



CROSS COUNTRY HISTORY

Masters (40+) Cross Country 1980-present

Editor
Bill Quinlisk

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130 East Washington Street, Suite 800
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-261-0500 | F a x 317-261-0514 | www.usatf.org

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US Cross Country History

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Introduction

Goal:

This history will focus on The Athletic Congress of the USA (TAC/USA) and the USA Track & Field (USATF) national Master (ages 40+) Cross Country Championships from 1980 to the present day.

Definitions:

"**Athletics**" includes track and field, long-distance running, cross-country running, race-walking, and mountain, ultra, & trail running. The governing body for Athletics in the United States is currently USA Track & Field (USATF).

Cross country is basically a team sport. Cross country courses shall be confined, to the extent possible, to open country, fields, parks, golf courses and grasslands. The traversing of paved roads should be kept to a minimum.

Cross Country Governance History:

AAU (1887-1979): On January 30, 1878, rower and runner William B. Curtis founded what became the **Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)** in New York City. The name was formally adopted in 1887. The AAU governed the sport of athletics, among other sports, until 1979, when the first Amateur Sports Act decreed that the AAU could no longer hold international franchises for more than one sport.

International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF): is the international governing body for the sport of athletics, covering track and field, cross country running, road running, race walking, mountain running and ultra-running. Included in its charge are the standardization of rules and regulations for the sports, recognition and management of world records, and the organization and sanctioning of athletics competitions, including the World Athletics Championships. In 2019 the name was changed to **World Athletics**.

TAC (1979-1992): The Athletics Congress (TAC/USA) became fully operational as the governing body for Athletics in late 1979 with its first annual meeting, conducted in Las Vegas in conjunction with that year's AAU Convention. A constitutional convention was held in Dallas/Fort Worth in 1980. The first stand-alone annual meeting of TAC/USA occurred in Atlanta, Georgia, in late fall of 1980.

USATF (1992-present): In 1992, the TAC/USA name was changed to **USA Track & Field (USATF)** to increase recognition for the organization and the sport of Athletics in the United States.

National Cross Country Championships

The first "Amateur Individual Cross Country Championship of America" was hosted by the New York Athletic Club (NYAC) in Mott Haven, Bronx, NY on November 6, 1883. In 1887 a second event was added with team scoring under the jurisdiction of the National Cross Country Association. The championships were held annually, albeit inconsistently, under various organizations until the fledgling AAU took control in 1898. A fall national cross country championships has been held every year since 1904. These early races featured competition for Senior or "Open" male runners only. There was an overlap span from 1962 to 1978 where the NCAA supported "US Track & Field Federation" (USTFF) hosted its own Fall National Cross Country Championships in direct competition with the AAU National Cross Country Championships. Most recognized

the AAU event as the “real” national cross country championships. The rival USTFF organization changed its name to “Track & Field Association, USA” (TFA/USA) and hosted two more Fall National XC Championships. The TFA/USA event in 1979 was held one month prior to the final AAU Championship. 1980 was the last year for competing cross country nationals and was the first year for the new TAC/USA Fall Cross Country Championships.

In 1975, the AAU established a separate Trial race to select the US team for the World Cross Country Championships. This USA World XC Trial race was run in January or early February as opposed to the usual November date for the Fall XC Nationals. The rationale was to try to guarantee a better level of fitness for the US World XC team by holding the selection race closer to the date of the IAAF World XC Championships – usually March.

The history of US women’s cross country championships begins with the addition of a women’s world championship race in 1967 after years of intermittent and unsanctioned world events dating back to 1931. The US Women’s Cross Country Championships began with the advent of TAC/USA in 1979. Originally the TAC Women’s Cross Country Committee was a sub-committee of the TAC’s Women’s Track & Field sports committee. The NCAA added women’s cross country in the fall of 1981.

International Cross Country Championships

Between 1903 and 1973 the ‘world’ cross country meet was called the International Cross Country Championships and involved only Open Men’s teams from European and North African countries. Intermittent and unsanctioned Open Women’s competition was begun in 1931. US Men first participated in 1966 with US Women beginning in 1967. In 1961 the under-20 (U20) or ‘Junior’ Men were added to the meet with a U20/Junior’ Women’s race added in 1989.

World Cross Country Championships under the aegis of the IAAF were begun in 1973 and were run annually until 2011. The IAAF XC event is usually held in March. As of 2011, the event is now run in odd-numbered years only. Between 1998 and 2006, the IAAF world meet, and thus the US qualifiers, featured a short course race and a long course race on separate days. The short course races were discontinued at the world and national levels after 2006. In addition to the Senior (Open) Men, Senior (Open) Women, Junior (U20) Men and Junior (U20) Women’s races, the 2017 IAAF World Cross Country Championships featured a mixed gender relay event for the first time. In 2019 the IAAF changed its name to World Athletics. Master races have not officially been added to the World Athletics Cross Country Championships – yet.

