

Running: Volunteers key to success of Ten Mile Run's legacy

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The 35th annual Annapolis Ten Mile Run is coming soon to the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. On Aug. 29, runners from more than 30 states and several countries will descend on Annapolis for 10 miles of fun in the sun for the unofficial end of summer running.

Begun in 1976 by a group of runners from Annapolis and Severna Park, it started as a challenge as to who could make it from Severna Park to the City Dock first. Among them were Jayne Astle, Phyllis Beardmore, Chris Kinstler and Debbie Fox. In 1979, the race was a joint event co-sponsored by the Annapolis Striders and the "Severna Park Fun Runners." The Striders took over full sponsorship in 1980. Since then, it has grown into a widely respected and anticipated event with entries capped at 5,500. The field was filled this year in less than 10 days from the opening date of June 1. Those who missed getting in early might be lucky enough to find someone willing to give up their slot. For the particulars on that process, that ends no later than July 31, visit the Annapolis Striders website (annapolisstriders.org).

The initial success of the event was quickly optimized by the scenic course that showcases the state capital and the Severn River. One facet that has run through the event from the beginning has been the quality of the premiums given to each runner. At first, all entrants would receive this just by signing up for the race. However, that led to many runners just signing up to get the premium and not running the race. As the intent of the event was to encourage running as a means to physical and mental well being, the club soon changed to the current policy whereby only finishers get the premium. That decision, and the fact that the race awards a high quality item that runners love to display and actually use in their training, has led to increased field size and demand for entries.

Those decisions have also had a positive impact on the ability of the race to be the primary source of financial support for the club's other programs and its charitable contributions in the community. This continuing success is also due in large part to the fact that the event is staged and produced almost entirely by the non-profit's club membership and is one of only a few large road races in the country that can say that. This infrastructure has produced a race committee that works well together. The current race directors, Craig Harrison and Lisa Fontaine, will tell you that their job is made easier by the large number of members who return each year to add their expertise to the event.

Without fail, if you encounter someone with A10 gear and you speak with them about their experience at the race, they will invariably react positively about it. It is good for the city to have such positive publicity and especially rewarding for those who help to make it happen.