

Joplin RoadRunners Newsletter

Summer 2026



A Summer Welcome from the President

Joplin Roadrunners' Newsletter Summer 2026 Edition.

Hello Roadrunners!

As we kick off another great summer season, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new members and a sincere thank you to those who continue to run with us every season. Whether you're training for your first race, chasing a personal record, or simply looking for good company on the roads and trails, we're glad you're here.

Summer is one of the busiest and most exciting times for all of us. With races, group runs, and community events filling the calendar, there will be plenty of opportunities to challenge yourself, meet fellow runners, and create lasting memories.

Of course, summer running also means heat, humidity, and the occasional run where every mile feels a little tougher than expected. Remember to stay hydrated, adjust your pace when needed, and listen to your body. The goal isn't always to run faster—sometimes it's simply to keep moving forward and enjoy the ride.

One of the things that makes the Joplin Roadrunners special is our diversity of runners. We have members of every age, experience level, and pace. What unites us is our love of running and the encouragement we provide one another along the way.

As we head into the dog days of summer I encourage you to join us at events, introduce yourself to someone new, and cheer on your fellow runners. Take opportunity to join one of our many group runs. The friendships formed through this club are often just as rewarding as the miles we log.

Thank you for being part of our running family. I look forward to seeing you out there this summer.

Happy Running!

Lori Thompson
President
Joplin Roadrunners





If you've spent any time running in the Midwest lately, you've probably noticed that summer has officially arrived. The temperatures are climbing, the sun feels a little hotter, and the air can feel thick enough to cut with a knife. While most runners pay attention to the temperature, there's another number that deserves just as much attention: the **dew point**.

Many people hear the weather report mention the dew point and immediately tune it out. After all, 75 degrees is 75 degrees, right? Not exactly.

The dew point measures the amount of moisture in the air, and for runners, it can make a tremendous difference in how a run feels.

When the dew point is below 60°F, most runners find conditions fairly comfortable. As it climbs into the mid-60s, you may notice your pace slowing and your effort increasing. Once it reaches 70°F or higher, your body has a much harder time cooling itself. Sweat doesn't evaporate as efficiently, your heart works harder, and even easy miles can suddenly feel like a workout.

That's why a run on a 75-degree morning can feel completely different from another 75-degree morning just a few days later. The temperature may be the same, but the dew point can turn a pleasant run into a challenging one.

The good news is that summer running doesn't have to be miserable. A few simple adjustments can help:

- Start earlier when possible.
- Slow your pace and run by effort rather than by pace.
- Hydrate before, during, and after longer runs.
- Wear light-colored, moisture-wicking clothing.
- Know when to cut a run short if conditions become unsafe.

Most importantly, give yourself grace. Summer is not the time to chase every personal record. Even the most experienced runners slow down when heat and humidity arrive. You're not losing fitness—you're adapting to tougher conditions.

Eventually, cooler temperatures and lower humidity will return. When they do, all those challenging summer miles will pay off. Until then, focus on consistency, stay hydrated, and listen to your body.

As you head out for your next run, check more than just the temperature. Take a quick look at the dew point, too. It might explain why some days feel effortless and others feel like you're running through soup.

The Ageless Runner

Board Updates– Meetings April 7th, May 5th, June 2nd 2026

Board Members– Lori Thompson, President, Paul Wright Vice President, Kayla Griffin Treasurer, Lisa Morris Secretary, Henry Coome CEO, Debbie Smith, Stephanie Durfee, Tom McKay, Bridgett Stoner-Thomas, Kevin Harrold-observer

Equipment

Bigger Better trailer– we are still on the look out for a bigger trailer, if you happen to come across one please reach out to a board member!!

2nd Timing System– Plans are in the works to purchase a second timing system by the end of 2026! This will allow us the ability to time point to point events (such as RWTW) with a mat at start and finish.

Club Gear

We still have some club shirts that need to be picked up, if you are a new or returning member, please get with a board member to get your gear!! If Don't forget to order your club gear outerwear for the rainy season! Check out your options on our website!

Upcoming Events -

08/21/2026 JRR Prediction Run 5K 6:30pm, Start at the YMCA Tin Cup Trail

08/29/2026 Lamar FCA Fair Run 5K/10K 7:30 am timed by JRR

09/19/2026 ROCC 5K 8:00am Timed by JRR

09/26/2026 Soles4Paws 1K/5K Solo/5K Canine 8:00am Organized by JRR

10/25/2026 Pumpkin Run 1M/2M/8K/10mile 2:00pm Organized by JRR

11/21/2026 Hit The Road, Jack! Run fest! 5K/10K/25K/50K 8:00 am
Organized by JRR

Board Meetings

Upcoming board meetings will be held at the following times. Everyone is welcome to come and observe!