With a few minor iterations over the years involving short course and long course races; TAC/USA and USATF have continued hosting two national cross country championship events each year. The fall event was renamed the Club Cross Country Championships in 1998 with its main focus on team competition while the winter event remains the US qualifier for the IAAF (now World Athletics) World XC Championships. US Senior (Open) and Junior (U20), men and women cross country runners have been given more international opportunities to run for their country with the advent of the North America, Central America, Caribbean XC Championships (NACAC), the Pan-Am XC Cup event and the short-lived BUPA Great Edinburgh International XC Challenge. Given the vagaries of international scheduling, one or both of the US national cross country championship events have been used to select teams for these international events.

Master (40+) races have not yet been added to international cross country championships.

Master runners

The word “**Master**” was first introduced in the 1960’s to describe track races open to runners ages 40+. By the late 1960’s these track events proved so popular that more categories were added for athletes ages 40+. At first, these categories grouped runners in 10 year age increments e.g. ages 40-49, ages 50-59, ages 60-69, etc. Later these categories were sub-divided into 5 year increments. Descriptive titles like “Sub-Masters”, “Masters”, and “Veterans”, developed for the age categories but only the “Master” nomenclature has stuck. The running boom of the early 1970’s soon expanded the inclusion of separate Master age categories to road racing and cross country. By 1975, these age groupings were used at the first World Masters Championship for both stadia (Track & Field) and non-stadia (Road Racing and Cross Country) events and have been used ever since. Masters Track and Field has since lowered the defining age limit for Masters below age 40. Masters Long

Distance Running including cross country has resisted that movement and has stayed with the culturally defined age 40 cut off.

Master (ages 40+) National Cross Country Championships

Master national cross country championship races were first added to the fall USATF Club XC Championships schedule in 1998 in Orlando, FL. This event has become highly successful bringing fields of over 2000 open and master runners in recent years. These numbers have also increased the team prize purses although in disproportionate amounts as master prize purse totals have lagged behind open money. Master races were added to the “Winter National” in 2000 in Greensboro, NC. Master cross country races continue to be held in conjunction with both the fall and the winter cross country championships to the present day with minor changes over the years in the number of races and the distances raced.

Prior to the inclusion of masters in the fall and winter open cross country championship in 1998 and 2000 respectively, all previous National Master Cross Country Championships were “stand alone” events; that is, Master (40+) only races. Master men and women raced the same course and same distance on the same day, often in the same race. Prize purses were minimal or nonexistent. Fields were often small, especially master women in the days before Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. Distances raced were 5km, 8km 10km, and 15km, often with three or four separate championship events held within one month of each other during the fall cross country racing season. Master cross country prize purses for the “stand alone” events have also grown over the years but are not yet on par with the purses being offered at the combined Open/Master XC Championships or Master Road Race Championships.

Master team eligibility rules and team scoring rules have evolved and continue to evolve to meet the needs of the growing Master cross country constituency. While individual awards are broken down into 5-year age groups beginning at 40-44 and continuing to the age group of the oldest runner, team awards are broken into 10-year divisions with older runners having the option to declare (and score) for younger age group teams. Currently master men 40+ and 50+ team divisions score the top 5 finishers by place with up to 9 runners declared on a team. All other team divisions: M60+, M70+, M80+ and all master women team divisions; score the top 3 finishers by place with up to 5 runners declared on a team. Team scoring totals are based on the sum of the scorers’ places within each team division. For the most part club team members all reside within the Association where their club team is based with each team allowed one runner from outside their Association. All-star teams are discouraged. Cross Country is truly a grassroots club team sport. Age-grading has also become part of championship race results and awards, and is currently used in the selection process for the USATF Master Harrier of the Year awards.

TAC/USA and USATF Master National Cross Country Championships

Note: National Master Cross Country Championships were held prior to 1980 under the auspices of the AAU.

Results are not available.

