

Ultrarunning World

ROAD, TRACK & TRAIL MULTIDAY & ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS
ISSUE 10





LA ULTRA **THE HIGH**

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Editorial

There's a strong female presence in the number of race reports and on the covers this month, reflecting growing numbers of women taking part in ultras and multiday in many parts of the world. And who are also happy to share their thoughts and experiences.

The range of reports is also quite encouraging with only two coming from England (if we include Wales as a foreign country) and the rest scattered around the world.

The UK & Ireland ultra calendar hasn't been updated yet in time for this issue but the multiday calendar has and features over 400 events and that doesn't include most 100 milers; there are over 130 such events in the US alone.

The IAU has given their permission to summarize the news from their website - that's very kind of them. Coordinating these large scale international events and maintaining the high standards the sport adheres to, means a lot of work goes on behind the scenes and if anyone is interested in helping the IAU, there are elections in the not too distant future.

There have been over 1500 views of issue 9 so far which is double what issue 8 had and that is very encouraging. Most of the content in this issue is again, already published on authors' blogs but there is some original content and I hope that more people will submit relevant material as the momentum grows.

Many thanks to the contributors (see page 63) and the people who have helped create this issue especially to Samantha Fanshawe at RacingThePlanet and the team at Beyond the Ultimate.

This edition is 64 pages – by far the biggest issue and issue 11 will also feature some longer articles, including part two of Karen Jackson's Vol State, a new epic on the Billy Butlin 1000 mile race and Sahishnu's 24 hour race essay.

The material presented in Ultrarunning World magazine hopes to share thoughts and ideas that ultrarunners feel are significant. Many people have blogs and this magazine is another channel for people to reach the ultra and multiday community. Please consider contributing your experiences and insights on life in the long lane.

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We are very pleased to share this issue with the community and to bring these reports and updates on international and British events. We are very grateful to all the people who have kindly contributed their experience, time and energy to make this edition a reality.

IAU News

The IAU welcomed Guatemala as a new IAU member. All required documentation was signed and finalised.

In early December the IAU announced "It is our great pleasure to share with you that the IAU Council accepted the bid from Timisoara, Romania for the IAU 24 Hour European Championships. The race will take place on May 26-27, 2018." The current list of scheduled IAU events is as follows:

Trail World Championships (80 km) Penyagolosa, ESP 12th May 2018

24 Hour World and European Championships Timisoara, ROU 26th-27th May 2018

100K World Championships Sveti Martin, CRO 8th Sept 2018

24 Hour World and European Championships Irnding, AUT July 2019

IAU Member Federations have been sent a notification of the 2018 IAU Congress and Elections and also details of the IAU Championships currently open for bids.

The IAU 2018 Congress will be held on 7th September in Sveti Martin, Croatia, the site of the IAU 100K World Championships and WMA 100K World Championships. Details for candidature for the IAU President and other consequent vacancies in the IAU Executive Council are available on the IAU website.



Six new records for Sichel in Oslo

Orkney-based ultra marathon runner, William Sichel (64) returned from last November's Bislett 24 Indoor Challenge having broken six of his own age-group records – three British and three Scottish – which he set two years ago at the same venue.

"It was all a bit strange really, but the records I broke were all in the first six hours of the race. I could see I was going really well early on and so decided to really push for my times at 30 miles, 50 km and for total distance at 6 hours. I bettered my times by up to 15 minutes which is a lot. However, by pushing so hard in those early hours I compromised my performance at the full 24 hours and was understandably not able to match my result from 2015 for total distance. That's just the way it went and I'm delighted with 6 more records."

William's total distance for the 24 hours was 109.9 miles – good enough for 23rd position from 101 male starters and 4th in his age group.

Recent Races

The **Salomon Sky Run** took place November the 19th in South Africa. Starting at Lady Grey this event has three distances – 100/65 km and a marathon that traverse the Witteberg mountain range. The 100 km event is self-supported and self-navigated with an average altitude of between 2200-2500 meters. With an mean finish time of 16½ hours and a cut-off of 30 hours, this is a challenging event. First man was Lucky Miya in 12:58:38, second was Sange Sherpa in 13:56:20 and third was Christiaan Greyling in 14:33:59. In the women's race Tracey Campbell was first home in 19:26:58, second was Misty Weyers in 20:52:20 and third place was Kate Swarbreck in 21:54:49.

Costa Rica Trail - La Transtica Extreme

La Transtica blends the event into community life with its donations to schools and projects supporting children. One of the aims of the race is to offer an opportunity to discover Costa Rica and its way of life and to share this experience with the locals through a sporting competition with humanitarian goals. Founded in 2008 La Transtica provides a great challenge over 5 daily stages and the race was won by Vivien Laporte with Harriet Kjaer first woman, 4th overall.

6th Global Limits Cambodia - The Ancient Khmer Path

This event is a 220 km 6 stage race which starts at a Buddhist Temple 180 km north of Phnom Penh and finishes at the famous Angkor Wat temple.

The 2017 winners were Xavi Marina (ESP) and first female was Isabelle Sauve (CAN) who was second overall. (25 finishers).

Yilan Dongshan River Ultra-Marathon

The 6th edition of this event includes a 100 mile race which was the first event in Taiwan to use miles as a measurement in 2015. Also featuring 100/50 km races. The 100 miler was won by Yen-Chih Wu in 15:42:46 and first woman was Su-min Hu finishing in 21:41:45.

Marathon des Sables Peru

The first edition of this event took place 26 November to 6 December 2017 in the Ica desert, 300 km south of Lima. Based on the original Moroccan race it features approximately 250 km divided into 6 stages in a desert environment with runners having to be self sufficient. 222 runners crossed the finish line first of whom was Rachid El Morabity (MOR) in 21:35:55. First woman was Nathalie Mauclair (FRA) finishing in 25:55:26.

The **Soochow International Ultra-Marathon 24 hour track** race in Taiwan usually draws a strong field and this year was no exception including big names such as Florian Reus, Dan Lawson, Stephane Ruel and US women Katalin Nagy and Courtney Dauwalter. First male was Yoshiiko Ishikawa (JPN), winner of the World 24 hour Championships in Belfast earlier

in the year with 266.938 km. Toshiro Naraki (JPN) was second with 261.605 km and Stephane Ruel (FRA) was third with 259.178 km. Top woman was Courtney Dauwalter, 4th overall with 256.405 km reclaiming her US 24 hour record which she had set at Riverbank early in the year and which was subsequently broken by Katalin Nagy at the Worlds in Belfast. Katalin took the second spot in Soochow finishing with 198.400 km and third was Liang Yun Yi, (HKG) 196.762 km.

