



AMERICAN
RIVER
50 MILE ENDURANCE RUN

On April 4, 2009, American River 50 Mile Endurance Run celebrated its 30th year! The background that surrounds the race is rich in history and tradition. The event continues to attract first time runners as well as a top notch men's and women's fields each year. The fast course, top secret jacket, and the pre and post race festivities allure novice and veteran runners alike.

It all started with a conversation between Sally Edwards and Mo Livermore back in 1979. At that time, The American River Ride, horse race started in Sacramento and finished in Auburn. When Mo described the trails used by the riders and horses of this event, Sally realized the course could be a challenging and beautiful 50-mile endurance run. And thus, a race was born. In 1980, nearly 200 runners toed the line at the Auburn Fair Grounds for the start of the inaugural AR 50. Since 1982, the run has started in Sacramento. Over the years, more than 10,000 runners have accepted the challenge. Only one runner, Gloria Takagishi has now completed all 30 years!

The race filled to capacity with 650 runners in late February.

The energy was exuberant at 6 A.M. as the 30th Annual American River 50 Mile Endurance Run, presented by Moeben, began from the Guy West Bridge on the American River Parkway in Sacramento. A total of 557 starters began their 50 mile journey to Auburn. The 2009 field for the men and women was both fierce and highly competitive. Although each runner had his or her goal in mind, everyone shared one common goal; I will finish! Runners were greeted by enthusiastic volunteers at the festive aid stations along the course. The "Beal's Point Luau and DJ J" was a favorite among many of the runners.

The ice cream treats at Buzzards Cove was a welcomed surprise. The helpful hands of the Placer High School Cross Country and Track team and friends of Dan Moores (Auburn Running Company) at Last Gasp Aid Station helped runners resurge and refuel for the last few miles of the race.

The men's race changed stories throughout the day. Leading the field in to Beal's Point at Mile 26.7 was Chikara Omine in 2:46:33. Max King was second in 2:48:34 and in the third spot was Keith Bechtol in 2:49:06. The race unfolded as the men hit the trails to Auburn. King eventually took the lead from Omine and the fast legs of Dave Mackey were strong and steady to take the second position. As spectators, friends and family waited in anticipation, it was Max King who surged on to Pacific Street and crossed the finish line in 6:04:44. Mackey was second in 6:12:13, Chikara Omine was third in a time of 6:12:46 and one minute back was Matt Lonergran with an

impressive 6:13:53. Twenty men broke the seven hour barrier despite the warm and dry temperatures.

The women's race was led from the start by talented ultra distance runner Kami Semick. At 26.7 miles, Beal's Point, Semick clocked a 3:15:52. The chase pack of women included past AR 50 winners Jen Pfeifer and Jenny Capel and top ten AR 50 finisher (06) and 2005 Western States 100 Mile Endurance Run winner, Annette Bednosky. Semick was on auto pilot and maintained her lead to Auburn and crossed the finish line in 6:45:51. Jen Pfeifer was second in 7:03:25, Annette Bednosky, third in 7:11:21 and Jenny Capel was fourth in 7:14:33.

There were many special stories attached to the runners in the field. Amy Dodson, a world champion ParaTriathlete and amputee completed her second 50 miler in 11:43:24. The tenacity and toughness displayed through Dodson's courageous achievement is an inspiration to us all. Approximately, one hundred and fifty runners were toeing the start line in their first attempt at the 50-mile distance.

Gloria Takaghishi, proudly wearing Bib #1, made her 30th debut at the 30th Annual American River 50 Mile Endurance Run. Takaghishi stands alone in this category. At 12:39:46, Gloria's remarkable feat was in the record books. Way to go Gloria!

The day was filled with heartfelt accomplishments and achievements. The most fulfilling reward came from seeing the emotions on every runner's face as they crossed the finish line.

Congratulations to all of the runners, volunteers, aid station captains and staff in putting together an unforgettable day.

See you on April 10, 2010 for the 31st Annual American River 50 Mile Endurance Run.

Julie Fingar
Race Director