11/09/80	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Mercer Island, WA	Luther Burbank Pk
11/23/80	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
11/29/80	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	San Diego, CA	Balboa Pk
10/04/81	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
11/21/81	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Houston, TX	Buffalo Bayou Pk
11/28/81	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	San Diego, CA	Balboa Pk
11/14/82	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	State College, PA	Penn State GC
11/26/82	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Raleigh, NC	Meredith College
11/27/82	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	San Diego, CA	Balboa Pk

10/30/83	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	State College, PA	Penn State GC
11/13/83	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
11/25/83	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Raleigh, NC	Meredith College
11/03/84	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	Houston, TX	Buffalo Bayou Pk
11/17/84	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Holmdel, NJ	Holmdel Pk
11/24/84	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Seattle, WA	Lower Woodland Pk
11/03/85	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Syracuse, NY	Green Lakes Pk
11/17/85	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk TAC/USA
11/29/85	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Raleigh, NC	Meredith College
10/26/86	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
11/16/86	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Holmdel, NJ	Holmdel Pk
11/23/86	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
11/08/87	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Seattle, WA	Sunset Pk
11/22/87	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	East Meadow, NY	East Meadow
11/28/87	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
11/20/88	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Holmdel, NJ	Holmdel Pk
11/25/88	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Raleigh, NC	Meredith College
11/27/88	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	Irvine, CA	Regional Pk
11/05/89	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Columbus, OH	Airport GC
11/19/89	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
11/25/89	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	San Francisco, CA	Golden Gate Pk
10/07/90	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Fayetteville, NY	Green Lks. Pk
10/28/90	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Pasco, WA	Sun Willows GC
12/02/90	TAC/USA Master 8k XC Championships	Steilacoom, WA	Sawyer St Pk
10/26/91	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Louisville, KY	Sawyer St. Pk
11/03/91	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Columbus, OH	Airport GC
11/30/91	TAC/USA Master 8k XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk
11/08/92	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Columbus, OH	Airport GC
11/21/92	TAC/USA Master 8k XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk
11/29/92	TAC/USA Master 15k XC Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
12/06/92	TAC/USA Master 10k XC Championships	Louisville, KY	Sawyer St Pk
02/06/93	TAC/USA Master 5k XC Championships	Sandy, OR	x
10/31/93	USATF Masters 10km XC Championships	Louisville, KY	Sawyer St. Pk
11/30/93	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk
10/16/94	USATF Masters 10km XC Championships	Canandaigua, NY	Finger Lakes CC
11/06/94	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Columbus, OH	Airport GC
11/20/93	TAC/USA Master 8k XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk
10/15/95	USATF Masters 10km XC Championships	Canandaigua, NY	Finger Lakes CC
11/11/95	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Landan, OH	Landan Pk
11/18/95	TAC/USA Master 8k XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk

10/27/96	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Louisville, KY	Sawyer St. Pk
11/03/96	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Columbus, OH	Ohio Sch. Of Deaf
12/07/96	USATF Masters 10km XC Championships	San Francisco, CA	Golden Gate Pk
09/01/97	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Pasco, WA	Sun Willows GC
10/11/98	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Rochester, NY	Genesee Valley Pk
10/25/98	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Louisville, KY	Sawyer St. Pk
12/05/98	USATF National Club XC Championships	Orlando, FL	Disney WWS
02/14/99	USATF Cross Country Championships	Tacoma, WA	Spanaway GC
10/17/99	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Louisville, KY	Sawyer St. Pk
11/21/99	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Holmdel, NJ	Holmdel Pk
12/05/99	USATF National Club XC Championships	Long Beach, CA	El Dorado GC
02/13/00	USATF Cross Country Championships	Greensboro, NC	Bryan Pk
11/04/00	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Pasco, WA	Sun Willows GC
11/19/00	Masters 5km XC Championships	Holmdel, NJ	Holmdel Pk
11/25/00	USATF National Club XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk
02/17/01	USATF Cross Country Championships	Vancouver, WA	Ft. Vancouver Pk
09/18/01	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Deland, FL	Sperling Sports Pk
11/04/01	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Rochester, NY	Black Creek Pk
12/01/01	USATF National Club XC Championships	Mobile, AL	Battleship Pk
02/09/02	USATF Cross Country Championships	Vancouver, WA	Ft. Vancouver Pk
11/03/02	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Rochester, NY	Black Creek Pk
11/24/02	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Holmdel, NJ	Holmdel Pk
12/14/02	USATF National Club XC Championships	Rocklin, CA	Sierra College
02/15/03	USATF Cross Country Championships	Houston, TX	Buffalo Bayou Pk
11/02/03	USATF Masters 8km XC Championships	Rochester, NY	Black Creek Pk
11/23/03	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Holmdel, NJ	Holmdel Pk
12/07/03	USATF National Club XC Championships	Greensboro, NC	Bryan Pk
02/07/04	USATF Cross Country Championships	Indianapolis, IN	Fall Creek/16 th St. Pk
10/17/04	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Saratoga Spgs., NY	Saratoga St. Pk
12/04/04	USATF National Club XC Championships	Portland, OR	Portland Meadows
02/12/05	USATF Cross Country Championships	Vancouver, WA	Ft. Vancouver Pk
10/16/05	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Saratoga Spgs., NY	Saratoga St. Pk
11/19/05	USATF National Club XC Championships	Rochester, NY	Genesee Valley Pk
02/18/06	USATF Cross Country Championships	New York, NY	Van Cortlandt Pk
10/15/06	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Saratoga Spgs., NY	Saratoga St. Pk
12/09/06	USATF National Club XC Championships	San Francisco, CA	Golden Gate Pk
02/10/07	USATF Cross Country Championships	Boulder, CO	Flatirons GC
10/14/07	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Saratoga Spgs., NY	Saratoga St. Pk
12/08/07	USATF National Club XC Championships	West Chester, OH	Voice of Amer. Pk

