



44th Southeastern U. S. Whitewater Championships

RACE RESULTS - August 18, 2012

By: John Pinyerd and Chris Hipgrave

Congratulations to the NOC, all the canoe clubs who participated, and everyone who raced and volunteered to put together another great event. For the third year in the row, the GCA and NOC have teamed up to combine the Downriver Race from the Southeastern U. S. Whitewater Championships, the oldest whitewater race in the Southeast, with the Nantahala Outdoor Center's Canoe Club Challenge. The race was a huge success again this year and we are already scheming how to make the event more exciting for competitors and clubs next year!

The classic top to bottom downriver/wildwater race was a blast again this year and the real winners were everyone who participated. But it was also a full blown race for those folks who like to go for it. And of course, there was a significant presence of Wildwater Team Members (both past and present) who dominated the composite classes.

Kurt Smithgall was the overall winner with a time of 46:51 followed by Terry Smith and Chris Hipgrave. Both Kurt and Terry raced at the World Championships in France last month. Chris Hipgrave, who also served as race starter, gave them a run for their money in spite of not getting a warm up. Grandmaster Bern Collins (who would beat everyone if we applied an age handicap) was 4th. Bern was also the winner of the decade long "beer cup" challenge with Pinyerd, and Pinyerd will pay up. Steven Smith was 5th.

John Pinyerd finished 6th overall and earned his 15th "Charlie Patton Award" for being the fastest solo canoe of any kind. Corey Hall, was 7th and was in a Wildwater K-1. He was followed closely by Pat Keller in a K-1 long boat. We were impressed with just how close Pat was to the wildwater times.

The fastest open canoe was powered by Chris Osment who was 11th overall. Our fastest junior was Bryson Popp in a WW C-1 and was 15th overall.

Gabriella Schlidt and Allen Heddon were the fastest tandem canoe and won the "Ramone Eaton Award". The fastest woman and winner of the "Julie Wilson Award" was Jennifer Bradley. She was followed closely by Sarah Smith who was the fastest junior woman. Selena Popp, a junior, was the fastest woman in a solo

canoe of any kind. We were impressed how well she was able to handle her wildwater C-1, which is perhaps the most difficult whitewater boat to paddle.

The last surprise for me is that a couple dozen racers did not complete the course in time to get a time and have their runs count in the points standings. Eventually, in fairness to the timers, we had to let them take bio breaks and get on with their lives. But these racers did help raise a valid point of: why should I paddle hard if all of the finishes count the same points? That will be one of the things we change for next year! Stay tuned!

This has always been and always will be one of our favorite races. We are looking forward to implementing a few more exciting features to make next year's race even bigger and better!

The complete results can be seen at www.usawildwater.com/news/2012/2012-Southeasterns-race-results.pdf