

2019 Runner Profile: George Etzweiler, 99

Many folks both locally and beyond know George Etzweiler's name by now. George has been making waves in the running sport for many years now. And for a guy who started running at age 49, he's clocked a lot of miles over the past 50 years and is still going strong.

Part of George's secret may be his focus. As captain of The Old Men of the Mountains relay team, he puts together a team of eight senior runners to take on the Tussey mOUntainBACK 50 Mile Relay and Ultramarathon in Rothrock State Forest. They've done it 12 years so far. But George doesn't just recruit the other 7 runners of his team,



all of whom must be age 65 or older. He strives for the highest average age possible, only reaching into the lower age echelons when he has to. This year's team roster mirrors last year's, with one change. Pamela Murphy, the lone lady on the team, will replace Paula Jech, who is in Hawaii.

George, 99, met Pamela, 66, recently in Lewistown, where both were running the Goose Day 5K. "When she found out that Paula would not be here this year, Pamela said, "You'd better add another woman to your team." And he did.

This year George has been training in his usual venue, the scenic upward, switchback-laden Lauren Run Road, just up the road from Tussey Mountain, where the Tussey mOUntainBACK race starts and finishes. He has been running the route three days a week with teammates Stephen Liadis and Jay Maynard. Two other days, George works out at a local gym.

George's recent training also includes his June run of the all-ascending, 7.6-mile Mount Washington Road Race, where he even beat last year's time by a full minute. Each of the two races seem to keep him in shape for the other.

Proceeds of this year's event will support Centre Volunteers in Medicine, a State College based medical and dental clinic that provides access to primary and preventive care for qualifying individuals living or working in Centre County who live in surrounding counties. For more information about Centre Volunteers in Medicine, visit <https://cvim.net/>.

Photo: George Etzweiler chats with spectators after the 2018 Tussey mOUntainBACK race. Photo by Tim Weight.
