

October Runover Triathlon Program, October 8, 1995

Profile: Granite State Race Services
by Steve Hamlin

The success or failure of a race depends on many factors, but, from a director's perspective, there is none more important than reliable timing. A multi-sport race, such as a triathlon, gives ample opportunity for timing glitches to arise. It's important to have a crew in charge of timing that is prepared to handle almost any situation coolly and professionally.

"Murphy' is at every race," says Bob Teschek, who has operated Granite State Race Services for more than ten years.

Bob and his wife, Anita, both avid runners, began as race directors about fifteen years ago, branching off into timing in the early eighties. In January of 1984, they formed Granite State. They have grown since into a service that is capable of timing as many as six races in a single day and ten in a weekend. In an average summer weekend, crews from Granite State will be handling four to five events over a six state area.

The hallmark of an event that is timed by Granite State is the constant presence of a back-up system. The primary timing system is usually wired directly to a computer, while the independent backup can be quickly down-loaded if needed. In the event that the primary timing system suffers an equipment failure, the back-up team will have already been collecting data. A paper system provides a third level as a fail-safe. Also, should any such problem occur, a Granite State team carries with it the knowledge and equipment to repair or replace the faulty unit quickly. With this redundancy built in, the chance of any participant falling through the cracks is negligible.

This behind-the-scenes organization is important, but it's the end product that the average racer is interested in: accuracy and comprehensiveness in the posted results. Here, too, Granite State's performance is second to none. Results are posted as they become available, not just after everyone has finished. This allows racers who have finished to see their split times and places much earlier. Granite State will provide the director with final tabulations in any format that is requested. Print-outs can be done (as they were last year) by category as well as over-all.

Bob and his crew still direct a limited number of races each year, too. Included in these is the Mt. Washington Road Race. For those who aren't familiar with it, this is a foot race up the auto road right to the mile-high summit. The race attracts an elite international field making it one of the premier races in the country. The infamous Mt. Washington weather makes this an especially challenging race to direct. This year the mountain was fairly kind. The day was crystal clear with winds only gusting to around 55 MPH.

The folks at Granite State usually try to stay fairly close to home for the races they time. Although they have done events in New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island,, the OCTOBER RUNOVER is on the outer fringes of their normal operating radius. This fall, though, Bob and Anita will be taking the business farther afield. They have been asked to time the I.T.U. Bermuda Triathlon. There are exceptions to every rule.

According to Bob, the single most important element in a race is good data collection. This is the responsibility of not only the timers and the volunteers that are working for them, but also, and perhaps especially, the racers themselves. If the racers make it difficult for the numbers to be read, or don't stay in order in the finishing chute, the timers have impossible task. Then it's 'Murphy's' turn