Ultra-Trail® Cape Town (UTCT) presented three trail races - 100km, 65km and 35km that traverse sections of Table Mountain on the Cape Peninsula as part of the Ultra-trail World Tour. The 100 km event was won by Prodigal Kumalo (RSA) in 09:51:00 (CR) with Ryan Sandes (RSA) second in 9:56:03 and Scotty Hawker (NZL) was third in 10:04:27. First female was Lucy Bartholomew (AUS)



Start of the Ancient Khmer Path

in 11:21:49. Robyn Owen (RSA) was second finishing in 12:06:40 and third was Naomi Brand (RSA) in 12:37:14.

The first **Perpetual Motion 24 hour** race which also included a 12 hour option took place in Grapevine, TX December 2nd. Nelson (Greg) Armstrong 243.432 km won

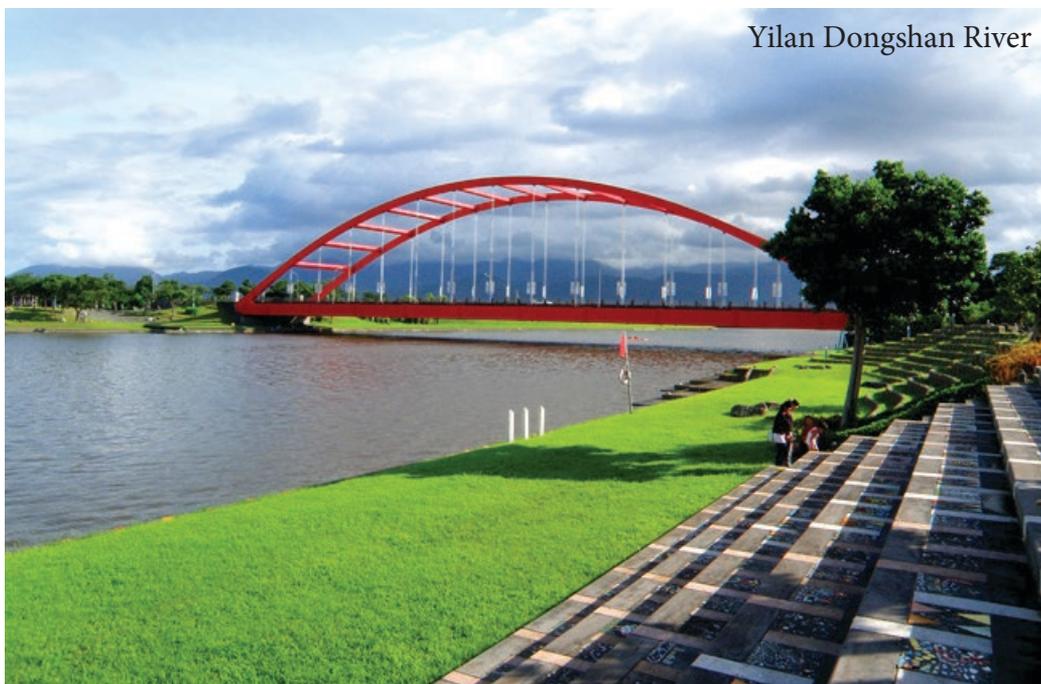
the 24 hour event with first lady Rebecca Cunningham covering 165.60 km.

The 7th annual **Desert Solstice** invitational 24 hour event hosted by Aravaipa Running, is designed to facilitate elite level performances to qualify for the National 24 hour squad

and again featured some of the top names of the sport in America. This year five runners set 19 new records including Camille Herron who set new US women's open records at 50 miles and 100 km on her way to a new women's 12 hour world record of 149.130 km.

24 hores d'Ultrafons en pista - Barcelona - The Barcelona 24/12/6 Hour race took place 15th of December in Spain with Ruben Delgado Gil (ESP) winning the 24 hour event with 240.756 km. Nathan Montague (GBR) in what appears to be his debut at this distance was second with 234.803. Aykut Celikbas (TUR) was third with 225.897. Monika Biegasiewicz (POL) won the women's race with 228.551 km for third place overall. Wendy Shaw (GBR) set a Pb and was second with 220.509 qualifying for the British 24 hour team. Patricia Scalise (ARG) also set a Pb with 204.274 km.

Yilan Dongshan River



The 3100 Diaries



Have you changed your diet and/or your nutritional philosophy since finishing the race? Yes and I will be doing things differently this time. I'm trying new foods and new products to help keep my weight on. I lost 20 pounds and muscle mass... I'm taking in more protein.

What are the most significant factors of your training that you are focusing on? Nutrition is the most significant factor and the most important.

I know you have only recently started to get back into training and I saw you went to ATY – did you feel ready for that? My body was ready for ATY but my mind wasn't. I was overwhelmed with compliments and athletes wanting to talk with me regarding the 3100 mile race which caused me to slow down.

I saw your mention of the Jackpot Ultra Running Festival – does your training feature a series of races? Yes, I have a series of races planned which will be a part of my training for the 3100 mile race. I'm training differently this time by adding multiday races and 100 milers. My daily power walks are anywhere from 20 – 31 miles.

Do you have any goals for this year's race? Yes, to break my World Record Pedestrian record, enjoy myself with more Miles of Smiles!

Is there anything you are looking forward to at the race again? Yes... seeing the friends I met going around and around the city block and meeting new friends.

Your 52 day challenge program has inspired a lot of people, what happened for you to get the idea and what are you hoping to achieve? Losing both parents and my mom 4 years ago to Type 2 Diabetes... I hope this year I can inspire more people to join me and the challenge by run, walk, bike, etc a mile or more for 52 straight days. It will be fun! You can sign up on my website... www.yolandaholder.com

With less than 6 months to go before the world's longest annual footrace begins again in New York, this column brings the latest news about the runners, the crews and the organisers as the long preparation for the Sri Chinmoy Self Transcendence 3100 Mile Race starts to get serious. Each month we hope to feature a different runner and follow them on their journey.

Record setting power walker Yolanda Holder is on the start list for the 2018 edition of the race which takes place in Jamaica, Queens starting June 17 and finishing August 7. After a nail-biting finish for her fans on her 2017 debut, Yolanda returns to the world's longest race with last year's experience providing a platform for another ascent of the Everest of multiday running.

Wondering what was going through Yolanda's mind as she announced her entry into the race, I recently had the opportunity to find out.

How was your recovery from the 3100 last year? My recovery was very slow and scary; it took me 3 months to fully recover. A week after returning home, I had some stomach issues and went to the doctor, I also had a bacterial infection and I believe it was due to not fully recovering from the stomach bug I had at the race.

Yolanda "Walking Dna"





22 NOV - 1 DEC 2018

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Beacons Ultra, Wales

Force 12 Events



Photo by No Limits Photography

Written by Stephen Cousins

There was a time when I was an ultra virgin, and it really wasn't all that long ago. Back in April 2014 I had just completed my third marathon, having done one each year since 2012. But I was disappointed with my time and decided to book another one soon after. So in May I ran the [Milton Keynes Marathon](#) and clocked an even slower time! But doing that, made me realise that I didn't need to stick to one marathon a year. I could run two, three, maybe even four in a year if I wanted to.

