a morning run, followed by 4 rounds of sessions, Expo time, and the Closing Reception + National Running Awards Banquet in the evening.

### Breakout Session 2 - Natural Stride Running

- Presented by Cari Setzler of Fast Finish coaching
- Consider getting a copy of *Anatomy for Runners* by Jay Dicharry. It's a layman's guide to running mechanics and a great resource.
- Running is a sport that has one of the highest rates of injury: 37-56% runners get injured each year, 2.5-12.1 injuries per 1000 hours running.
- First Strike Conundrum
  - one study shows ~30% of runners use forefoot strike
  - 2013 study shows it's not necessarily more economic for runners to move from rear to forefoot strike mechanics.
  - Different foot strike results in different injuries, not more or less injuries
- Running form is very important, primarily since it promotes less injuries and faster races. One 12 week program on mechanics changed the foot strike of participants naturally.
- Key Running Coach Focus Areas:
  - Cadence: 88-92 steps per minute
  - Posture: forward lean from ankles, no bend at waist, hips level with arms 90 degrees from the body
  - Reload: land under the body's center of gravity, land softly with athletic stance, keep feet relaxed
- More detailed analysis:
  - cadence example: western profile for a run at 7 mph, 160 spm

- ~1370 steps per mile
    - 6" vertical oscillation per step
    - total: body lifted 9257" or 771 ft/mile; marathon: 20,200' or 3.8 miles climbing equivalent
  - highly efficient runners for a run at 7 mph, 180 spm
    - ~1543 steps per mile
    - ~2" vertical oscillation per step
    - total: body lifted 3086" or 257 ft/mile; marathon: 6673' or 1.3 miles climbing equivalent
  - Efficient cadence saves 2.5 miles of vertical climbing!
  - Effect of stride frequency on running economy: 5% change in frequency correlates to ~10% reduction in braking impulse
  - Metronome can help runners pick up and keep higher step rate. Available as a phone app or song track.
- Posture Problems:
  - pelvic tilt, a key problem for women, relates to phrase "glute activation"
  - bending at waist
  - rounded shoulders
  - back bend
  - twisting with upper body
  - excessive arm rotation
  - lack of elbow drive
- Gait Analysis:
  - Get history from athlete including length of time running, prior injuries, etc.
  - Video tape runner from side, front, and back
  - Have runner run at conversation pace as well as race pace
  - Conduct flexibility strength assessment
    - look at functional flexibility and movement tests available (mobility/stability). Cari created her own assessment checklist with much consultation of doctors and literature
- Make changes slowly to avoid injury
  - Need to take time to adapt
  - Lengthening of soft tissue takes approximately 12 weeks if done properly
  - Use running drills for improving flexibility and mobility
  - Focus on regular range of motion exercises, e.g. bend feet in with hips aligned
  - Footwear appropriateness based on current conditioning, need to reassess once a season if making changes in mechanics
  - Use form cues for athletes (e.g. signal to straighten back), especially during races

### **Breakout Session 3 - Brilliant! Why runners are so smart!**

- Presented by Gary Westlund, Founder and CEO of Charities Challenge with RxExercise

- Exercise is good for health, fitness, cardiovascular system, but most significant impact from exercise is in the brain
  - E.g. dancing - a great activity for coordinated, non-accustomed activities that exercises the brain as well as the body
- Many illnesses can be alleviated by exercise, hence the RxExercise concept. Benefits include:
  - Improved cognitive function
  - Improved blood lipid count
  - Improved heart function
  - Improved cardiovascular function
  - Improved aerobic capacity
  - Improved body composition (lower body fat to lean body mass ratio)
  - Reduced blood pressure
  - Reduced glucose-stimulated insulin secretion
  - Decreased clinical symptoms of anxiety and depression
  - Reduced all-cause mortality
- Good to mix activities, challenge of different activities exercises the brain
  - Teaching in ancient times was done while walking
- Risks of Brain Atrophy
  - Physical inactivity
  - Distress
  - Depression
  - Disease
  - Drug & alcohol abuse
  - Aging
  - Social isolation
  - Prejudice and intolerance (fears of new ideas and challenges to beliefs)
- Exercise can be treated as medicine - can overdose or underdose, but most humans underdose. Worst form of overdose would be acute death, which is rare.
- Use positive psychology to stop the flow of automatic negative thoughts, move past negative thoughts by addressing them and replacing them.
- Aging Assaults on the Brain:
  - Physical inactivity and decline
  - Social isolation and substance abuse
  - Depression and anxiety
  - Prejudice and intolerance
  - Fear, purposelessness, and hopelessness
  - Increased disease and injury risks
  - Long, slow dying
- Phrases like “I don’t feel like it” or “I’m not interested in that” are signs of aging. Combat these by being more openly open - listen to ideas not aligned with yours. Lack of engagement is disconnecting and leads to social isolation.

