

Liftathon at Acalanes High School

... continued from Page C1

Julian had three goals in mind when he set up the competition: "I wanted to encourage all of the athletes in all of the sports to use the weight room. I wanted to provide a fun event so that the athletes could see how their lifting has made them stronger and to help generate more funds to be able to purchase more equipment and allow more hours for the weight room to be available."

Tim Sil has been the strength coach at Acalanes for four years, after coming over from Miramonte. "When I got

here, the Booster Club came to me and said that they had funds available to upgrade the weight room," Sil said. "So, (trainer) Chris Clark and I figured out what we needed and put together the layout of the room."

Sil, who also coaches the defensive backs for the football teams, has been studying weight training for 10 years, has attended numerous clinics and has developed his own weight training principles. "My philosophy is 'Less is more,'" Sil said. "I try and set up workouts for three days a week and have them rest in between. We will do upper, lower, and full rotational lifts. I will start with mo-

bility on various parts of the body then will lead into their lifts and then accessories and plyometrics. I like movement-based work as I don't want the athletes to get too tight."

Those athletes that have been coming in since their freshman year have shown great strength gains, but there's a lot more to it than that for Sil: "Everything we do is with the idea of preventing injuries. We've seen a decrease in injuries. We've only had two concussions per season in the last four years."

Besides setting up the lifting programs, Sil also has to manage the increased number

of lifters along with the new freshmen classes: "Working with the freshmen is a little harder because this is the first time for many of them to be working with weights. It will get crowded in the wintertime and I have to be creative with setting up the workouts to make sure everyone and everything is safe in here."

Along with Chris Carter, there are other coaches that work along with Sil in the weight room like Mike Ivankovich who started the weight room back in the 1990s and Connor Hornsby, the Dons' baseball coach, who runs the program for his team.

With an influx of new weight room equipment this past year, there has been a concomitant increase of athletes and teams that began to utilize the weight room. "We had about 90% participation of the school's athletes that participated in the weight program this summer with just about every Acalanes team participating," Julian said. "The water polo and swim teams numbers were low for the Liftathon as most were competing in the junior Olympic tryouts. This is the first year we've done this and I'm hoping to make this an annual event as part of the Boosters."

Rod Farvard – ultra marathoner



Photo provided

Rod all smiles meeting his crew at mile 31 of WSER at the Robinson Flat Aid Station.

... continued from Page B1

In my training, there's just so much time for things to go wrong that it's actually a little bit exciting. It's like, can I beat the clock today and push my body to outperform what I thought I could do."

In March 2020, Elation Health chose to operate remotely. Farvard and his girlfriend opted to move to Mammoth Lakes, an environment that satisfied his aesthetic desires and was an ideal area, at an altitude of 8,000 feet, for his training. "I mostly moved out here for the mountains and the trail riding," Farvard said. "I also like climbing and peak bagging (attempting to reach a collection of summits published in the form of a list) and things like that. It's a really amazing area with a number of 14,000-foot peaks. I've always wanted to live in a high altitude and see

what it would do for my running."

The 'A' race for Farvard at this point was The Western States 100-mile endurance run, the world's oldest 100-mile trail race starting in Olympic Valley, California, and finishing 100.2 miles later in Auburn, California.

Farvard first ran in a shorter ultramarathon race in San Diego where he qualified for the Western States ultramarathon. "I was absolutely hooked on the community and the way the event was run," Farvard said. "It was an out-of-body racing experience that I didn't get in the triathlons. It was a very unique, captivating experience."

Farvard finished in 58th out of the 380 entrants in the Western Open with a time of 22 hours and 48 minutes. Farvard's goal was to finish in the top 10 and for 80% of the race, things

went as planned. "I'm essentially running the whole time averaging eight-to-nine-minute miles," Farvard said. "Where this race went south was around mile 80 when I couldn't stomach anything, so I basically had to walk in the last 15 or so miles which resulted in a very slow time and a very bad position."

The races have proven to be a constant learning experience in both mind and body for Farvard: "Self-belief is huge. The person that's not telling themselves they're going to do well is not going to do well. You have to be mentally strong and able to convince yourself that you can do this thing versus pain in the mind and body, but if your goal is just to finish this race, it's absolutely all mind."

Runners can hit the wall where the mind wants to quit but for Farvard it was in his training where he learned to break through that symbolic wall. "Every day in training is a mental battle," Farvard said. "It's a matter of not letting anything bother you. I want to hit that wall because it teaches me how to get out of it and how to prevent getting there during a race. I focus on running with the same rhythm and cadence that I want during the race."

Every runner will have their own technique in handling the distances in what is going on in their heads. "I try to stay as present as possible, monitoring for myself," Farvard said. "I don't like getting distracted and I try stay in the pre-

sent, focusing on my breath, my steps, and my surroundings. I'm always thinking about what is happening and imposing my moment in that race."

In many ways, Farvard has come to understand himself better through these challenges: "I learned about my weaknesses more than anything. I'm not a very patient person and that's something I'm really trying to work on. I've also learned that I'm extremely competitive and how much I've really enjoyed the races and how it really matters to me."

In his preparations, Farvard learned not to overtrain and to plan in how to run each race. "It's incredibly easy to go overboard," Farvard said. "I will feel I need to train super long but that's a great road track to injury. It's easy to go out hard because you want to win the race, but you can really be suffering in the back half of the race. I've gotten a bit more strategic in my racing and have been pacing things better but it's a really fine line."

Farvard has sponsors for shoes, apparel, backpacks and bottles. He will compete in ultramarathons about every two months and, as a rule, training everyday, going through about 15 pairs of shoes each year.

Most of Farvard's races are in the United States but he is currently planning on going to Chamonix, France for the Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc Ultramarathon at the end of August. It is 106 miles long with an elevation gain of 33,000 feet. Even

with strict qualifications, the race will have 2,500 starters with a history of 35-40% of the racers unable to finish the race.

Farvard has a support staff at each of the ultramarathons. "I get most of my aid from my crew because they will have more of the stuff I've been practicing using. For the race in France, my parents are going to come along with my girlfriend. I have a lot of friends who will also be competing. There are multiple races and it's like a festival so when we're not racing, we're helping each other," Farvard said.

Not afraid to take on any challenge, Farvard took it upon himself to run the 210-mile John Muir trail in the Sierra Nevada mountain range last summer and, as in all his races, was careful to avoid injuries. "It took a little over three days and it was just non-stop moving so I had a lot of caffeine though I would take an hour nap here and there," Farvard said. "A lot can happen in these runs so I'm definitely on the better side of technical running. You have to be conscious but it's not like it occupies my mind at any point. I can see myself racing 200-mile races at some point competitively."

In the end, it has to take more than just a drive to run these daunting distances for Farvard: "I run every day. Obviously, I'm training for races and stuff like that. But even when I don't have a race on the calendar, I still run every day because I absolutely love it."

CCFOA seeks officials for high school and youth football

The Contra Costa Football Officials Association is looking for men or women interested in officiating high school and youth football this fall. It's a great experience that leads to great camaraderie as well being able to make up to \$300 a week. (This amount may vary depending on availability and number of games officiated.) Most games are in Southern Solano County, Central and East Contra Costa County, and Central and Eastern Alameda County. Email Assignor Dave Cutaia at cutaia@aol.com if you are interested.

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