First Ultra

Then, my new running buddy Richard, suggested we do a race called the Longman Ultra in September 2014. A 33 mile event along the South Downs Way. I told him to go away but I used slightly more colourful language to get my point across. He, and a few of my other club mates, had already booked up to run a 46 mile race in Wales called the Brecon Beacons Ultra in November. A few weeks passed and my attitude softened. I eventually agreed to run the Longman Ultra.

The race was a bit of a baptism of fire. It was a hot day. I had nothing left in the final 10 miles, I had gastric issues and threw up at the end! But I loved it and when a place became available on the trip to Wales for the Beacons Ultra, I decided to go for

it. After all, I was no longer an ultra virgin. I had run 33 miles and survived. Another half marathon after that should be fine, surely! I mean how big are the hills in Wales anyway?

Wales in November

November arrived and I had what I would describe as a very acceptable run at the [Brecon Beacons Ultra 2014](#). I felt strong most of the way round, apart from painful feet caused by my rubbish Fellraiser trail shoes. I finished in 9 hours and 25 minutes in 49th place. The weather had been superb and we'd had a real blast of a weekend away. We vowed to do it again. The high coming off that run fuelled my love for ultra-running for a couple months, but it took 3 years for me to organise another trip to Wales for the revamped Force 12 Beacons Ultra.

Richard and I had initially planned to camp but given the cold and the wind and the rain, we were handed the last minute lifeline of a B&B about 12 miles from Tal-y-Bont on Usk and race HQ. Hilariously, when we arrived, the heating wasn't on in our room and it was almost as cold as if we'd been in a tent. Still, we managed to turn the radiator on, then went to the restaurant, stuffed our faces with chips and got our heads down by 10pm.

Beacons Ultra 2017

Race start was 7:30am, at Henderson Hall, as it had been 3 years earlier. Since then Martin and Sue Like, who run the [Likeys shop](#) in Brecon, have handed over the running of the event to Jonny Davies and the crew from Force 12 Events. Essentially the race remains the same. Two laps of 23 miles each. The course is identical to 2014 save for the bits that occur around HQ, namely the start, middle and finish. But it's basically the same. The forecast had been for quite heavy rain early on, but as it was we lined up on a cool, overcast day with just a hint of rain in the air.

There were one or two people we knew on the start line. Clare Prosser, who actually won the event overall in 2014. Helen Etherington who we see everywhere these days and who can finish running 100 miles and still manage to look like she's about to go out on the town on a Friday night. Also, Richard Hurdle who has run everything under the sun, including [Arc of Attrition](#), UTMB and the [Transvulcania Ultra](#) in La Palma.

The Start

We began on the sports field next to the canal, ran around the field and up on to the canal bank. The first 6km is flat along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. It's tempting, as always, to go off too fast, either accidentally or deliberately, in order to get some miles in the bank. This is almost always a mistake. Obviously, it's all relative. It depends what you are capable of. But, whatever your pace, I am a fan of even splits as far as is possible. In a hilly ultra it's simply not going to be possible to hit every mile or kilometre the same. But it might be possible to do each quarter at the same pace or both halves.

Richard disappeared along the canal and was out of sight after 2 or 3 kilometres. I was careful to keep my pace steady. Quite a few runners came past and I was very happy to let them go. I secretly whispered to myself, 'I'll see you in a couple of hours.' Six kilometres into the Beacons Ultra the route leaves the canal at Llangynidr Locks and we began the long steep climb up to the 551m summit of Tor y Foel. It is a 400m climb with about four false summits! It is by far the toughest climb of the race, and beware; you have to do it twice!

The Dreaded Coal Road

The weather was holding and although it was a little windy on the top, it wasn't cold and it wasn't raining! A steep descent off the hill leads to a dirt road and a short run to checkpoint one. I didn't stop. There's a gentle but technical descent down to the old coal road and then it's a long slog to the next mental break in the race. The old coal road is about 4 kilometres of slightly uphill running. It's pretty relentless. It's flat enough that you feel you really should run, but the incline is such that you can definitely feel it in your legs and I know it's a dreaded part of the course for many, especially on the second loop.

I skipped along it quite gaily first time round and made it to the tarmac near Blaen y Glyn Uchaf car park. There's a nice little downhill recovery on the road towards Torpantau Station, where the railway line ends. You don't quite reach the station though because there's a right turn at 19km (56km on lap 2) which is the start of the climb up to The Gap. The highest point on the Beacons Ultra is The Gap. It does what it says on the tin. It's a gap in the ridgeline on the climb up Pen-y-Fan at about 600m elevation. The view is fabulous, although it was a little shrouded in mist on the first ascent.

Up To The Gap

I managed to run the whole climb and was very pleased with myself upon reaching the top. The descent is very technical and you definitely have to watch your footing. You're either going to stumble on rocks or slip on wet grass. When you reach the



Race Report

second checkpoint at the foot of the drop you have 10km to go. There are no more tough climbs left on the loop. There's a little more technical descent, a road section, then some fields and styles to negotiate, another drag of a road and the final 3km canal towpath back to the start/finish. I got to the halfway point and was just starting to feel a little fatigued. But I could see Richard up ahead and that spurred me on. I grabbed a coffee and got going again.

The second lap is harder. Same course, same distance but now you have 23 miles of running and 900 metres of climbing in your legs. It's time to dig in and flush out any mental negativity. It was good that I had the goal of chasing Richard down, because that certainly helped the canal path section to disappear relatively quickly. Having now run over a marathon it was time to start climbing Tor-y-Foel again. I power-hiked, with the odd stop for breath. I caught Richard about half way up. He was having gut problems and looked a bit rough. We are friends but we don't do sympathy. Well, not that often anyway! So I left him behind. It was beginning to rain and the wind was also getting up.

Starting to Tire

I pushed on, feeling tired but confident. I stopped at checkpoint one to get my water filled up and then made my way down to start the long coal road section. This is a very easy place to get demoralised during the Beacons Ultra. It seems such a long way from home and such an unforgiving section of road. But once again I was lucky. Up ahead I could see another runner and I set my sights on catching him. He was walking and so it didn't take too long. As I passed I asked if he was ok and he said he was feeling nauseous. He's another runner with gut issues. After injury, gastric problems are the number one reason for DNFs in ultra running. Anyway, once past him I thought I needed to keep running to make sure I got some distance between him and me. So, as much as I would have liked to walk, I forced myself to run on.

I did eventually give myself a little walk break at the tarmac and then jogged slowly down the hill towards the railway station in the rain. But I was suffering now. For the next four kilometres I had to adopt a run/walk strategy. I had run all the way up the hill to The Gap on the first lap, but I just couldn't do it this time. Half way up, the chap whom I had passed on the coal road came steaming past me. "Stomach's ok now. Back on form" he said as he bounded up the hill. I daren't look back because I knew Richard wouldn't be too far behind. The wind and rain were at their worst now blowing horizontally from the left. This was definitely, physically and mentally, my low point of the run. I finally reached the ridgeline and started to make my way down to Checkpoint Two.