July 7th 6:00pm Social BTB

August 4th 6:pm location TBD

September 1st 6:00pm location TBD

October 6th 6:00pm location TBD

November 3rd 6:00pm location TBD

December 1st 6:00pm location TBD

Club Meetings

Thursday, July 16th, 6pm at Freeman

Rehabilitation and Sports Center 2206 E 32nd Street Joplin We will have a Short run at 6pm, meeting will start at 6:30pm. Kendra Cochran and Dr. Eu banks will be our guest speakers. Topic will be running injuries, how to treat and prevent. You won't want to miss this one!!

Thursday, September 10th, 6pm,

Yoga in the Park, we'll meet at Mercy Park for a short run, then Yoga. More information to come later.

Social Runs

The last Thursday of every month! We rotate each month between Carthage, Webb City, Joplin and Neosho! Location and times are posted on our Face book page.

2026 Membership Update!

We are currently at 109 members for 2026!

Charity Donations

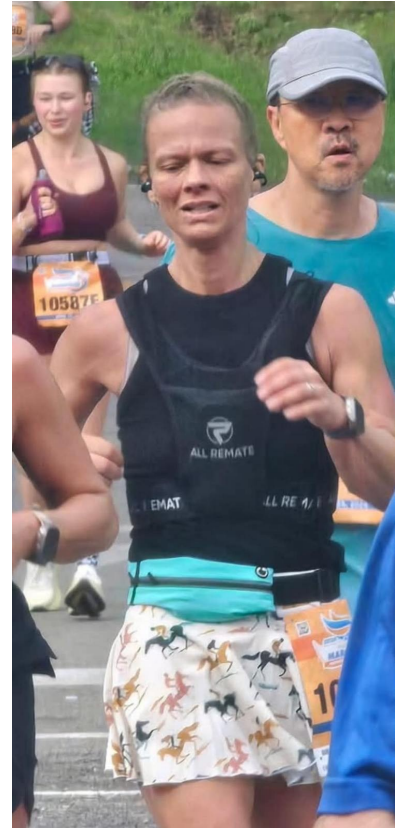
We handed out \$1430 in to our charities from the Clover Run event! During the Social Run for June. Carthage Crosslines and Jasper County 4H each received a check in the amount of \$715.

Thank you to everyone who came out and participated! You made a difference!



Runners Stories

Sharon Smith-Kentucky Derby
The Kentucky Derby Marathon was an unforgettable experience. It was a perfect day for a race, and everything just came together. The crowds, the energy, and the course kept me motivated every step of the way. Crossing the finish line with a personal best—beating my previous marathon time by nearly 30 minutes—made all the hard work worthwhile. It was one of those races I'll always remember and a reminder that dedication really pays off.



The Good, The Bad, The Ugly, and The Amazing (Jason & Karla Shumny)

We decided to do the Little Rock Marathon that was scheduled for March 1, 2026. They will allow, a two hour head start. So eight hours to complete as opposed to six. Back to training: we had been warned of the training. Just remember when you pick your race that you will be training in the months before it (fall race means summer training, spring race means winter training, etc). We did it every weekend in the rain, the cold, etc. Training to walk at a 16 min/mile pace. We are ready. Race day comes and we are nervous. The atmosphere is fantastic because everyone participating is treated the same. The first 7 miles or so we are doing great, but Karla walks faster than me so I have to occasionally run to keep up. Then the time comes when I can no longer keep up with her. I see her slowly increase the distance between us and eventually I lose sight of her.

I try to remember to hydrate and take nourishment. After mile 12 I start slowing down, tired, back and legs starting to hurt, failing to hydrate and take nutrition as needed.

Miles 18.5-21.5 are miserable. I stop. A lot. So much so that those 3 miles have me at an almost 30 min/mile pace. And I quit. Because I can't go on. I have pushed myself and reached my limit. Karla, however, powered on, like she always does. She finished with a large smile on her face. She said it was difficult at times, her Slow Turtle playlist kept her energized. She still looks at her finisher medal with pride (well deserved), and I have learned that it's ok to not hit every goal you set for yourself.



What Have I Done-by Russ and Kathy Ritchhart

It is with deep regret, that I have come to the conclusion that Kathy and I are mentally unstable. As usual, we ran a 10k last weekend, everything started off GOOD, the weather was cool , we met a few old friends. Finally the race got started, we were off but after a couple of miles my feet started burning caused by neuropathy. Then my left knee was trying to stiffen up from when I broke it years ago. Once again arthritis in my right hip let me know how old I was. If that wasn't enough, sweat was getting in my eyes so I couldn't hardly see where to run, plus the sun came out and was blinding us as well.

I looked ahead and saw mile marker 3. I looked at Kathy and said I was sure we'd ran at least 5 miles! Even though we were both tired, determination kept us going. Kathy says were just too stubborn to quit. After a few more miles I finally see the finish line. Thank the Good Lord! Praise God our suffering is almost over!! As we neared the finish line, people are clapping and waving, cheering us on for the finish, when it's finally it's over. It takes a few minutes to recover and get my breath but when I turn to



Kathy and asked.....Where's the next race Honey? Only a runner can enjoy the pain and suffering you go through mile after mile and then look forward to doing it all over again the next weekend.

