

## **2023 CNYO Rogaine at Finger Lakes National Forest**

### **Meet Director's Perspective**

This year's annual rogaine is now over, except for a little final paperwork and a few more hours of cleanup and organizing of equipment, and it was a very fine weekend. We were back at the site of CNYO's very first rogaine event (one of the first few in the country), a little over 30 years later. In many important ways the event this year was quite similar, but there have been some significant changes! Back then, the US Forest Service had just recently taken over control of NY State's Hector Land Use Area, and one of the things they had done was to make a large map of the new National Forest in a roughly USGS style, with public lands indicated by a light green overlay and private land in white, if I am remembering correctly. Mark and Barb Dominie had enhanced this by making a large stencil of the area with openings for all the grazing land, and had by hand "overprinted" with yellow highlighter all of the open area on one copy of the map for each team, and the other team member(s) got one of the off-the-shelf maps. The control flags were standard orienteering flags and punches, and for the night part of things, instead of reflectors they had put out green glow sticks that came (I think) from Shawn Forney's army connections, and were turned on by snapping off the covering case by hand by one of a group of volunteers who had each been assigned to do a group of them slightly before dark on the Saturday night. Mark and Barb were up keeping the hash house going all night, establishing the basic style of food service that the club has used ever since. It was the first rogaine that Mary and I had ever raced in (we were pretty new to orienteering in general), and we were immediately enthusiasts! While participating as a competitor is perhaps a little more fun, running the event (in an administrative sense) is also pretty fun. Nowadays, we have much more detailed maps of the area (the one we used at this event was created by Mark about 15 years ago, and has been updated a little bit in the intervening years as changes are noticed during the process of putting out controls). Now we usually get by with a smaller crew of workers (no more sending out a half-dozen people during the event to ignite glow sticks), but the club has a larger and better consolidated batch of equipment stored in a trailer, and we have had a lot more experience in the things that require special attention at a number of venues. Cows at this site, for example, are one of the reasons we have switched to using metal control markers for our rogaines!

In any case, this year, as in our first event, the weather was beautiful! We had 72 people that actually went out on the course, about half of them in the 6-hour event, and the others split about equally between the 12 and 24 hour events. Some people traveled a considerable distance to the event, the longest trip being for a team from Texas, but at least six states and two Canadian provinces were represented. After two months of drought conditions, we had quite a considerable amount of rain in the week just leading into the weekend, and it was only a day ahead of time that the forecast had switched to sunny skies and cool temperatures for the event. It seemed on Friday afternoon a little hard to believe that the rain was really going to stop in time, but it did! We had rather few people that ended up camping for the weekend, but those who did seemed pleased with the availability of lots of nice places to choose for setting up a tent. On Saturday morning, few people arrived to check in until well after registration officially opened at 8, but after a pretty busy half-hour before the map distribution at 10, most people had checked in. As always, there were a few people who had some sort of travel difficulties and had to do their planning with pretty minimal planning time before heading out in the mass start at noon, but nobody seemed (at least outwardly) to be experiencing a lot of stress about time pressure.

In the 6-hour race, there was a rather greater spread in prior experience amongst participants than in the longer races, and probably a larger spread in the intended expenditure of energy, ranging from very casual recreation to pretty competitive effort. We had a couple of very novice teams participating, the Farvets and the Davis Family, who both were much more effective in their navigation than might have been expected from their lack of prior experience, and finished up right in the middle of the scoring. The highest score, by quite a big margin, was 1170 (of 2860 possible) by Sam Kolins, the famous Gummy Bear Overlord. Only two teams were overtime, and those only by a few minutes, and pretty much everybody seemed happy with their day in the woods.

The 12-hour race was won by the Quebec team R2D2-Rogaine Laurentide (Benoit Chagnon and Francis Falardeau) with a score of 1850, visiting 29 controls. There was a general drop of typically about 2 controls between adjacent finishers for most of the teams in the race.

In the 24-hour race, the winning team was Sole Brothers (Sean and Kathleen Powers) from Ontario with 2200 points and 30 controls. Sean's wife Kathleen was a last-minute substitute for his originally planned teammate, who became ill a couple of days before the race. Kathleen was clearly a great fallback plan, even if it had been about ten years since her last 24-hour rogaine! But second place (by 80 points) team Etc. (Dmitry Lavrov and Artem Kazantsev) who got back to the finish a little more than 50 minutes earlier must be wondering if they could have added in control 84 in less than 50 minutes when they were up near the north end of the map!

There were some very nice performances at the two ends of the age spectrum represented in this race. The junior team Crickets (Artem Lavrov and Nicolas Maga) at 17 years old in the 24-hour race very ably represented an age bracket which we would like to see more of at rogaines. Meanwhile Shuffle off to Buffalo (Walt and Patty Lyons) in the 6-hour race and GHO Slow (Jim and Sue Waddington) in the 24-hour race demonstrated that there are still a few people in their 80's that can still successfully take on this sort of a challenge.

A number of people have been important in making the event happen. The US Forest Service personnel were very helpful in getting me through the bureaucratic aspects of the event, Jodie Vanselow at Finger Lakes National Forest and Jennifer Edmonds at Green Mountains State Forest. Mark Dominie created the map for the event, which has since needed only minimal updating. Barb Dominie acted as registrar, keeping things current even when she became ill the week before the event. Shawn Forney helped with EventReg, and Stacy Pendell has taken care of things for the event on the CNYO webpage. John Boland helped with hanging some of the control markers. Ann and Charlie Leonard were absolutely crucial in getting materials out to the event site, helping out with cooking and general operations during the event (Charlie took a bit of a break while running in the 12-hour competition), cleaning up the area on Sunday afternoon, and carting off a trailerload of equipment afterwards. Mary was involved in pretty much everything, from nagging me to get things done for deadlines, helping put out controls and water, food purchase and helping with cooking, and general organization. Joe Shayka has picked up all the controls for me after the last several years of these rogaines. This year he got everything out of the woods in about 9 ½ hours each on Sunday and Monday.

We'll hope to see most of you (and many others) back again next summer for the next CNYO rogaine. It was so nice to see so many old friends again this year after the break in our normal activities caused by covid-19!

Eric Smith