- Number 1 predictor of successful vs usual aging? Leg strength. This directly relates to bone strength. Strong legs means someone walks/runs more, so has stronger cardiovascular system. Also, exercise means better attitude, better brain function.
- Brain-Body Connection
  - Hippocampus is tied to memory. Alzheimer's patients can hold off disease effects through use of exercise.
  - Prefrontal lobe governs executive functions. This is stimulated by exercise, slowed by aging.
    - Older people tend to walk more slowly, and will stop to consider questions. Faster gait correlates with higher executive function.
- Brain Protective Behaviors and Choices:
  - Physical activity
  - Social Engagement
  - Disease Management
  - Interventions
  - Reading and memory training
  - Travel and adventures
  - Faith, hope, and charity
- Key benefit of running: improved memory
  - Act of memorizing (rote) and meditating can also boost overall memory
  - Memorizing exercises the brain, allowing you to learn more. Suggestion: try memory games or learning while on a treadmill or out for a run (use index cards)

#### **Breakout Session 4 - Crisis Management**

- Presented by Joe Moreno, Race Director for Quad Cities Marathon
- *“Prepare for the worst, hope for the best”*
- Need to balance inconvenience and overreaction (e.g. post-Boston) with preparation
- Emergency response plan - requested by many sponsors now and a key to good race preparation
- Most common incidents at races
  - Items blown over and striking runners
  - Uncontrolled intersections
  - Insufficient water on the course
  - Inadequate medical coverage
  - Other: fire on course or elsewhere, wrong turn, police in wrong place or directing traffic across the course, heart attack/death of participants
- Examples:
  - NYC 2014 - High winds (35-50 mpg gusts), used sendwordnow.com, minimized issues by taking down banners, standing speaker systems, cancelled VIP tents, etc. with the result of now wind-related injuries.
  - Chicago/Tel Aviv races - high heat

- Boston Marathon - volcanic eruption in Iceland interrupted participant flights
- Multiple races nationwide - trains interrupting runners
  - Biggest piece of advice: design course around railroad crossings.
  - If that is impossible, take time and develop a relationship with the railroads: thank them for their help during races, get commitment to not run any trains (in writing), and reach out to offer sponsor/VIP status.
- #1 Priority: Safety of Race Participants
  - Develop relationships with police and public safety
  - Communications with key major players, e.g. Railroad companies!
  - Establish race day command center
  - Communicate with all race participants using multiple media outlets, e.g. social media, email, sms. Possibly choose primary source for most up-to-date info (e.g. webpage).
- Tips for Managing Event
  - Before event:
    - Set up ladder structure to communication; volunteer->volunteer coordinator->staff to make decisions
    - Look for repeat volunteering to bring experience back each year
    - Meet with everyone - police, fire dept, EMS crew, etc.
    - Determine when race leaves your hands during an emergency, e.g. when police or other security forces take over
  - Night before the event:
    - Collect feedback on all key points along the race to capture status/issues
    - Ensure well-documented emergency plan is in tubs for all water stops
  - Day of event:
    - Keep a short list of key people to contact on the back of a card for race day (hang on a lanyard or otherwise attach to yourself)
    - Provide lanyards with emergency numbers and brief emergency plan for volunteers to wear
    - Include GPS coordinates/closest cross streets for water stop volunteers for quick identification of location if 911 needs to be called
    - Lightning sighting - use 20 minute rule before starting race
    - If race has started and race director makes call to shut down, give option to runners already on the course by providing for pick-up, e.g. vans. Cannot force people to leave course, but offer the option.

