

Daryl Carter featured in The Villages' *Daily Sun* newspaper.
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Cowboy Crawl Mud Run



From top: Competitors glide down the Zipper Ripper; crawl under the Bug Zapper, low-voltage electric wires; decide on the best way to get down the Slip-n-Slide; and squirm through a tire obstacle. Sumter County contractors built the 23 challenge obstacles.



Competitors balance themselves as they try to cross a deep-pond obstacle during the Cowboy Crawl Mud Run on Saturday morning at the Providence Ranch in Lake Panasoffkee.

Photos by Cal Gaines / Daily Sun

'Good, muddy fun'

Zappers, water and gators challenge competitors along 3.1-mile course

By KAYLA STIRZEL
DAILY SUN STAFF WRITER

LAKE PANASOFFKEE The Saturday-morning sky was still dark as hundreds of enthusiastic mud runners gathered at Providence Ranch in Lake Panasoffkee for the inaugural Cowboy Crawl Mud Run.

The 5-kilometer course was designed to get participants as dirty as possible and challenge their ability to trudge through mud while climbing over, crawling under and jumping through obstacles. Best not to ask how the 1,300-acre ranch got so muddy. Whiffs of manure provided a clue.

The first wave of adventurous mud runners started the 3.1-mile course at 8 a.m. Participants lined the fences, eager to get dirty.

Football players and



Inside

Jonathon Collier, a member adviser at MVP Athletic Club in The Villages, tackled the course. Read his account.

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Golden Girls troupe members from The Villages High School showed their school spirit out at the mud run.

Freshman Sam Petro was excited to run through the muddy course.

"I like to get dirty. I'm just happy to be with my friends and have fun," Petro said.

Micah Baker, another freshman, was a first-time mud runner. He was looking forward to the obstacle

challenges throughout the course.

Freshman and Golden Girl Alyssa Torri had only one thing on her mind throughout the race.

"I'm just nervous about falling in the water; I don't care about the mud," Torri said. And she took care to not fall into the water when crossing the man-made beams on the course.

Although worn out and tired, Torri was still smiling at the finish line.

"I made it! I didn't go in that water. It was fun but very difficult," she said.

Terry Yoder, owner and chief executive officer of the T&D family of companies, was one of the hosts of the event and the man who rounded up contractors from throughout Sumter County to build each of the 23 obstacles for the mud

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run. Yoder's businesses, along with several of the contractors, have a strong presence in The Villages and other parts of Sumter County.

Sean Williams, of PSL Construction, wanted to make sure their company's course was as difficult as possible. The crew created "Water Moccasin Way," which consisted of two beams, one 4 inches wide and the other 6 inches wide. Participants had to walk carefully, yet quickly, across without falling into the muddy pit.

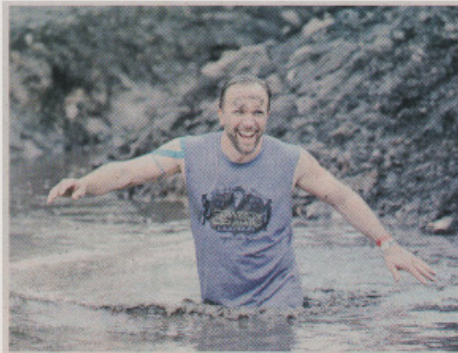
Yoder encouraged the contractors to use their ingenuity to come up with unique obstacles. Each challenge course was a one-of-a-kind creation.

Steve Munz, of Galaxy Home Solutions, created the "Bug Zapper," which had the potential to actually mildly zap contestants. The 50 feet of electrical fence was fastened not far off the ground and turned mud runners into more cautious mud crawlers.

Elisa Adams-Rae, project manager and general contractor for Mico Customs Inc., is no stranger to mud races and is a fan of zip lines. So it was a no-brainer for her team to design the "Zipper Ripper."

Adams-Rae cheered on the participants, while company superintendent Dodson Manly instructed participants how to use the zip line.

To get to the zip line, participants climbed up a wooden wall with little to grab on to. After reaching the top of the nearly 20-foot tower, it was a long look down to the ground. Manly instructed participants to sit on a small piece of wood connected to a rope, to hold on and go. Participants "zipped" into muddy water before



Chris Mullen laughs as he wades through a deep pool of mud Saturday morning during the 5-kilometer Cowboy Crawl Mud Run at the Providence Ranch in Lake Panasoffkee.

