

Pacific Association Shines at USATF XC Club Nationals in Tallahassee

by Andy Crawford, Men's LDR Committee Chair

The Pacific Association (PA) once again demonstrated why we are the Association of Champions in the sunshine state early in December. Apalachee Regional Park (Tallahassee, FL) played host to the 2023 USATF National XC Club Championships on December 9th, and what a beautiful day it was. The deliberate cross country specific designed course, built at the site of a previous garbage dump, did not disappoint. Permanent sign post markers for every kilometer and every mile for each of the four courses (5k, 6k, 8k, and 10k), dedicated coaching boxes and spectator crossing zones, a brick inlaid finish arch, and a jumbo-tron with live race updates and video coverage highlighted a glitch-free execution of an event that brings together club teams from across the nation to battle for prize money and more importantly... bragging rights.

The morning started with the Masters Women's 6k, in which **Jenny Kadavy** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) was the top PA finisher in 7th place overall with a time of 22:38.6. Teammate **Heather Gibson** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) was the next PA finisher in a time of 24:08.8 to nab 25th place overall. **Samantha Forde** (Impala Racing Team) finished 36th overall in 25:18.7, and finishing 4th in the 50-54 age group. In the 55-59 age group, **Aeron Arlin Genet** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) claimed a podium spot in 3rd place, merely 3.2 seconds ahead of 4th. In the 60-64 age group, **Patricia Bellan** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) also finished 3rd in a time of 25:53.3.

Masters Women's 6k Team Results: In the 40+ category the **HOKA Aggie Running Club** finished in 7th, and in the 50+ category the **Impala Racing Team** also finished in 7th. In the 60+ category the **Impala Racing Team** finished in 2nd place, making their way to the podium.

The 60+ Masters Men's 8k was the next race on the docket. After the masters women burned up the course, it was hot and ready for the 60+ men. **Kevin Ostenburg** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) finished in 4th place overall in a time of 30:32.2, putting him just short of the podium individually. **Jeff Soares** (Santa Cruz TC) finished in 14th place overall in a time of 32:00.4 and **Thomas Cushman** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) took home 39th place in a time of 35:01.4. Cushman also claimed the top podium stance for the 70-74 age group, grabbing gold for his 1st place age group finish.

Masters Men's 8k (60+) Team Results: In the 60+ category the **HOKA Aggie Running Club** finished 6th overall.

The 40+ Masters Men's 10k started at 11:00am, just as the Florida warmth really begin to sneak up on ya. Unlike the subtle heat, **Malcom Richards** (West Valley TC) made his dominance known from the start. Richards went wire-to-wire leading the field, clocking a time of 32:08.4 to solidly finish 1st place overall (and 1st place 40-44 age group) almost 35 seconds ahead of the nearest mortal. Teammate **David Cisewski** (West Valley TC) came in hot to gobble down the last overall podium spot, placing 3rd overall (and 3rd place 40-44 age group) in a time of 32:58.0. **Jaime Heilpern** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) was the third PA harrier to cross the finish line in 9th place overall in a time of 34:49.4, which also secured him the 1st place 50-54 age group win. Hot on the tracks of the top 3 PA finishers were the following: **Neville Davey** (West Valley TC) in 10th place overall and 1st place 45-49 age group, **Ben Koss** (West Valley TC) in 15th place overall, **Todd Rose** (West Valley TC) in 16th place overall and 3rd place 50-54 age group, **Kevin Pool** (West Valley TC) in 17th place overall, **Tom Haxton** (West Valley TC) in 22nd place overall, and **Mario Farioli** (West Valley TC) in 26th place overall. **Mark**

Callon (West Valley TC) finished in 3rd place for the 54-59 age group, scooping up a podium pic.

Masters Men's 10k (40+) Team Results: In the 40+ category **West Valley TC** finished 1st place as a team with a score of 36 points, bringing the title back to the bay. The **West Valley TC B-team** finished in 8th place, only 6 points out of 6th place.

In the 50+ category **West Valley TC** continued the champions pose with a 1st place team finish, edging out 2nd place by only 3 points.

Congratulations to the National Champions: West Valley TC 40+ Men and West Valley TC 50+ Men! This is the first time in USATF National XC Club Championship history that the same club team has won both the 40+ and 50+ Men's titles.

As the sun rose higher in the sky, so too did the performances of the PA aspire to follow. The Open Women's 6k race did not disappoint. The PA's **Claire Green** (Peninsula Distance Club) finished 2nd overall in a time of 20:20.4, also a 2nd place age group placing. 2.4 seconds hot on her heels was teammate **Maya Weigel** (Peninsula Distance Club) in 3rd place (also 3rd place age group). **Kayla Knapp** (Peninsula Distance Club), **Holly Clark** (Peninsula Distance Club), and **Ayla Granados** (Peninsula Distance Club) finished 6th, 8th, and 9th overall, respectively to complete the team. **Sabrina Garcia** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) finished in 33rd overall.

Open Women's 6k Team Results: The lone team from the PA, the **Peninsula Distance Club**, represented well and finished in 1st place with a minuscule 18 total points. Finishing 1-2-4-5-6 gleamed of dominance.

Congratulations to the National Champions: Peninsula Distance Club's Open Women!

The last race of the day was the Open Men's 10k. Feet were on fire, legs were blazing, and lungs grasped for relief in the humid air where hydrogen outnumbered the much needed oxygen 2-to-1. The top finishers from the PA were **Mark Huizar** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) in 12th place overall in a time of 31:51.5, **Phillip Reid** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) finishing in 32:09.1 to place 23rd overall, and **Craig Huff** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) who's favorite number is thirty two placing 32nd overall with a time of 32:32.5. **John Gutierrez** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) and **Swarnjit Boyal** (HOKA Aggie Running Club) placing 42nd and 45th overall, respectively.

Open Men's 10k Team Results: The sole team from the PA was the **HOKA Aggie Running Club**, and they finished 5th overall in team standings.

The USATF National XC Club Championships will be at Chambers Bay in Tacoma, WA in 2024. While the state of Washington might not be the "sunshine state," you can be sure that the Pacific Association teams and individuals will bring the heat and blind the competition if they stare at us too long.

Summary of PA Bling:

Masters Women's 6k

- Team: 2nd place - Impala Racing Team (60+)
- Individual: 3rd place - Aeron Arlin Genet (HOKA Aggie Running Club) (55-59)
3rd place - Patricia Bellan (HOKA Aggie Running Club) (60-64)

Masters Men's 8k (60+)

- Individual: 1st place - Thomas Cushman (HOKA Aggie Running Club) (70-74)

Masters Men's 10k (40+)

- Team: 1st place - West Valley TC (40+)
1st place - West Valley TC (50+)
- Individual: 1st place - Malcolm Richards (West Valley TC) (40-44)
3rd place - David Cisewski (West Valley TC) (40-44)
1st place - Neville Davey (West Valley TC) (45-49)
1st place - Jaime Heilpern (HOKA Aggie Running Club) (50-54)
3rd place - Todd Rose (West Valley TC) (50-54)
3rd place - Mark Callon (West Valley TC) (54-59)

Open Women's 6k

- Team: 1st place - Peninsula Distance Club
- Individual: 2nd place - Claire Green (Peninsula Distance Club)
3rd place - Maya Weigel (Peninsula Distance Club)

All Results: <https://live.pttiming.com/xc-ptt.html?mid=5953>