

## **The History of POCAR**

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### ***INTRODUCTION***

The Purdue Outing Club Adventure Race, i.e. POCAR. Who were the original masterminds behind this event? When did it get started? How has it evolved over the years? This is a document that needed to be put together to recognize the history of this classic event as the race evolves and advances beyond its original state. Furthermore, this piece will act as a guide to those present and future that either choose to participate in the event or decide to take on the beastly task of organizing it.

### ***CREATORS***

Back in Autumn 2000 two prominent members of the club had a brain child. Adventure Racing was a new emerging adventure sport and they thought they would try their hand at creating one unique to POC. These two fellows are Paul Andron, the POC president and Senior in Mechanical Engineering and Bryan Scott, a very active member in his time but by 2000 he was head long in Ph.D. research in Civil Engineering. Despite their demanding academic (and surely social) schedules, they managed to muster up a hit event that still lives on within POC and now beyond.

Past event organizers include:

1. POCAR 2001 -- Paul Andron, Bryan Scott
2. POCAR 2002 -- Bryan Scott, Shelley Potts, Jonah Duckles, Jon Orthman, Bob Peterson
3. POCAR 2003 -- Shelley Potts, Mick Caddell, Matt Clifton, Derick Miller
4. POCAR 2004 -- Nathan Folks, Robby Flowers
5. POCAR 2005 -- Kevin Baldauf, Matt Clifton, Daryl Sielaff

### ***DATES***

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual POCAR took place in January 2001 during Martin Luther King Jr. weekend (as have all subsequent POCARs). The strategy behind these sets of dates was twofold. First, having the Monday following the race off as a holiday allowed race participants (and volunteers) a day to recover before facing back up to the realities of work and school. Second, a race in the dead of winter, when days are short, nights are long, and weather can go from bad to worse without warning, is enough to test *anyone's* will and endurance.

### ***COURSE/TIME LENGTH***

Speaking of endurance, this was the theme of the first race and all others that have succeeded it. The race was 30+ miles “as the crow flies” and participants had 52 hours (sunrise on Saturday until noon on Monday) to cover the distance. This proved to be extremely challenging as only 5 of the original ~30 competitors completed the entire course. As of POCAR #4, the time/length format has been modified. The race commences at noon Saturday and terminates at noon Monday – 48 hours.

What does completing the course entail? As mentioned earlier, POCAR was unique to POC because it was not quite like most adventure races of its day (and even now). The

primary activity is orienteering. A map is supplied to each team which they use to navigate point-to-point in a specified order (expedition style). Once all valid points (yes, there are decoys) are visited, you have completed the course. At each check point (control) the team would sign in their name, the time they arrived, and any comment, serious or otherwise. This was to allow the race organizers and volunteers to track the progress of teams and supply assistance if a team was in jeopardy. Furthermore, to prove that a team had indeed visited a control, there was a code word or symbol they had to record (sometimes in a unique pen or crayon that likely was not being carried by any competitor in attempts of feigning visiting a control). Since POCAR #4, a more reliable system of punches and punch cards has been implemented. Also, more recent POCARs have implemented Rogaine sections, where teams may choose the order they wish to progress from a list of several points.

### ***COMPETITORS***

Who took part in this race? The original race was designed exclusively for POC members. If the event was a success and well received, subsequent races would open up to other clubs within Purdue, other universities, and eventually to the public (or at least those crazy enough to take part in such an event). Those POC members interested in racing were randomly assigned to 5 member co-ed teams based on your personal rank of athletic ability and navigation skills. This turned out to be a popular way to organize teams because it allowed members to reach out and get to know others in the club that they may not have met otherwise. Teams have now evolved such that you can select your teammates as you wish, co-ed or not, as long as there is a minimum of 4 members. The attractiveness of randomized teams was recognized, however, and was still an option through POCAR #4.

### ***COURSE LOCATIONS***

The 1<sup>st</sup> POCAR was held in Wyandotte Woods in southern Indiana (west of Louisville, KY) near where the Blue River empties into the Ohio River. The idea behind this location was to illustrate to those native (and non) to Indiana that there actually is some terrain in the state! Subsequent races have all been held in Indiana to reinforce this fact. But more importantly, the location remains relatively close to home to alleviate the dangers of tired racers driving long distances back to Lafayette or their respective home. Other locations utilized for POCAR are Hoosier National Forest (Deam Wilderness (#2) and German Ridge(#3)) and Morgan-Monroe State Forest (#4), all in the general vicinity of Bloomington, IN (much to the liking of a lot of the IU competitors), and Clark State Forest (#5), near Louisville, KY.