Sponsors of the 23 obstacles

- T&D Pool and Spa Construction ■ T&D Pool and Spa Service ■ T&D Screen Enclosures ■ T&D Distribution ■ T&D Supply ■ Galaxy Home Solutions ■ Lake Panasoffkee Hardware ■ Chandler Electric ■ Mico Customs ■ Pikes Electric ■ Global Contracting Group ■ Jesse Brannen Fencing ■ Barfield Builders Inc. ■ Blue Monster Promotions ■ Tommy Goff Excavating ■ Wade Surveying ■ Sumter Electric Cooperative

tackling their next obstacle.

Yoder said he was most looking forward to people participating in a healthy, outdoor activity where everyone could enjoy nature. He said this was the first mud run Sumter County has seen.

About 1,100 participants registered.

As for the rumor going around about water moccasins

being killed throughout the week at the ranch, Yoder said, "Well, it makes the story a lot better, but for anyone living in Florida, if you think there's not snakes in Florida, you're dreaming."

All proceeds from the mud run will be donated to the Sumter County Chamber of Commerce to promote local businesses.

"I think this is going to be good for Sumter County. We want to make sure that we bring good business to Sumter County and to do that we have to support our Chamber of Commerce," Yoder said.

Sumter County Chamber of Commerce and Maury L. Carter & Associates Inc. were the other two hosts of the event.

Back when the Cowboy Crawl Mud Run was just an idea of Yoder's, Daryl Carter, owner of the property, received a call from him saying, "I want to have a little foot race." Carter agreed and said he was glad to have accepted the request for the use of the ranch.

"People are hooting and

'My contract with the devil for a good cause'

By JONATHON COLLIER

Most people wouldn't pay to run in mud.

This was not the case for me and about 1,000 other participants at the first Cowboy Crawl Mud Run Sumter County has ever seen.

Pulling up to Providence Ranch before dawn provided little insight to what was about to take place in just a few hours. Two flaming rings were all that could be seen while approaching the tent, where what unhappily reminded me of a contract with the devil had to be signed before entry.

Once inside the gate I met up with my team and we started to do some warm-up stretches for our race. The first heat of competitors already were lined up in front of two large doors just chomping at the bit to get mucho muddy.

In hindsight, the term "muddy" might have been an understatement. At around 8:35 a.m. our heat began, and within five minutes not a square inch of me didn't have some form of mud covering it.

While the entire course was far from a walk in the park, the most challenging part was attempting to climb across a suspended ladder over a pond where a 12-foot



With a medal of completion around his neck, Jonathon Collier, of Lady Lake, finishes the challenging 5-kilometer mud run Saturday morning.

alligator was an unwelcome spectator.

After falling in the pond and flailing to get to the other side, we were informed the suspicious onlooker was a fraud. Yes, the alligator was fake and placed on the pond bank to encourage participants not to fall.

On the other hand, a real alligator was spotted during the crossing of a pond while atop a 6-inch-wide beam during an earlier obstacle.

My favorite challenge was the "slip-n-slide" where the only way to slide down was to first climb up a 16-foot wall using a rope.

The last, but my least favorite, obstacle was

attempting to not be mildly shocked by live wires only inches from my head while crawling on my hands and knees through mud.

Trudging through deep, uneven, underwater mud valleys, I and five co-workers helped one another reach those two flaming rings — the finish line.

And then the day was complete with a hot shower, which never felt so good.

Jonathon Collier, a member adviser at MVP Athletic Club in The Villages, participated in this event as a member of the company's team. He is also the fiancé of Daily Sun reporter Kayla Stirzel.

hollering and smiling. Looks like no one has got hurt and people are having fun and raising money for the Chamber and for the community. Terry said, 'Good, clean fun' and I said, 'Good, muddy fun,' Carter said.

Yoder's intention for the day was for everyone to have fun and enjoy themselves. No matter how much mud or manure participants were covered in, they all had mud-splattered smiles when they jumped through the two burning rings

of fire that brought them to the finish line.

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