

September 1, 2014

Tuff Scramblers Newsletter

I would like to welcome all of the readers to my first newsletter for Tuff Scramblers. Hopefully these will be able to provide some insight into the creation of Tuff Scramblers, the direction we hope to move in, as well as the latest news on the course.

I guess you could call me the race director, but I would prefer to just be one of the workers behind the scenes. If you have been to one of our events, you have probably seen me. I am usually covered in dirt or mud, running all over the place filling water holes, manning the water pumps, trying to be social and most likely dressed like a five year old with a variety of hats, including my favorite pink cowboy hat. I am amazed at how the 40 plus volunteers we have put in as much effort, if not more, than me on race day and the days prior to the event. Without this great group of people, Tuff Scramblers would never exist.

This will be our seventh event held at the Rehoboth, MA location. We do our best to try and change something at each and every event. We are continually learning and hopefully improving. I have made my share of mistakes but with the support of the participants who answer our survey questions and local running groups that provide race reviews, I hope I have made improvements that the runners enjoy.

We have several runners who have supported us over this time period and have seen us grow from our first group of 100 to the count we have now. It is not well known but at our very first event back in July 2011, we went to a facility out of state, had high expectations and ended up with about 40 runners. My family and a few very good friends worked their tails off to put that event on. We ended up with a much lower number than expected but we made sure we treated those 40 people as if the event was designed exclusively for them. We had food, we had beer, we had a couple of 10' x 10' tents, and we gave them the best course we could build at the time.

I came home dejected but I was not brought up to be a quitter. I was not sure what had gone wrong and what to improve on for future events. Every other mud run I read about was doing great, why not Tuff Scramblers? So I decided to try one on my property. It was almost August at this point. I picked a date in October that did not seem to be in conflict with anything and started the process. I had to get the necessary Town permits, as well as the State permits. Nothing seemed to be moving quickly. I still had to figure out where to advertise, how to get a course ready in time and how was I going to be able to handle all those runners we were hoping for. It turned out to be a great event again with much lower numbers than we had hoped for, around 100. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves though and seemed to have a great time. In fact, some of those runners have gone on to do every one of our races since then...thank you!

I struggled with the idea of just moving on and letting it all be a lesson learned. My daughter kept sending me the posts with all the positive feedback and encouraged me to try again. Honestly I didn't know if it was the right move, but what else was I going to do with all those Tuff Scramblers pint glasses and shirts. So we continued: 350 runners, 600 plus runners, 700 plus runners and so on and so on.

So here we are heading into our seventh event (really eighth). I believe our course is as good as anything out there. Each race facility has their own identity and I encourage runners to try them all. They may have similar obstacles but the terrain can change the overall course dramatically. I am a true believer in supporting the other events. There are thousands of people in this area who don't know what they are missing. As hard as we try, meaning the race directors, we cannot spread the word as quickly as our runners can. If you enjoy a race, tell your friends, tell your family. Heck, tell a stranger. The more people attending these events, the more creative the courses will become. It is a win-win situation for all!

Thanks for reading. I hope to get another letter out in a few weeks. If you have questions or comments you can e-mail me, Joe, at info@tuffscramblers.com.