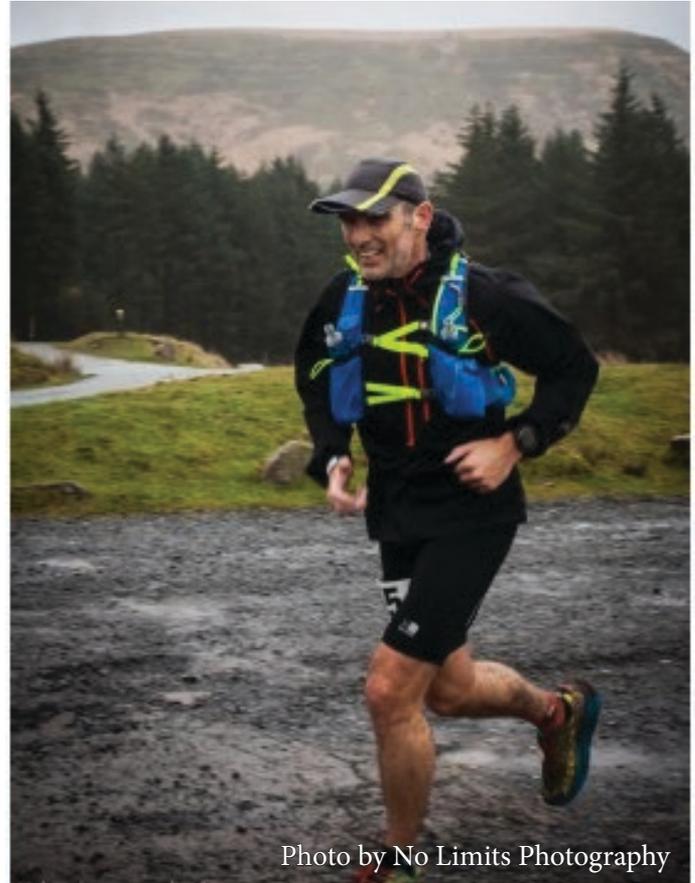


Photo by No Limits Photography

Richard Catches Up

I managed to run but I certainly wasn't as fast as I had been on lap one. I needed my bottles filling again, which I did when I got to the checkpoint and as I was there, sure enough, who comes bounding down the hill but Richard. It is usually at this point that he disappears off into the distance again, but I think he had used a lot of his energy trying to catch me up. By the time we reached the road section he was falling behind again. There's a turn off the road at 66km (30km on lap 1) on to the fields. Back in 2014 I missed this completely on the first loop and added another 400 metres to my journey going the wrong way. This time, I had stopped to stretch out my cramping legs, when Richard almost ran straight past the turn. He said if I hadn't been there, he would have missed it. The rain had stopped now. It had only been really bad when we were up high.

We stayed together running across the fields. The cramp in my legs was getting so bad I couldn't climb over the styles and had to open the gates instead. But I was still running and once we reached the road at Llanfrynach, I could see we were catching the same chap again. He'd either run out of juice or he was suffering a recurrence of his stomach issues. I told Richard I wanted to see if we could catch him, but I don't think Richard was in the mood! So with one last big effort, I upped the pace over the tarmac and left Richard to his walking break. That's not a phrase I get to say very often, where he and I are concerned!

Passing a Legend

After a couple of kilometres on the road, you can see the canal running parallel on the left, so you know it won't be long before the final section. Sure enough, at 71km the route reaches Pencelli and joins the canal where [Pencelli Castle](#) once stood. I was feeling good now, knowing that I was nearly home, knowing I was going to catch the guy ahead and that I was going to beat my target time of 8 hours. Once I'd caught up, I briefly walked alongside the runner with whom I'd been playing leapfrog, and he told me he had indeed had a recurrence of his tummy troubles. I knew I recognised his face but couldn't put a name to it.

It was still light and I was still running well when I approached the DayGlo arrow telling me to turn off the towpath and on to the sports field by Henderson Hall for the final 100 metres. I crossed the line in 12th place in a time of 7 hours 47 minutes. My goal had always been under 8 hours and ideally a top 10 finish. However, looking back at previous years results it does seem like, apart from in 2016, 7:47 has always been around 12th place finish time. So I am very pleased. Having won the women's race in 7:20, Clare Prosser was there cheering people home and the men's winner was Sam Humphrey, who won the Beachy Head Marathon in 2016. He finished in 6 hours 15 minutes. I'll just say that again. 6 hrs, 15 minutes. Yea, I know.



Race Report

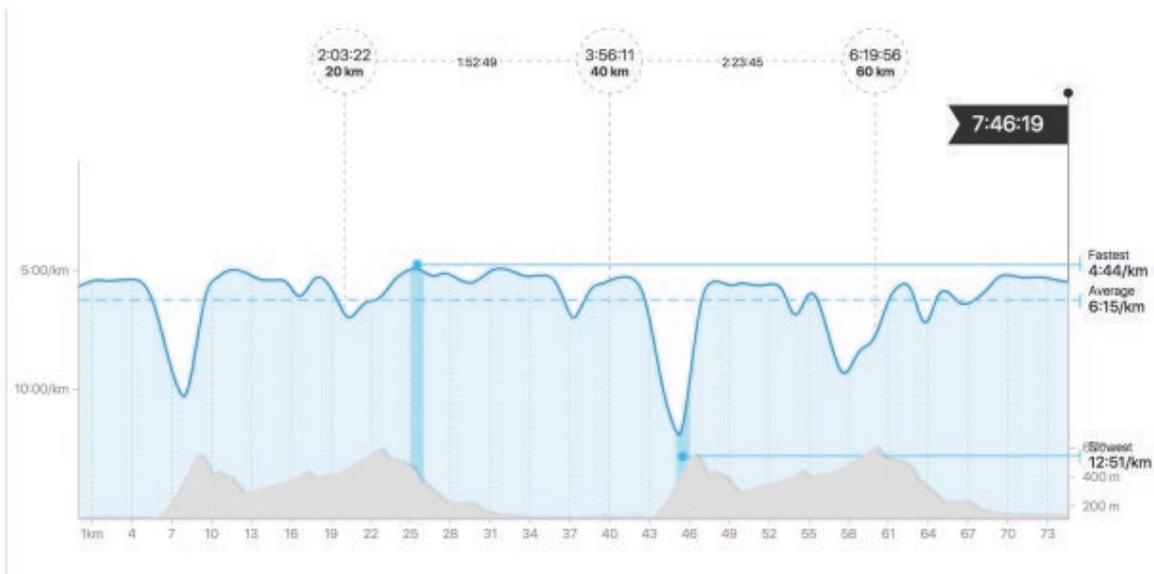


Photo by Nick Kershaw groovyeditor@me.com

Target Time Finish

It wasn't until much later that I discovered the identity of the guy with the gastric issues. I wish I'd known because I'm bit embarrassed that I didn't acknowledge him en route. It was Steve Wyatt who is twice winner of the Arc of Attrition 100 mile race and who I knew was running. Remember [that film I made](#) where I finished in 29 hours 50 minutes? Steve ran it in 21 hours. He's a phenomenal runner and it's a total fluke that I came in ahead of him at Brecon. He was just having one of those days that we all have from time to time. So kudos to Steve. Richard followed both me a Steve a couple of minutes later to finish in 14th place in 7:50.

