

Billygoat 2017

Goat's Report

39th Annual Billygoat

Presented by Hudson Valley Orienteering
and Western Connecticut Orienteering

May 7, 2017, Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Cross River, NY

Head Goat/Coursesetter: Rick DeWitt
Meet Director: Craig Weber
Head Diplomat: Geof Connor

I hope everyone enjoyed this year's edition of the Billygoat. The weather cooperated nicely, partly cloudy with temperatures in the mid 50s, just about perfect for running. And the rain held off until late afternoon, just as we were coming out of the woods with the last of the flags.

Quick Notes

Billygoat specs: 13.3 km, 470 meters climb, 25 controls. 88 starters, 83 finishers, with 77 (87%) finishing within the 3:30 t-shirt deadline. 4 of the 5 DNFs were injury related, unfortunately.

Francis H and Bob B were the final finishers in time for a t-shirt, with less than 3 minutes to spare. And Steve T continued his streak, now 39 for 39 in earning Billygoat shirts. More info below on skipped controls, fork options, etc.

Pygmygoat specs: 7.5 km, 290 meters climb, 11 controls. 25 starters, 25 finishers. Top men were Daniel W (62:52), Krum S (69:24), and Carl C (69:45). Top women were Albina Z (80:21), Mary Jo (90:01), and Anne B (92:02).

The Race

The competition was close, both for the top 3 men (Jordan L, Will H, and Giaco B) and the top 3 woman (Alex J, Kseniya P, and Isabel B). All 3 men skipped 14 and were close at 15, arriving together at 16, the start of the final loop. During the climb to 20 Jordan pulls ahead by 14 seconds, but seems to bobble 21. So Will and Giaco punch 21 (the start of the fork) about 12 seconds ahead of Jordan, and both take the longer flatter north fork option. Jordan takes the shorter but steeper southern fork over the top. The fork options for these 3 are close, with Jordan giving up an additional 1 second. So Jordan comes to 23 (the end of the fork) now 13 seconds behind Will and Giaco. But in the 600 meters to the next control Jordan catches both, taking a 6 second lead at 24. Jordan picks up another 7 seconds in the 500 meters to the go control, finishing with a winning time of 87:16. Will finishes a close 18 seconds back, with Giaco another 13 seconds behind that.

The top 3 women (Alex, Kseniya, Izzy) were equally close. Kseniya has a strong first half, opening up nearly a 5 minute lead at one point. But by 16, the start of the final loop, they are close, and everyone has made their skip (Izzy skips 10; Alex and Kseniya skip 14). Alex has a slight lead at this point, 6 seconds ahead of Izzy and 24 seconds ahead of Kseniya. But by the end of the climb to 20 Kseniya regains a slight lead, and punches ahead of Alex by 4 seconds and ahead of Izzy by 7. All 3 opt for the northern fork option, and at the northern control 22 Alex is back in the lead, 9 seconds over Izzy and 15 over Kseniya. Now Kseniya puts on a burst of speed, passes both, and arrives at 23 with a 4 second lead over Alex, 13 over Izzy. Kseniya and Alex are now neck and neck, but Alex pulls a bit ahead, taking a 4 second lead at 24. Alex stays ahead through the go control, finishing with a winning time of 121:52, with Kseniya second at 122:19, and Izzy third at 122:55.

Well done all. It looked like a tough race.

The Fork

The fork offered two distinct options. The route from 21 to 23 via the northern fork was much longer, 1.5 km, but relatively flat, almost entirely on trail, and with little navigational challenge. The southern option was 500 meters shorter, but with substantially more climb, and steep climb, and with some possibility of a navigational bobble.

Generally the idea was to have orienteers decide whether they were better off doing a shorter climb or a flatter run. But I might mention Will H's decision process, which was classic game theory. Will said later he thought it unlikely he could win if he and Jordan took the same fork. So Will's decision process consisted of seeing which way Jordan went, and going the other way.

