

TEAM SCORING

One of the more interesting and innovative ideas for your race is team competition. It adds a new twist. You may ask, is this something new? The idea is not new, but very few races have really promoted the idea and again very few have used the proper scoring system. In past races, team recognition and awards seemed to get lost among all the other items at the awards ceremony. Since award ceremonies, in most cases, are long and boring, team results and awards were not available or were mailed to the winners later.

Most teams in Oklahoma are comprised of three members. Teams can have more than three but only the top three best times are combined for scoring. It is much easier for runners to recruit three members rather than five or more. Here are a few of the team categories that have been used in the past: OPEN, MASTERS, CORPORATE, CLUB, FAMILY, FRIENDS, COED, MEDIA, SCHOOL, CITY, STATE AND ALSO COUPLES, CROSS COUNTRY AND RELAY.

Let's take a look at the regular team scoring and look at Couples, Cross Country and Relay later. The OPEN team competition has been used quite often and is for the Open class runners. That is, those who will have the best performance based on time only. In other words, the top-three actual times are added together and the team with the best time wins. It is best to separate the sexes and have a male Open team and a female Open team division. With three team members you will have an uneven number of runners in one sex or the other if you do not have separate sex divisions. In most cases, this will give an unfair advantage to the team with the most male runners. Open team scoring is simple and can be done on the spot with a calculator. Of course, each runner's finish tag must have the team name or code on it for manual posting. Computer scoring will give you instant results. We will get into that a little later.

Team competition is fun if it is scored properly. You cannot use the Open team scoring of actual times and do it equitably with all categories. One thing certain about team scoring...races using the categories above must evaluate and compare performances. This is absolutely essential if you are to create interest. Performance Comparison as determined by the World Masters Association is the ONLY way to do team scoring and do it equitably when ages and sexes are mixed. Keep in mind that the teams with the good performing runners are the teams that will win. This innovative system selects the best performing runners of all ages and both sexes. It is important that you also keep in mind that this system does not equalize poor performing runners with good performing runners. It determines the best performance considering both age AND time.

Here is an example of why WMA scoring must be used: A small corporation comprised of six female employees wished to enter a team in a 5 km race which offered corporate team scoring. The top three women runners were ages 36, 56 and 62. Their best 5 km times were 20:19, 24:48 and 28:17 respectively. Two of these three times were in the state record book. Another corporation entered a team with three male runners, age 24, 24 and 28 with best times of 18:46, 18:58 and 19:12 respectively. Another corporation entered a team of two men and one lady age 29, 32 and 48 with best 5 km times of 15:48, 17:10 and 29:11 respectively. With corporate and most other teams you will get many combinations of ages and sexes. You can see at a glance which team would win using a system based on time only. Certainly there is nothing fair about the all-female older team competing against the all-male younger team. Young, male runners equally trained will invariably reach the finish line first.

Performance Comparison or age-graded scoring by WMA gives everyone an opportunity to contribute.

Your particular race may be suitable for several of the categories mentioned above or you may wish to add others. Here are some other items of importance to keep in mind: Some corporations or organizations may be large enough to enter more than one team. For example, if a corporation has 30 runners entered in an event, it could conceivably have ten separate teams. Most teams should have an extra runner or an alternate in case someone does not show. In other words each team should have four members with the top three being scored. Some families have enough members to have more than one team in the family category. Looking at the categories listed, many of these would probably be able to field more than one team. This is additional fun...not only does each corporation or organization get to compete against other corporations and organizations, they will be competing among themselves! This is possible only if the WAVA scoring is used.

Couples' scoring opens up other possibilities. A couple is usually a two person, male and female team. You can assign these couples to ten year age groups based on combined ages starting at age 29 and under through 110 and over. In addition, sub categories can be added such as, mother/son, father/daughter, brother/sister, husband/wife and so on. Of course, the WMA system must be used to be fair. The question asked by some...is WMA scoring necessary for couples teams since age groups are used? YES. For example, in the 70-79 age group, you could have two runners age 35 and 36, male and female. In that same age group you could have a 70-year old female and a six-year old male resulting in unfair competition.

Here is another excellent idea for cross country teams. Invite the surrounding high school teams to participate. You can also ask grade schools and middle schools. If it is not cross country season, male and female teams can be formed from the following age groups: 12 & under, 13-15 and 16-19 or you may wish to have team competition among each grade. Cross country scoring is completely different from other team scoring. It is based on the total of finishing places of the top five runners or whatever is designated. In other words, a perfect score would be 15 with runners from a particular team taking the top five places and adding the scores 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Relay teams is another type of competition. The Run Amuck Relays in 1992 and 1993 was a fun event. Each team was comprised of three members in various categories from the Open to Family and Friends. Each team member ran one 5 km segment in a 15 km race. Computer scoring was done on the spot by Glen's Road Race Service. The time for each runner in each segment was listed in addition to the time for the first two segments and the total times. Every conceivable combination of results was printed on race day. Scoring is the same as that in a triathlon or a duathlon wherein five separate races are scored and posted. For example, the first 5 km, the second 5 km the total of the first and second 5 km's, the third 5 km and the total of all three 5 km's.

Team scoring does not eliminate runners from competing in the other categories; runners are still eligible for Open, age-group, Clydesdale, Masters and other awards. Team scoring is a supplement to everything else. The only exception to this would be in a relay race. However, you could still score the top individual times if preferred. Teams can be a tremendous addition to your race. It can create interest if it is promoted properly and runners understand the categories and the scoring. It is essential that the procedure be explained in your brochure. We have seen brochures with virtually no explanation of team competition. Some merely state that team competition is available but with no categories, number of team members or type of scoring shown.

Scoring with the WMA system works beautifully with the RUNSCORE computer program. Glen's Road Race Service has generated on-the-spot team results. These results list each team with each team member's name, age, sex, city, actual time and WMA time or performance factor. These results will list the combined time of the top three runners and will list each team results in each category.

Cross country scoring works the same only with the finish places added together. The program will list the top scoring runners and also the displacers in parenthesis. Regardless, of the type of team or scoring it can all be done in one race. Every type of results format, in any type of team scoring, can be printed on the spot by Glen's. Posting of the results at a later date is satisfactory, if absolutely necessary. However, the real secret to being successful with team scoring is being able to produce accurate results on the spot or at least a few hours later at the awards ceremony. Contact us if you need more information. We have numerous examples from actual races.