

Running commentary... racing into 2020

By **Charlie Kanzig**
Correspondent

It's natural to look ahead at the start of a new year so I thought I'd help my fellow runners consider some Oregon-based running events to take part in for the first half of 2020. I have compiled a list of events held from January to June.

I tend to favor low-key events in general, races that support good causes, and those that include the opportunity to see a part of Oregon that folks might not already be familiar with. Registration and other information about these races can be found via a Google search or the Bend Footzone website (www.footzonebend.com).

The absolute most down-to-earth race in this list comes first. The MADass FATSO run on Saturday, January 25, in Madras has no online registration, no set entry fee, no refreshments and no set course. There are courses measured for both 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) and 50 kilometers (31.1 miles) but runners can choose to simply start and turn around whenever they feel like it. A suggested \$20 donation goes toward a memorial scholarship. The run starts at Madras Physical Therapy and the courses include Willow Creek Canyon and the national grasslands area.

A pair of races caught my eye for February. First up on Saturday, February 1 is the Bristow Trail Run in Dexter, Oregon. This run has something for everyone with distances from 5 mile to 50 kilometers (31.1 miles). Dexter is south of Eugene, approximately 110 miles from Sisters.

Two weeks later on Saturday, February 15 is a local event that has unique attributes. The Royal Run 5k in Bend is a "poker" run in which participants get a playing card at checkpoints along the race. The runner with the best poker hand wins! This race is held in conjunction with Winterfest, which includes all sorts of other activities as well, so you could get a run in and then make a day of it in Bend. Check the Winterfest website for complete information.

Sunday, March 1 is the date the Mastondon Trail Run takes place between Tumalo and Redmond. The area is known as the Maston Trail Network and someone decided to tie that name into the idea of the prehistoric pachyderm to make a cute name and graphic. This is another fairly low-key race of "around" 10 miles

near Cline Butte with views of the Deschutes River and the Cascade mountains. The mostly flat course makes it a bit less challenging than most trail runs in the area.

A shorter, family-friendly run on Saturday, March 14 takes place in Bend to usher in St. Patrick's Day. The St. Patrick's Day Dash includes a 5-kilometer course in the Old Mill District. Costumes are encouraged. The event is a fundraiser for Family Access Network.

A month after Mastondon you can try another local trail race at the Horse Butte 10 Miler on Sunday, April 5. The race is limited to 200 participants, which keeps it low-key, but makes it important to register early. Horse Butte is about 11 miles southeast of downtown Bend.

If you don't get into the Horse Butte race or want something a bit tamer, try the long-held Salmon Run, also set for April 5. The race includes a half-marathon,

10k, and 5k along with a "Little Fry" run for the youngest runners with distances appropriate for three different age groups up to age 10.

Of course, for those willing to go 20 or 40 miles, there is the well-loved Peterson Ridge Rumble right here in Sisters, set for Sunday, April 26. The Rumble, in its 15th year, supports running teams at Sisters High School and Sisters Middle School. The courses start and end at Sisters Middle School and take in a big portion of the Peterson Ridge Trail system. Race Director Sean Meissner even throws in a little prize money for the top men and women in each race.

The month of May includes one of my all-time favorite road half-marathons. The 53rd annual Eastern Oregon Half Marathon (5k and 10k) takes place Saturday, May 23. This point-to-point 13.1-miler is one of the longest-running races



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

A group of women near the first aid station at last April's Peterson Ridge Rumble.

in Oregon. The course runs along the rural highway from Service Creek to Spray. Due to its early start at 8:00 a.m., many racers find a place to camp the night before in the area (Mitchell, Fossil, Spray). Service Creek itself is just over a two-hour drive (106 miles) from Bend. Organizers have added a 5k and 10k to the menu and provide shuttle service from Spray to the start line at Service Creek. The race is held in conjunction with the Spray Rodeo and provides a real small-town Oregon experience.

race for an especially good cause, try the Heaven Can Wait run in Bend on Sunday, June 7. The race takes place each year on National Cancer Survivors Day and benefits Sara's Project, a fund of St. Charles Foundation, that provides education, early detection and support services to ease the challenges of breast cancer for people in Central and Eastern Oregon.

These are my recommendations, but if you check out the Footzone website or racecenter.com you might find your own favorites. Happy running!

If you are looking for a 5k



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