

BARE LEGS AND FLYING SNOW AT SOUTH POND SHUFFLE

I couldn't believe it. I had actually talked my two athletic kids into doing the WMAC South Pond Shuffle 4-mile snowshoe race! Since we live in Woodstock, CT, in the quiet northeast corner of CT, we had to awaken at 5:30 AM. By 6:36 AM we were pulling out of the driveway with absolutely no snow on the ground and temperatures in the balmy range. The kids, Erin 20 and Todd 18, were skeptical, but I knew that if conditions in Savoy weren't good Farmer Ed would have called everyone the night before. The race had already been postponed once.

As we cruised northbound on Interstate 91 I must say that when we had reached the Northampton area with no sign of snow I too became a little uneasy. But, not to worry. As soon as we got to Route 2 snow began to peek out from everywhere. By the time we were ascending through the mountain passes you couldn't see a patch of earth anywhere for all the snow.

What a surprise upon arrival at the parking lot when I lowered the window to say hello; the temperature was absolutely frigid. Not only was it cold, but we had no indoor bathroom facilities. Right up my alley, but a bit tricky for Erin. She figured it out like a true trail running trooper though.

For the first time in their lives Erin and Todd strapped on snowshoes loaned by Sherpa for the occasion. Erin tested them slowly and carefully, so as not to attract attention to herself. Todd tested them in a full sprint, kicking up the snow all over the place. The kid could have played soccer in those snowshoes! We were all set to do the shuffle, but the raffle got in the way. Can you believe that all three Worshams won a raffle prize? I think there were as many prizes as there were contestants.

Since I had been training on Blue Hill Mtn in Milton, MA, and doing track workouts every weekend, I decided to test how my training was going, and took off relatively fast. One thing that I discovered was that it is much more difficult to pass someone in a snowshoe race than it is in a trail race. The trail had been worn into a v-shaped groove, and if you tried to go out of it to pass, the deeper snow immediately slowed you down. Trying to pass took a lot of energy for me. Passing (and subsequently getting passed by) Karl Molitoris was quite distracting due to the fact that he ran bare-legged in his orange shorts in the frigid weather. He must have read the article about dressing for winter running in the last newsletter. Maybe he even wrote it.

After running in 5th position for a lot of the race I got passed by 3 guys in the last 1/2 mile. However, an 8th place finish in the company of Bob Dion, the winner, and some pretty good other runners was fine with me. I finished only 3 minutes behind Bob.

After finishing I started backtracking to meet Erin and Todd. About a half of a mile out Todd approached without sign of Erin. He was carrying his snowshoes; it seemed that one of the bindings broke, so he took them both off. Todd told me that Erin had been in front of him, so right away I knew that she had ignored Farmer Ed's perfect trail marking job, and started another loop around Tyler Swamp instead of heading for the finish. This was a shame, because she was the first woman at that point. However, part of trail running is being able to actually follow the trail, and not imitate your father's technique of running the Breakneck race. So maybe next year .

The Worsham kids ate all the veggi chili that Donnalee, siren of Lost Mountain, had waiting for the runners. I of course went for the hamburgers, hot dogs, and cookies.

We all had great fun at the Shuffle. Lots of thanks to Ed and other WMAC members for providing us with a great day, great food, and social enjoyment. I'm working on Erin and Todd already to talk them into a trail race during the regular season. I think the secret lies in that great WMAC veggi chili!

Bob Worsham

ENTER THE DRAGON

The 2nd part of the WMAC Snowshoe Series was held a day after the inaugural event, and despite limited participation compared to the day prior, didn't lack for excitement.

Bryan Dragon learned of the importance of pace and keeping a little left in your tank after leading most of Saturday's event only to be passed towards the end. At the Hawley Kiln Klassic 7 Mile Snowshoe Race held in Hawley / Dubuque State Forest, Bryan allowed Karl Molitoris to lead and break trail for the first 5.5 miles, where he followed the leader left instead of right at a trail junction. This wrong turn allowed Ken Gulliver to overtake the two leaders a mere 1.5 miles from the finish.

Realizing their mistake within a few minutes, Karl and Bryan turned back and charged after Ken through the last wooded mile before the course opens up onto the snowmobile trail leading to the kiln. The young legs of Bryan recovered better than Molitoris' (both had raced the day before at the South Pond Shuffle in Savoy) and it was the 14 year old alone closing the gap on veteran trail runner Gulliver.

Ken Gulliver had this to say as Bryan Dragon tore by him on the final quarter mile, "I felt pretty good and figured I would just try to stay with him after being passed. Then, as he began to pull away, I figured "OK, just keep him in sight". As he pulled farther away, I just stopped caring...".

Bryan Dragon finished the event 20 seconds ahead of Kenny Gulliver and 4 minutes ahead of Karl Molitoris who had a wonderful finish also. In addition to both Bryan and Karl, Lawrence Dragon and Konrad Karolczuk had completed the South Pond Shuffle the day before also. This was a difficult back to back achievement for these four gentlemen, and worthy to mention.

FEBRUARY 22, 1998 HAWLEY STATE FOREST HAWLEY KILN KLASSIC 7 MILE SNOWSHOE RACE

1.	Bryan Dragon`	14	Cheshire, MA	1:35:26
2.	Ken Gulliver	34	Sterling, MA	1:35:45
3.	Karl Molitoris	42	Stafford Sp, CT	1:39:30
4.	Lawrence Dragon	37	Cheshire, MA	1:52:35
5.	Edward Alibozek	35	Suffield, CT	2:00:00
6.	Art Gulliver	58	Leominster, MA	2:16:30
7.	Tom McCrumm	51	Ashfield, MA	2:19:20
8.	Konrad Karolczuk	45	Windsor Lks, CT	3:08:56