I totally loved the Beacons Ultra when I ran it with the boys in 2014. I love it even more now that we have returned and have to some extent, tamed the beast. It's a great run and a super challenge. It's a mix of fast, flat runnable, super technical runnable, runnable climbing and non-runnable climbing. I think it would make a good first ultra if you're after a bit more of a challenge than a standard 50km trail race across the South Downs. It also makes for a very good race, for experienced and faster runners. Well done and thanks to [Force 12](#) and all the volunteers. If you've not done it before, definitely go and have a look at the website and consider adding the Beacons Ultra to your list for next year.



Everest Trail Race

by The ELEMENTS pure Coconut Water

by Elisabet Barnes



*“It is not the mountain we conquer
but ourselves”*

(Sir Edmund Hillary,)

Race Report



The Everest Trail Race (ETR) retraces, in part, the footsteps of the historical Everest expeditions, including the one led by John Hunt in 1953, in which Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first confirmed climbers to reach the summit. Whilst the ETR doesn't take you to the top of the world (perhaps thankfully!), it does come pretty close and allows you to enjoy the breathtaking skyline of Himalayan giants like Everest, Ama Dablam and Lhotse. If you open your mind, this experience can be so much more than a race, and it takes you on an unforgettable journey in a beautiful place on earth.

About ETR & Pre-Race

The Everest trail Race is a

multi-stage race over 6 days in the Himalayas of Nepal, in the area of Solukhumbu. It takes place in November, and the total distance is approximately 160km. According to the road book the total ascent is approximately 15000m and the total descent about 14000m. My Garmin recorded less of both ascent and descent, but even so the elevation gain and loss is not for the faint hearted. The maximum altitude is at climbing Pikey Peak on Day 2 at 4068m above sea level. The ETR is performed in semi self-sufficiency. The organisation provide tents, mattresses and all the food, both in camp and at check points. The runners carry all their kit and the backpack must weigh between 3.5 and 7kg. The minimum

weight is to ensure that the equipment is adequate for the temperatures in this region, which can get down to -10 degrees C at night time. In contrast, the days are quite warm and shorts and T-shirt are great for the day. I have a great deal of experience in multi-stage racing so the concept of ETR was not new to me. However, for me, the challenge of this race was in the extensive amount of climbing and descending, the technical terrain and the altitude. I knew that I had to prepare for these aspects if I wanted to have a chance of doing reasonably well. The timing was good in that I ran the TransRockies race in Colorado in August. In the TransRockies I faced 120 miles of mountain running

of up to 3800m. In total, before Everest Trail Race, I had spent 10 weeks at altitude between late June and late October, in Tenerife and the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. This was essential preparation. Still, I was rather apprehensive going into the race. Late September I ran on a national trail in Sweden (Kungsleden) and sprained my ankle badly. With 6 weeks to ETR I didn't know if I would recover in time. I had 3.5 weeks completely off running and my form was less than ideal as a result of this. I carried a bit too much weight, my left ankle was still swollen with weak ligaments, and the right felt a bit unstable too. Three weeks before the race I was able to get two weeks of training in Tenerife to reacclimatise to

altitude and test the ankles on some technical trails. It gave me enough confidence that things would work as long as I took care not to injure myself again. A few rolls of Rocktape was thrown into the luggage to cater for this and I taped both my ankles every day for extra support.

I was extremely impressed with the organisation right from the start. Runners flew from Barcelona and London and met in Istanbul for a connecting flight to Kathmandu. The arrival in Kathmandu on the Monday morning was chaotic to say the least. However, this was by no fault by the organisation, but by the cumbersome process to acquire a visa before entering the country (see the section on practical advice below).

Once we were all through immigration and had found our luggage, we were on buses to the hotel in Kathmandu, where we would spend two nights before travelling to the first camp site on Wednesday. This was plenty of time to settle in, get over the jet lag, explore the surrounding area, and organise the kit.

Kathmandu is a melting pot of visual impressions, colours, noises, smells, traffic and people. Our hotel was a short walk from the vibrant, buzzing Thamel district which really provided a bit of a shock for the senses. What at first appeared as complete chaos (and pretty overwhelming) seemed after a while to have some kind of system deployed in the mayhem. Maybe because the people are very tolerant, polite, friendly and

patient. The air was incredibly bad in Kathmandu and it didn't take long walking around the streets before you were covered in dust, felt pretty dirty and had a cough. Crossing the busier roads required attention in order to not get overrun by cars, motor bikes or the overcrowded buses!

Having arrived on the Monday, we had to go through kit check and hand in our main luggage on Tuesday afternoon. Out kit was weighed and checked and our medical certificates and ECGs checked carefully. We then had dinner together in the evening before setting off to the first camp site in minibuses on Wednesday morning.

The 7-hour or so journey from Kathmandu to Jiri went

along some rather winding and narrow mountain roads. I had taken one pill for travel sickness and it completely wiped me out but at least I didn't get sick as we zigzagged our way up the mountains, occasionally daring to look over the steep edges of the roads and praying that we would arrive alive.

Jiri is also called "the Gateway to Mt Everest" and the trek from Jiri to Everest Base Camp is referred to as the classic route to Everest. Although many trekkers now choose to start their Everest trek from Lukla, the early expeditions to Everest all passed through Jiri.

In camp we were allocated our 2-man tents. These were pretty roomy and with very comfy, insulating mats to



Race Report



sleep on. Throughout the week we would sleep in tents four nights and in lodges three nights (including after the finish in Lukla). In the mornings we were woken up by the Sherpa's with a hot cup of tea which was a nice way of getting out of bed as it was often quite chilly. We had breakfast and dinner together in a big tent. This was actually a really nice feature of the race as you get to socialise with everyone. The race staff really went out of their way to make sure we were all looked after and everything went like clockwork.

The Race

Day 1 from Jiri to Bhandar was designed to ease us into the race. Starting at 1900m elevation, climbing to 2700m

and finishing at approximately 2000m, it was not too challenging as far as altitude is concerned. The distance was also very reasonable with 21km. I managed to miss a marker and took a wrong turn after CP1. This cost me about 10 minutes but I was not the only one who got lost on this stage. It was very warm on arrival in Bhandar. I had a wash, lunch, chilled for a bit and as the sun set went for a recovery walk up the hillside. It was very beautiful and so tranquil. The contrast to the chaotic Kathmandu was striking.