The top 30 finishers split evenly on the fork options, with 15 taking the shorter southern route over the top, and 15 taking the longer northern option. After the first 30 it skewed toward the northern trail option, with the final figures being 32 south, 50 north. Among men it split 29 south, 37 north; among women the split was 3 south, 13 north.

Niels O is working on an analysis of the fork option and outcomes. I'll post a link when that's finalized.

The ebox at control 21, the start of the fork, quit registering after the 11th runner. Craig completed an autopsy on the box, and determined the cause of death was a broken coil wire. So, no data to recover other than the first 11 runners. The fork analysis for most runners will primarily be based on times from control 20 to control 23.

The Skip

For the Billygoat, 14 was the most popular skip, with 60 runners taking this option. Control 10 was the second most popular, with 13 runners opting for this, followed by control 4 (6 runners), with controls 7, 21, and 25 having 1 runner each skipping them. A shout out to David S for skipping the go control. Also to Rich N for not skipping any. Apparently at some point Rich

became unsure whether he had punched control 3 (which he had), and so opted to be safe and visit all the others.

In course setting hindsight, I should have pulled control 14 back more toward 13. I wanted 14 to be an attractive skip, but not that attractive. By the way, I thought 21 was the second best option, but only Coach took this. So with only one data point, it's difficult to get a good read on how this skip compared to others. But eyeballing it, it looks like Coach picked up about 4:30.

For the Pygmygoat, the most popular skip was control 10 (14 skips), control 6 (8 skips), with one runner skipping control 1.

Jockstuffer/Brastuffer Award

As usual, there were a number of contenders. An honorable mention goes to Alan Young, who stashed away his map at the start and stayed in Wyatt R's back pocket the entire course, finishing with his fastest Billygoat time. Also an honorable mention to Melissa Chase, who likewise stashed her map and stayed with Susie and Kent S, getting her first Billygoat shirt (and Kent's second).

But the main prize has to go to Giaco. I can't swear this is true, but it's a good story, and that's good enough. The word is that Giaco, now in the second half of his third decade on earth (did you know people lived that long?), wanted to relive some of the glory of his youth, and spent the night before the Billygoat partying like he did when he was still a strapping youth of 20. The morning of the Billygoat it wasn't just that he wasn't hitting on all cylinders; rather, word is he could barely see straight. But he stuck within sight of Jordan and Will for the first half, and even managed to recover a bit by the end and lead to a couple of controls, coming in with a 3rd place finish.

Club Award

There was not a lot of competition for this. CSU (via Ed D) came through at the last minute with a much needed clock for the finish line. NEOC (via Jeff S) came through with much needed beer. And from New Zealand no less. It's tough to decide which was more valuable, so the Club Award is hereby jointly awarded to both CSU and NEOC.

Volunteers

Finally, but very importantly, many, many thanks to the many volunteers: John-Eric and Karen M vetted and woke up the controls and generally helped with the start; Bill S helped throughout with setup, takedown, and more; Bob B handled parking and other miscellaneous tasks; Mairead Y, Judy D, Fiona and Una handled the control 16 food and water stop; Betsy and George H, with Nadya P took care of the food/water at the finish; Chin-Hua provided general assistance throughout; Susie helped with check in; Andy R and Nadya did much of the control pickup; and Cathy Connor made two huge tarts for the top men's/women's finishers. Plus a shout-out to Kendal from the Trailside staff, and other Pound Ridge staff for dropping off water at the

southern water stops. Oh—and Geof’s dog Duke who the day before vetted the controls and made sure the stands were freshly watered.

An especially big thanks to Craig and Geof. Among other tasks Geof handled the diplomacy job, getting permissions, working with the park staff, and more. Craig did a terrific job anticipating all the little things that assure a meet goes smoothly, dotting all the i’s and crossing the t’s, and also was a good consultant on the course design, along with helping with vetting and flagging.

I hope I’m not forgetting anyone. Thanks all!

I think that’s it. See everyone next year.

Rick DeWitt
Head Goat
Billygoat 2017