

Strider Walkers Host Virginia Beach Racewalking Clinic

By Steve Durrant

During the weekend of April 16 – 18, Hartley Dewey and I were the co-hosts for a Dave McGovern World Class Racewalking Clinic. In addition to Hartley and me, twelve other Tidewater Striders – Kathy Nash, Cindy Williams, Linda Janssen, James Wolfe, Bill Spruill, Paula Graham, Laurie Russell, Bill Lipford, Maureen Ventrice, Lori Sherwood, Heide Sleasman, and Dwight Kane – attended the clinic. A total of 27 racewalkers and racewalker want-a-bees ranging in age from 17 to 75 from Virginia, Vermont, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, and North Carolina attended. Paula Graham's arranging with two local restaurants to provide lunch on Saturday and Sunday, and Cindy William's handling of the Saturday evening's dinner restaurant details made the clinic run very smooth during the weekend.

The clinic was conducted by Dave McGovern, who is a member of the USA Racewalking Team competing in May at the 2010 World Cup Racewalking Championships in Chihuahua, Mexico. Dave is a past member of several U.S. national racewalking teams and a well known national and international racewalk competitor and coach. With the large number of clinic attendees, Dave was assisted by two guest coaches: Dan Serianni from New York who is coached by Dave and a member of the USA racewalking team competing in Chihuahua in May; and Rebecca Garson, a racewalker coached by Dave from Afton, Virginia. Rebecca is the record holder of the women's Shamrock Half-Marathon Walk.

The clinic started Friday evening with an informal pasta dinner at Hartley and Lorraine Dewey's home. This afforded everyone an opportunity to gather in a casual setting to meet and talk with one another. Saturday morning we met at the track at a local middle school where Dave, Dan, and Rebecca demonstrated and led the attendees in several exercises and drill sessions to improve technique, flexibility, and foot speed. During this time Dave filmed each individual racewalking to establish a baseline to measure their improvement during the clinic. At mid-day we broke for lunch.

Following lunch we met in a classroom at a nearby private school. Dave reviewed on the screen each individuals' video

and commented on their racewalking abilities. He then recommended where each individual needed to concentrate to improve their racewalking proficiency. Following this, we returned to the track. After an extended warm-up we were divided into teams and racewalked a "semi-competitive" 800 meter relay race. After a post-relay stretching period, the day's training was competed. Saturday night many of us met socially with Dave, Dan, and Rebecca at a local "cantina" for dinner and liquid refreshments. No one stayed out late.

Sunday morning began in the classroom. Dave discussed the physiology involved in the different types of workouts needed for fast racewalking. They are necessary to condition the body's neuromuscular, cardiovascular, lactate threshold, and VO2 systems. Following this instruction we returned to the track for a "lactate threshold" workout wearing heart monitors. We divided into two groups. One group racewalked while the other group acted as their assistants relaying each individual's heart rate readings back to Dave. The test group racewalked for three, eight

Below are the Tidewater Strider Attendees and the Clinic Coaches.

L-R: front row: Dave McGovern, Rebecca Garson (Asst Coach), Maureen Ventrice, Paula Graham, Lori Sherwood, Dan Serianni (Asst Coach), Steve Durrant
2nd Row: Heidi Sleasman, Laurie Russell, Linda Janssen, Kathy Nash
3rd Row: Cindy Williams, Bill Spruill, Dwight Kane
4th Row: James Wolfe, Hartley Dewey, Bill Lipford

minute periods and their heart rates were taken and recorded every two minutes. The two groups flip-flopped and a second series of three, eight minute racewalks was completed followed by a stretching session.

Following lunch we met back in the classroom. Using the data from the morning's testing, Dave determined each individual's heart rate at their lactate threshold, and their corresponding maximum heart rate. This information is useful to insure that training will result in better race performances.

This wrapped up our weekend racewalking clinic. It was an informative and enjoyable experience. Hopefully more of our Strider walkers, or want-to-be racewalkers, will consider attending future racewalking clinics. It's a win – win experience for all from the inexperienced walker to the seasoned veteran racewalker.



Bill Spruill & Paula Graham lead off in "racewalking the ladder"