If Day 1 was relatively easy, Day 2 was not! We first descended to 1500m for four kilometres before starting the seemingly never ending climb

up to Pikey Peak at 4068m. The beginning of this climb was in parts pretty hot but as we got higher it got a bit chilly and I had to change gloves. At around 3200 meters elevation I caught up with people who were now struggling. To my surprise this included the Nepalese girl Chhechee Sherpa Rai, who had set a blistering pace on the initial downhill section, leaving Ester Alves and myself in her dust.

If you have not acclimatised to altitude it is hard work at this elevation. If you have, it still is, but it's more bearable. The section from 3200m and up to the peak I found really beautiful and I enjoyed it very much despite it being very steep and challenging.

Once past the peak we had a technical descent for a couple of kilometres. This was icy in parts and then turned very steep with loose rock. I sat on my bum a couple of times and there was plenty of swearing going on! Despite the monstrous climb we had already had, I was quite relieved to face a final ascent up to camp which was located at Jase Bhanjyang at 3600m. This was a stunning spot and well worth the effort. It now got a bit colder due to the altitude and I think quite a few people suffered a bit. I had a very warm jacket and sleeping bag and I was thankfully never cold. Rather, I enjoyed the fresh cooler air.

Sleeping at this elevation did affect me somewhat. I got a

very slight headache and felt a bit tired in the morning of Day 3. I knew that this would be a challenging day for me. We had a significant amount of descent and this is not my greatest strength. In addition, with a sprained ankle not yet fully healed, I had to be really careful to not cause myself any more damage. I couldn't rush the downhills. The beginning was undulating and runnable but tough due to the altitude.

Then followed a steep descent with some loose gravel before more stable terrain. However, coming down it was a bit wet as we crossed several streams and it was a little boggy before we hit the rock and gravel trails. I fell into the same pace as the Frenchman

Phil and we stayed together for the whole day as the group quickly separated on the initial descent. It was nice to have some company, especially as this day felt like a mental challenge and a bit like "just get it done". In addition to all the descending, we had three ascents to tackle and we also now started to encounter animals on the trail, mainly mules. The mules were friendly but their wide loads made it difficult to pass them sometimes and you had to be patient or you could get knocked off the trail. With mostly a vertical drop on the outside of the trail, this was not an attractive proposition, nor was getting squashed against the mountain side...

At about 21km, after our

second climb, I felt exhausted. To my relief there was a small shop here, and I stopped to buy a Fanta and a Mars bar. I downed the Fanta in a few seconds and this gave me some renewed energy which was probably good as we faced a rocky and in parts slippery descent which required all the focus I could summon. The last check point arrived quicker than expected and as I realised we only had 8km to go I perked up significantly. These were not easy however. We first descended for about 4km on more technical ground, crossed a river, and then started an arduous and very hot, steep ascent to Kharikhola and the beautiful monastery where we would spend the night. Phil was the stronger climber here but

patiently waited for me so that we could cross the line together and honour the fact we had stayed together for the whole day. I think we were both exhausted because we literally tripped and fell on the last step of the stairs as we crossed the finish line. I have had more glamorous finishes but it was an opportunity for a good laugh! I lost a fair bit of time on this day so 3rd place was now the realistic place to finish the race in, I just had to put a good effort in on Day 4 to really secure it. Luckily on Day 4 I felt good. I was motivated, and perhaps preserving my legs a bit on all the downhill the previous day put me in a good place to go a bit harder. This day was varied and undulating though beginning with a 900m climb





up to CP1. We now faced a lot more animals on the trail, porters transporting heavy loads (they would have easily outrun us had they carried as little as we did!), and towards the end we also joined the main Everest Base Camp trek route. As such there was also a significant amount of trekking tourists on the trail. Our journey had started on quiet, isolated trails, travelled by few, and now turned into what seemed like a busy highway in comparison. This was an interesting contrast for sure and the tourists were all very excited about what we were doing. The cheering was almost like participating in a big city road marathon at times and it was encouraging. “Excuse me, racer coming through!” became a frequently

used phrase as I tried to navigate my way through the larger groups of trekkers. Of course the mules and yaks would have none of it and I just had to be patient. The yaks could also be aggressive and it was essential to not scare them. Chhechee had disappeared early on, usual style, and Ester and I kept each other in sight all day. At the last Check Point I got a report that Chhechee had slowed and was only a minute or two ahead. This last section was pretty runnable so I put an effort in to chase. So did Ester, but we never caught her although all three of us finished within a minute of each other in Phakding. Here we stayed in a lodge instead of tents. I am not sure there was any advantage to staying in a

lodge except for being able to stand upright in the room. It was no less cold or humid at night and the mattresses were not as comfortable as those in the tents. Still, being able to stroll around the small village and discovering a German cafe serving all sorts of cakes was a nice treat. I had an apple cake with whipped cream and delicious mint tea at Herman’s following the now habitual post stage shake out walk.

On Day 5 we continued on the main Everest Trek route with Tengboche at 3860m elevation as our end point for the stage. This once again meant a day of mainly uphill. The final two days of the race were not marked due to following the main trekking route. There were however a

couple of places where route options were present and I did manage to take a wrong turn after a bridge. I soon realised as I was on a single track trail deep in the woods and I probably lost 6-10 minutes as a result. This really would make no difference to my position at this point so I was relaxed about it but even so it was annoying. The theme from the previous day continued with mules, yaks, porters and tourists as we gradually climbed up the trekking route. The final climb really was a bit of a push with more than 500m vertical in about 3km and I couldn’t be more relieved to cross the finish line, but this was worth the effort. Jordi, the race director, pointed out all the peaks: Everest, Ama Dablam,

Lohtse... It was breathtaking. A warm shower was available and the room in the lodge was a bit nicer than the night before. Here I paid a small fortune for a Fanta, Bounty and a tub of Pringles, and was delighted to find another cafe with a great selection of cakes. The afternoon was spent soaking up the views of the magnificent mountains as the sun set. Everyone seemed relieved we now only had one day to go and spirits were high.

The start of the final day, Day 6, was not as cold I had anticipated. I had doubled up with a thin base layer and a T-shirt and Primaloft mitts over my gloves. Although there was some ice on the first descent (the same route that we had climbed up to camp the day before) I got pretty warm and the mitts had to come off on the ascent that followed. The T-shirt came off at CP1.

This day we retraced our steps in part from the preceding two days but with some variation as we made our way to Lukla and the finish. Tourists were plentiful as were animals, but for most part the path was fairly wide. It was a hot and challenging day with a lot of descent but the knowledge that the finish was near helped keeping the spirits up. I was on my own for large parts of the stage and I was relieved to find markers from the final CP into Lukla as I really didn't fancy another wrong turn. From the final CP it was supposed to be 3.5km to the finish but I was delighted that it appeared after only 2km!

