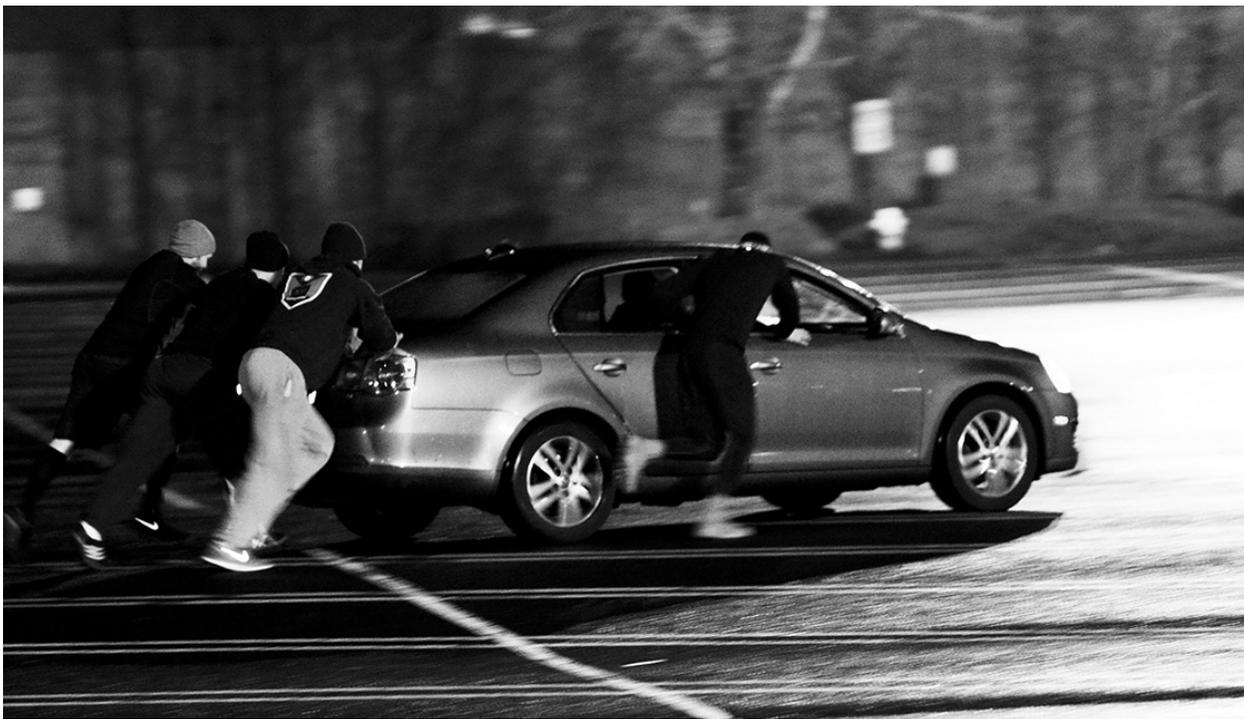

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Chaos League: The Chaos 5000

Fight Club was the beginning. Now it's moved out of the basement and the box. It's called The Chaos League.

By Rob Ord

March 2013



All: Karen Puyfeart

You live in an orderly society for the most part. You are brought up learning rules and regulations for almost every situation. Obeying those rules, even mastering them, determines to a large degree how well you will navigate within the structures of society.

Order is good. Order is predictable. Order builds homes, neighborhoods and cities. Order allows you to climb the corporate ladder. Order gives you the sense that you are in control: play the game and everything will be OK. You can plan your future, and if you work hard, you can enjoy it in peace and quiet.

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Order is the eggshell that contains the hopes and dreams of your future.

Fire. Earthquake. Car crash. Mugger. Home invasion. Flood. Crack!

"Chaos is the law of nature; Order is the dream of man."
—Henry Adams

Train for Chaos: The Chaos League

At CrossFit HEL (Human Evolution Labs), in Portland, Ore., chaos is embraced as part of the "natural order."

Indeed, chaos is the reality civilized order can never be free of, and failing to incorporate it into your training is tantamount to preparing a boxer for the big fight with nothing but Pilates and positive affirmations.

At CrossFit HEL, the motto is, "Train for Chaos."

The Chaos League is a small group of athletes within CrossFit HEL who embrace guerrilla training—unconventional,

outside-the-box training methods that utilize elements of the natural environment as a means for testing the effectiveness of what is occurring inside the lab. The Chaos Challenge takes this one step further by incorporating the true nature of chaos in the form of extreme challenges and the element of surprise.

Excerpt from the Chaos League member invitation:

Chaos League Membership is by invitation only, and League Members are all equal partners in a grand experiment, whose aim is to elicit the kind of growth impossible in the orderly confines of careful structure.

By definition, chaos is unexpected. Physical and mental challenges, therefore, may come at any time, day or night. Members receive when and where information regarding a Chaos Challenge via text message. The message may also include any special equipment needed for that challenge.

As all members are invited to join the League, they can also be uninvited.



Chaos challenge: 2 a.m., Vancouver Mall parking lot. Dress warm. Bring gloves.



Does your training inside the gym prepare you for life outside the gym?

The Chaos 5000

It was the middle of the night, and it was raining when the League arrived.

Rubbing sleep from their eyes with gloved hands, they sipped coffee in the empty mall parking lot as they waited for the challenge to be unveiled.

