

AGING AND AGE GROUPS

Ten-year age groups for awards are a thing of the past. It is very rare if a race in Oklahoma has ten-year age groups. It certainly is unfair. Most race directors and runners do not understand the aging and slowing process.

There is a period between age 20 and 34 for most race distances where there is no difference among runners. In other words, a 34-year-old runner is just as fast as a 20-year-old runner. The slowing starts in the mid 30=s and continues until death.

The most misunderstood item about this is the difference in the age groups. For example, the slowing from age 35 to 39 is not as significant as the slowing from 40 to 44. The ability gap then continues to grow substantially. In age group 50-54 the age-54 runner is much slower than the 50-year-old runner and then it continues on up the ladder with the gap getting wider and wider with each year or with each age group. Yet, race directors have five-year age groups within the 20-34 years where there is no difference in ability and then lump runners in the 50-59, 60-69 age groups together where even one year makes a big difference. There is a big difference from age 70 to 71 but none from age 20 to 34.

Try to explain this to some people and they will not listen.

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