Post-race

At the lodge where we were staying there was only a cold shower available but I was beyond caring at this point and just happy to get one. We received a small drop bag that we had deposited before the race so I could have a clean change of clothes which was nice. The afternoon was spent in a lovely cafe eating cake and burger and taking a look at the airstrip from where we would take off the following day. The airport in Lukla is commonly referred to as the most dangerous airport in the world so the adventure wasn't quite over yet!

The following day was about having a good dose of patience. The wait at the airport was around 2-3 hours before taking off. The planes are only small so we were on several. On arrival in Kathmandu all went surprisingly smoothly and we could return to the hotel. Our rooms were ready and the afternoon and evening spent at our leisure. The prize giving ceremony and dinner was not until the following day. This was great event and I particularly liked how everyone was recognised individually as we received our medals one by one. Also, the men's and women's podiums were presented simultaneously which was a really nice touch.

The ETR is without doubt one of the best races I have ever done. The organisation is spotless. There is a genuine passion for the race amongst all the staff and they all went out of their way the whole week to look after us. Whilst the race certainly

is challenging I believe it is achievable for most with a decent fitness level and the right preparations. The small scale of the race means that you will get to know the other participants and leave with new friends. The mix of abilities, reasons for participating, nationalities and ages is what makes this race really great. So, if you are thinking about it, don't hesitate. It is a beautiful journey in so many ways! To quote Sir Edmund Hillary once again: "You don't have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things — to compete. You can be just an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated to reach challenging goals."

Thanks to the organisation and staff for an incredible week, to RunUltra, to Ian Corless for great photography, to Nicky Spinks for training advice, to my sponsors and partners Raidlight, HOKA ONE ONE, Sziols, LYOFood. Also thanks to Carol McDermott at Lightwave for great advice on sleeping bags, and of course myRaceKit for completing my equipment. Last but not least thanks to Sondre Amdahl for being a very tolerant tent mate as my kit exploded everywhere in usual fashion and I probably snored as I slept so well in the comfy tents.

Practical Tips:

Visa: Before you travel, fill in and print a visa application form online here. Then bring this form, along with a passport photo. Once at the airport, if you have the form, you do NOT need to go to the machines. Just

go straight to the payment desk, pay (approximately EUR 25) in USD, GBP or EUR, and then go through immigration. If you forget the form or photos you have to use the kiosks at arrival. Be aware that scanning the passport does not work, however, you can enter all your information manually. You need to have passport info, address in Nepal, and flight number available. If you have passport photo but not the form, look around or ask an official as there may be forms available. I found some hidden away under a desk in the immigration hall... All luggage except race gear is handed in on Tuesday afternoon. You then spend Tuesday night in the hotel before travelling to camp 1 on Wednesday and starting the race on Thursday. Therefore, you may want to keep some disposable spare clothing or toiletries for this night and the travel day.

You will be given a small bag that you get access to immediately upon finishing the race in Lukla. Here you can put a change of clothes, some toiletries, a towel etc to freshen up after the race. There is one night in Lukla (if the weather is good) before travelling back to Kathmandu where you get access to your main luggage again. I didn't take my mobile phone with me during the race but I put it in this drop bag.

It is cheap and easy to buy a local SIM card. If you have an unlocked phone it is well worth doing this as data rates are pretty high otherwise. Mobile coverage and quality of signal is very good in

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Kathmandu and better than the hotel Wifi. A SIM card is approximately 250 rupees and then it's approximately 300 for 1GB of data or 500 for 2GB.

During the race, at least from day 3 onwards, it is possible to buy supplies in shops along the way. The further you get, the more expensive. This is no wonder when you see the porters carrying huge loads up the mountain on foot! Bring some cash as it can be really nice to buy a coke, have a coffee and cake, or supplement the race check point food with a Mars bar or a Snickers. As a guide, a coke is a couple of hundred rupees, a coffee and piece of cake might be approximately 700 rupees. Trekking poles are strongly advised. Train with them and use them during the race.

Some parts of the course are undulating and runnable but there is a lot of trekking uphill and on the steep descents you might find poles a useful help and support for tired legs. You have to carry all your kit but this is certainly a race where packing right takes priority over packing light. At check-in your sleeping bag plus down jacket is weighed and should amount to 1kg (no-one tells you this beforehand but useful to know!). Two of the camp sites are at 3600 and 3800 metres respectively and it can get very cold, so it is for a reason.

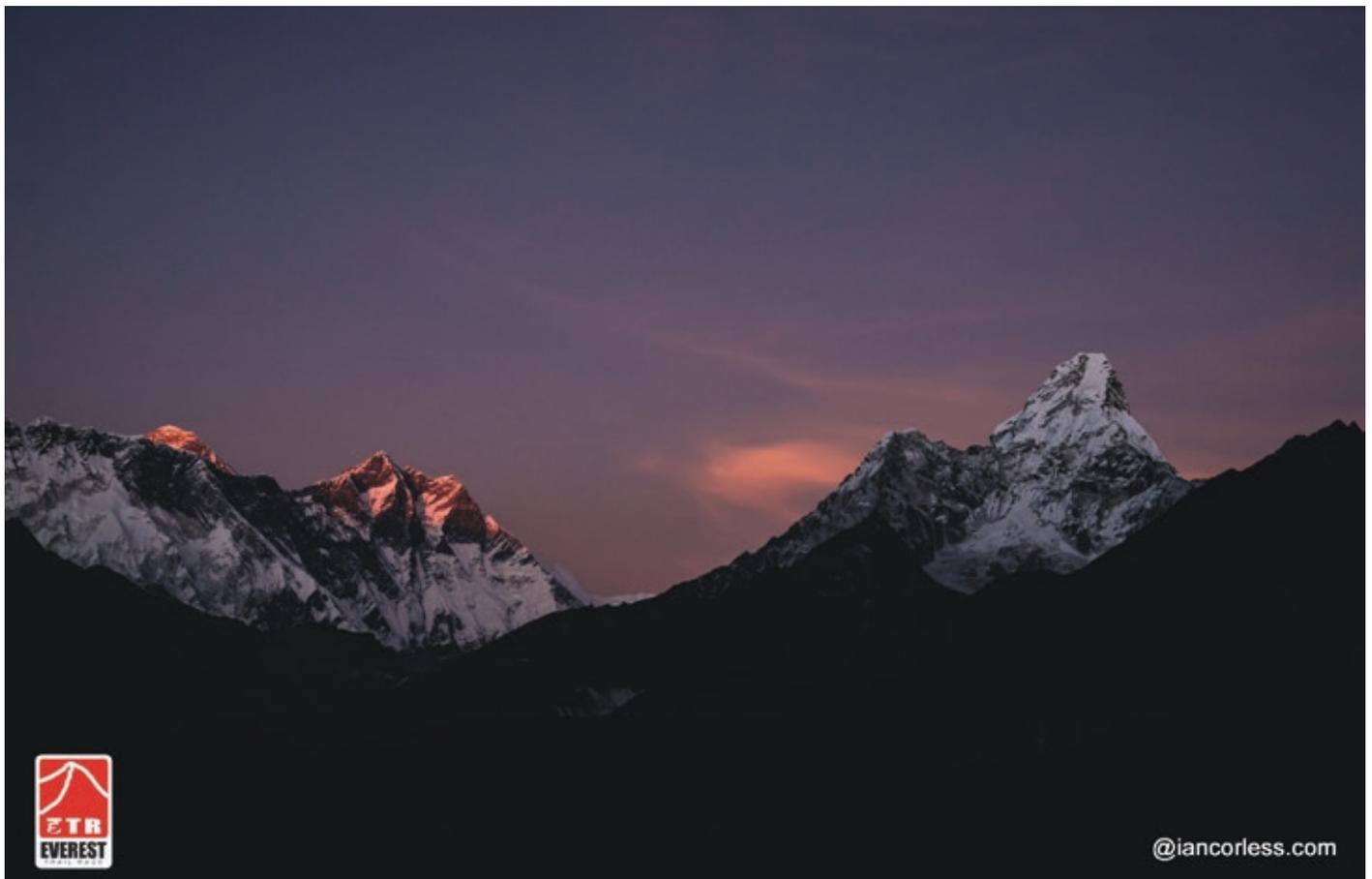
Bring hand sanitizer and loo roll and take probiotics for travel. Stomach bugs and traveller's diarrhoea is a high risk but I managed to avoid it. Keep good hygiene and you should be fine.