About four hours prior, I had sent out a text message. It was brief:

Chaos Challenge
2 a.m.
Vancouver Mall Parking Lot
Dress Warm—Bring Gloves

I had been there for a while already and had measured out a 400-meter course and set up cones. The challenge was to push a “stalled” mid-sized car 5 kilometers on the coned, slalom course in less than 70 minutes, which would not have been very difficult, except they had to change a tire every 400 meters.

Written as a WOD it would look like this:

12 rounds for time
400-meter lap—5 pushers/1 driver
Change 1 tire

The long oval track had tight turns on the way out, wider turns on the way back. The parking lot had a natural grade that made going out much more difficult and therefore slower than the quick trip back into the pit. In the pit, two members would remove a tire, run it around the car, and put it back on. During the pit stop, all members not changing the tire would do 10 burpees and then hold the FLR (push-up position). The team was required to change the driver every lap.

At first it was awkward. Communication was ineffective. There was no standard operating procedure indicating each member's position on the car and how it would change on the next lap. Tire changes took far too long, largely because putting the tire back on was more difficult than expected, and instead of slowing down and finding a method that worked, the teams struggled frantically on the first couple of changes. In the first few laps the team averaged right about 7:30 per lap, which, if continued, would have resulted in a time of 75 minutes—five minutes over the cap.



The first rule of the Chaos League is that you must be invited to join, and you can also be uninvited.

In short order though, the team started clicking. Communication dropped to only what was essential to initiate the actions necessary to get the job done. Tire changes became fluid as the team embraced the old adage "slow is smooth and smooth is fast." At the end of the final lap, the time on the clock showed 64 minutes 44 seconds. Mission accomplished in the midst of chaos through fluid adaptation and teamwork.

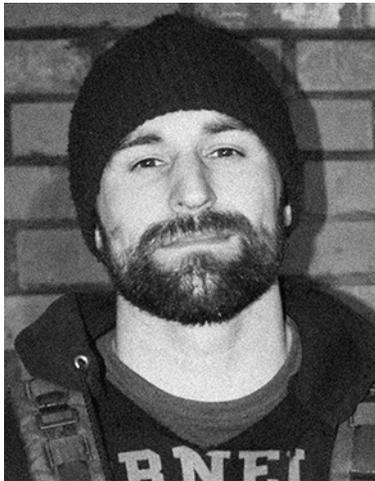
However, the Chaos Challenge was not over yet.

Just as the team pushed the car into the pit on its final lap, I threw a monkey wrench into the mix.

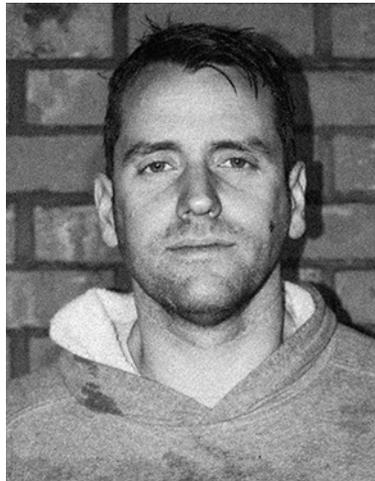
"You are in the midst of a hurricane," I told them. "Just moments ago, a loved one was injured and you were on your way to the hospital with them in the car. Right now your vehicle is stalled near a rapidly rising river, and inside is your injured family member. Local EMS is on the way but will not be on scene before the river rises beyond where your vehicle is sitting. To ensure the safety of your loved one, you must push the car over 50 feet in less than a minute up a slight grade."



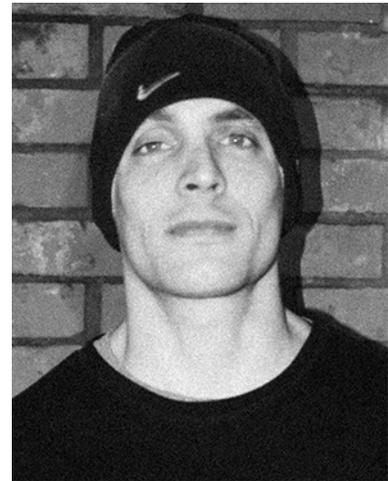
Here are the results of the final challenge:



283 feet



216 feet



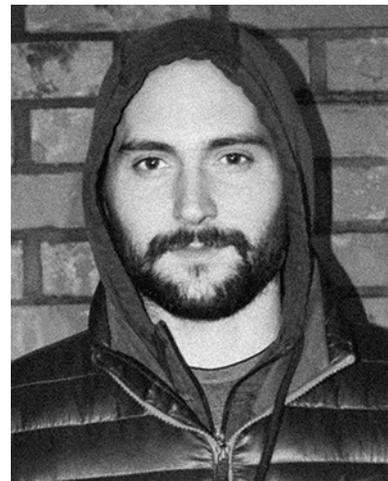
56 feet



46 feet



43 feet



41 feet

Postscript

CrossFit Journal:

The Chaos League invites you to step outside the eggshell of planned video shoots in controlled conditions, interviews by appointment, and articles written in warm, well-lit offices.

If you want to cover The Chaos League, you need to experience the chaos.

Plan to show up in Oregon with a camera and a notebook. Let us know when you'll arrive and how to contact you. Then wait. We'll let you know where to find us.

Bring gloves.



About the Author

Rob Ord is the founder and president of [Brass Ring CrossFit](#), whose primary focus is developing and optimizing human performance through training the whole person—body, mind and spirit. For more information on [The Chaos League](#), visit [Chaosleague.com](#).