02/16/08	USATF Cross Country Championships	San Diego, CA	Mission Bay Pk
10/12/08	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Greensboro, NC	Hagan Stone Pk
12/13/08	USATF National Club XC Championships	Spokane, WA	Plantes Ferry Pk
02/07/09	USATF Cross Country Championships	Derwood, MD	Ag.History Farm Pk
10/11/09	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	St.Petersburg, FL	Canceled
12/12/09	USATF National Club XC Championships	Lexington, KY	Masterson Station
02/13/10	USATF Cross Country Championships	Spokane, WA	Plantes Ferry Pk
10/23/10	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Vancouver, WA	Ft. Vancouver Pk
12/11/10	USATF National Club XC Championships	Charlotte, NC	McAlpine Pk
02/05/11	USATF Cross Country Championships	San Diego, CA	Mission Bay Pk
10/22/11	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Fairport, NY	Center Pk
12/10/11	USATF National Club XC Championships	Seattle, WA	Jefferson Pk GC
02/11/12	USATF Cross Country Championships	St. Louis, MO	Forest Pk
10/13/12	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	San Diego, CA	Balboa Pk
12/08/12	USATF National Club XC Championships	Lexington, KY	Masterson Station
02/02/13	USATF Cross Country Championships	St. Louis, MO	Forest Pk
10/20/13	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Flemington, NJ	Deer Path Pk
12/14/13	USATF National Club XC Championships	Bend, OR	River's Edge GC
02/15/14	USATF Cross Country Championships	Boulder, CO	Flatirons GC
11/08/14	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Carmel, IN	Northview Church
12/13/14	USATF National Club XC Championships	Bethlehem, PA	Lehigh Univ.
02/07/15	USATF Cross Country Championships	Boulder, CO	Flatirons GC
10/18/15	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Saratoga Spgs., NY	Saratoga St. Pk
12/12/15	USATF National Club XC Championships	San Francisco, CA	Golden Gate Pk
02/06/16	USATF Cross Country Championships	Bend, OR	River's Edge GC
11/06/16	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Tallahassee, FL	Apalachee Reg. Pk
12/10/16	USATF National Club XC Championships	Tallahassee, FL	Apalachee Reg. Pk
02/04/17	USATF Cross Country Championships	Bend, OR	River's Edge GC
10/15/17	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk
12/09/17	USATF National Club XC Championships	Lexington, KY	Masterson Station
02/03/18	USATF Cross Country Championships	Tallahassee, FL	Apalachee Reg. Pk
09/23/18	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Buffalo, NY	Delaware Pk
12/08/18	USATF National Club XC Championships	Spokane, WA	Plantes Ferry Pk
02/02/19	USATF Cross Country Championships	Tallahassee, FL	Apalachee Reg. Pk
10/12/19	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	San Diego, CA	Mission Bay Pk
12/14/19	USATF National Club XC Championships	Bethlehem, PA	Lehigh Univ
01/18/20	USATF Cross Country Championships	San Diego, CA	Mission Bay Pk
10/18/20	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Boston, MA	Canceled Covid 19
12/12/20	USATF National Club XC Championships	San Francisco, CA	Canceled Covid 19

02/06/21	USATF Cross Country Championships	San Diego, CA	Canceled Covid 19
10/17/21	USATF Masters 5km XC Championships	Boston, MA	Franklin Pk
12/11/21	USATF National Club XC Championships	Tallahassee, FL	Apalachee Reg. Pk

To be continued.

Send comments, corrections and additional information to:
Bill Quinlisk, USATF Master Cross Country Representative
crosscountry@usaf.org