## **Breakout Session 5 - Course Measurement Workshop**

- Presented by Toni Youngman and Duane Russell
- Definitions:
  - measurement: the act of measuring distance accurately using the “bicycle calibrated method” (BCM) of measuring

- course certification: review and approval of an application from a measurer by a state certifier
- Common Myths
  - Course measurement is time consuming. (sometimes, but not always)
  - Course measurement is complicated. (only requires simple math)
  - Course measurement is expensive. (only requires handful of equipment)
  - Nobody is going to set a record at my race. (what about PRs?)
  - Certified courses are measured long. (SCPF defined below is 1.001)
  - A measured wheel is just as good as Bicycle Calibrated Method. (maybe high cost ones, but only when new and rubber is still fully intact)
  - Only a certifier can measure a course for certification. (measurers measure, only 1 certifier per state)
  - Google Earth / GPS watch is accurate. (measure timestamps from satellite, not surface distance)
- Calibrated Bicycle Method (BCM)
  - Bicycle being used is calibrated each time a course is measured
  - Equipment needs: bicycle, Jones counter, steel measuring tape (30 m), lumber crayon or chalk, calculator, safety vest, spring balance (10 lb tension), masking tape, paint, hammer, nails & washers, surveyor's tape, pencil, notebook.
    - Helpful accessory: clipboard with pen that is mountable on bike handlebars
    - Consider getting an orange warning sign with "Official Race Course Measurement" printed for at-work times
  - Note on markers:
    - masking tape/lumber crayon - temporary
    - paint/nails & washers - permanent markers
    - surveyor's mark tape is used to mark the nails
  - Note on Jones counter:
    - left hand version is preferred historically, but right hand one is now available
    - differ in precision: RHS has 5 digits, LFS has 6 digits
  - Measurement Steps:
    - Define road race course
    - Select and measure a calibration course
    - Calibrate bicycle
    - Measure course 2x, to tolerance (~ 8/100ths %)
    - Recalibrate bicycle
    - Calculate length of course
    - Make final adjustments
    - Document the course measurement
    - Complete forms and draw course map
    - Submit application to certifier
- Measurer Should:

- Be able to ride bicycle in straight line
- Understand concept of “shortest possible route”
- Know the route that is being measured
- Be detail-oriented
- Be able to do simple math calculations
- Be informed with access to tools and information when people have questions
- Calibration Course
  - Well marked, mapped, and accurate course measured with steel tape. Steel is preferred since it has known stretch factor at given temperature.
  - Calibration courses are filed with state certifier and used to calibrate bicycle
  - Should be straight, paved, flat as possible, and at least 300 m or 1000 ft to meet minimum standards.
  - **Free** to submit calibration course paperwork, so suggestion is to define and use your own if none are nearby.
- Method for calibrating a bicycle based on a Calibration Course:
  - Stay on bicycle at all times to keep weight on the bike
  - Use 3 clicks on the Jones counter as tolerance
  - Mix tools: use a calibrated cyclometer to get you close, the Jones counter for near the end of the split point. Wired cyclometers are better since wireless ones can experience problems due to interference.
  - Best to install the Jones counter so it is visible from the bike seat.
- Short Course Prevention Factor (SCPF) takes into account the wobble at the start of bike ride. Multiply all counts by 1.001 (per mile or per km), that way the course is *at least as long as you say it is*.
- Key note for runners and measurers: **certified courses that are under length are identified by quotation marks**. E.g. Big Frank’s “5k” Race. Actual distances will appear on the certified course form.
- Steps to Measure a Course:
  - Note key points and intermediate splits on the course
  - Start, Finish, and turn-around points must all be noted in detail. Hand drawn maps are very useful.
  - User permanent markers, not something impermanent like trees!
  - Consider the shortest possible route a runner can take without being disqualified from the race. Measure no more than 30 cm (1 foot) from any curb, side of road, obstacles, or bends.
  - Fill out the application based on the latest version ([www.rrtc.net](http://www.rrtc.net))
  - Draw the course map. Make it clear - key locations, identify all streets, details of any coning, written descriptions of start/finish/turnarounds, include detailed insets of those key points, include map compass and contact information of measurer.
    - Must be on 8.5x11” paper, black ink on white, 3/8” margins. Some certifiers will accept color maps, but not all.
- Final considerations:

- Applications must be sent to certifier before the date of the event.
- Fee must be paid before certification
- Can be submitted by mail, fax, or scanned email attachment
- Certifications are good for **10 years**, but expire if any changes are made