Forever mentally unstable, Russ and Kathy Ritchhart

A Run To Remember– Kevin Harrold

Like many runners, I have several reasons—or “whys”—that motivate me to keep moving. This spring, however, I discovered my most meaningful one at the Oklahoma City Memorial Run to Remember.

Oklahoma City is my hometown. Many of my memories are rooted there, from my senior prom to my first job working in my father’s shop. But the race is about much more than personal memories. It exists to honor the 168 lives lost in the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995, while recognizing the survivors, first responders, and the resilience of a community that chose healing over despair.

What makes this event special is the way the entire city embraces it. While many races face complaints about road closures and disruptions, Oklahoma City welcomes this race. Neighborhoods actively compete to provide the most enthusiastic support. Spectators thank runners for honoring the victims, runners thank the community for showing up, and everyone appreciates the volunteers and law enforcement who make the event possible. The atmosphere embodies everything great about running: determination, encouragement, and community.

Every detail of race weekend serves as a reminder of its purpose. Bib numbers 1 through 168 are permanently reserved in honor of those who lost their lives. Before each race, participants observe 168 seconds of silence at what would have been ground zero in 1995. Another moving tradition is the blank memorial bib that runners can wear, allowing them to write the name of someone connected to that tragic day. Some run for loved ones they lost, while younger generations run in honor of relatives they never had the chance to meet.

At the finish line, 168 banners display the names and photographs of the victims. When fatigue sets in, those faces become a source of strength, reminding runners why they are there.

Race weekend spans two days. On Saturday, my sister and I participated in the 5K. We intentionally took our time, wanting to enjoy the experience and reconnect with our hometown. As the city skyline glowed green in remembrance and hundreds of runners gathered together, I found myself more emotional than I expected. Afterward, we visited the Oklahoma City National Memorial Museum, which deepened our understanding of the tragedy and reinforced the significance of the race.

Still, nothing prepared me for Sunday’s half marathon.

As we walked toward the start line that morning, the city felt alive. Buildings were illuminated in green, memorial messages shined from downtown skyscrapers, and thousands of runners filled the streets. Yet amid the excitement came another 168 seconds of silence. Somehow, surrounded by thousands of people, the stillness felt even more profound.

Once the race began, the city transformed into one giant celebration. The support was unlike anything I had ever experienced. Every mile featured new groups cheering runners onward. The Oklahoma City Thunder pep band, mascots, and entertainers energized the crowd. Drumlines, church choirs, Star Wars characters, children blowing bubbles, and neighborhood groups lined the course.

At every turn, residents found creative ways to encourage participants. There were themed neighborhoods, dancing dragons in the Asian District, Mario Kart characters in Mesta Park, and even medical staff dressed as cows holding signs that encouraged runners to “Keep Mooooooving.” The enthusiasm never faded.

What stood out most was the generosity. Official aid stations were plentiful, but so were countless unofficial ones. Residents handed out water, sports drinks, snacks, popsicles, and other refreshments from their own front yards. It seemed that every neighborhood was determined to help runners succeed.

I was also inspired by the people participating in the race. Firefighters ran wearing full gear. Volunteers and athletes supported children with special needs by pushing wheelchairs through the course, ensuring they could experience the excitement of race day. Everywhere I looked, I saw examples of selflessness.

As the miles passed, fatigue eventually arrived. Near the top of a challenging hill, I questioned how much farther I could go. Then I looked ahead and saw the Memorial. Instantly, I remembered why we were running.

On my second bib, I had written the name of Antonio, a young victim of the bombing. As I approached the finish, I imagined that he was running alongside me. Then I saw the 168 banners once again. I knew there was no slowing down. This race was no longer about pace or personal achievement. It was about honoring lives, remembering a tragedy, and celebrating a community's strength.

Crossing the finish line brought a flood of emotions. I had completed both races that weekend and earned an additional medal. I also achieved a personal best time in the half marathon. Yet what meant most was reading the words engraved on the medal: "WHY WE RUN.!"

Those words perfectly captured what I had learned.

I run because I witnessed the strength of a community that refused to give up. I run for the memory of the 168. I run to honor Antonio and others whose futures were stolen far too soon. I run as a reminder that light can emerge from even the darkest moments.

After the race, instead of joining the celebration, my sister and I returned to the memorial. There, among the 168 chairs representing those lost, I found Antonio's chair and quietly showed him the medals we had earned together.

That moment changed me. Running used to be about finishing times, race shirts, medals, and personal goals. While I still value those accomplishments, they no longer feel like the most important reason to run. This experience taught me that running can be about something much bigger than ourselves.

I may never participate in the OKC Memorial Run again, but I will carry its lesson with me. On future runs, I will remember the victims, honor their stories, and appreciate the gift of being able to keep moving forward.



One day, I will cross a finish line for the last time. Until then, I will run to remember.

Group Runs and Social Runs!