Altitude: many people neglect the fact that they are travelling to, and racing at altitude. Altitude sickness can have severe consequences and if you are not used to being at altitude you may also find it very tough. If you can acclimatise beforehand, then do. Travelling to somewhere high and training there is the best thing although not practically possible for many. Other options include altitude centres where you can acclimate by breathing through a mask or exercising in a chamber. Sleeping in an altitude tent (possible to rent) is also an option.

Training:

Training is of course much of an individual matter but nevertheless there are some key pointers on how to prepare for this race. Training

should always be specific. Therefore, given that you will mostly be moving on rocky ground, and either up or down, think about this as you prepare. Most people will deploy a fast hike uphill, and majority will use poles. So, incorporate this in your training. Whilst some downhill sections are pretty technical, most of them are on fairly stable ground. It does require skill and focus and the more you can practise this the faster you can go on the downhills and this will certainly make a difference. Finally, and already mentioned above, don't ignore the altitude if you have any means of acclimatising. It will make it a lot easier and reduce the risk of suffering from altitude sickness.



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The North Face Endurance Challenge 2017

A tough day on dreamland trails

by Caroline McKay



Photo courtesy Ultra Race Photos

Technical trails are not my forte but I've grown to choose mountainous routes over flatter courses every time. So as dream races go, The North Face Endurance Challenge San Francisco spoke to me. 50 miles of buttery smooth, groomed, dry (most years) yet steep trail could play to the strengths I've built yet throw down a real challenge. 10,500 feet of ascent over 50 miles and an elevation chart resembling jagged shark teeth was never going to be easy, no matter how maintained the trails and dreamy the views.

The Endurance Challenge series is a decade old, the seed planted by local Marin County resident Dean Karnazes' 50 miles in 50 states challenge in 2006. Since then it's flourished into a hugely competitive end of season party of racing, with an army of elite athletes

pushing each other to breaking point. This year was a step into new territory, with the race being shifted back by a few weeks to late November rather than the traditional mid-December weekend, and a course change meaning a new starting location in Sausalito, Marin County and a new finish in Crissy Field, San Francisco. A bonus 1,000 feet of climbing was also loaded onto last year's route. The breath-taking route transitions from rolling open hills to shady forest trails and steep descents to white sandy coves, overlooking Sausalito and the San Francisco skyline. 600 runners - including over 50 pro-athletes - would take part in the 50 mile, with many hundreds more taking on 50k, marathon, half-marathon, 10k and 5k distances.

Frosty pre-dawn conditions greeted anxious bodies arriving at the Sausalito

ballfield starting area, a quick 20 minute shuttle across the bridge from San Francisco. The Race Director wasn't wrong when he said it would be colder in Marin than the city. The urge to warm up fast isn't going to help the need to start steady, I thought, as Dean Karnazes shouted a few inspirational words at the crowd and the leaders shot off up the dark trail. Despite a strong streak of mountain training and a decent finish at UTMB earlier in the season, I'd severely disadvantaged myself ahead of this race through a scheduling error, booking flights when I thought the race was a week later. Yikes. This meant I arrived in San Francisco off an 11 hour flight from London, just 12 hours ahead of the race start at 5am. Less than ideal, but an interesting experiment.

Off we went. Leaving tarmac and light



Photo courtesy Ultra Race Photos

behind for darkness, a dusty trail and the first long climb of many out of Sausalito. My coach Ryan Ghelfi, of Trails and Tarmac, had given me a course preview and his words were fresh in mind that the first four climbs would be easiest and I shouldn't have a problem running them. As predicted, I was far from bursting with energy and strength, legs and mind sluggish, so I ran at a snail's pace to keep things sustainable. The gradients were certainly more runnable than UTMB, but herein lay the pressure. With precious few walking breaks came precious few mental or physical breaks on the climbs, and knee pain from a recent fall in Edinburgh took the joy and recharge out of the descents.

On the climb out of Tennessee Valley aid station, mile 13, I stole a hiking break. These hills were starting to challenge how much grit and mountain fitness I had left post-UTMB. But as we hit the summit before the descent to Muir Beach, a breathtakingly beautiful pacific seascape stretched ahead for miles. I knew the four mile climb from mile 19

up to the first pass through Cardiac aid station was the longest of the route, and I had this target to preserve and pace myself for. I reminded myself that it takes a while to warm back into a climb and once you get going your body adapts and the inner metronome takes over. As the narrow single track trail transitioned to an endless series of switchbacks up the mountain, I suddenly felt the stark contrast to a summer of UTMB training and racing; the practice of hiking hard, poles in hand, committed to a long climb and knowing exactly what lay ahead. This race would be different.

Back to the switchbacks, one by one. Ryan had forecast that if I'm strong and racing well I could begin to pass other 50 milers here. Yet no sooner had I started the climb than hordes of runners approached, like graceful gazelles effortlessly springing past. I cast a sideways glance and noticed the blue 50k bibs. Turns out the 50k had started a few hours after us, bypassing the first loops of our course and passing through Tennessee at 3.5 miles. So they were just

a few miles in, joining our course for several sections before we split.

Finally the summit came into focus and we tackled a lengthy, rooty, woodland descent to Stinson Beach, another reminder that if you aren't going straight up a hill on this course, you're heading down another. I found myself able to have more fun on this cool shady section than I'd expected, passing a few runners to reach Stinson at 27 miles. Stinson signposted the start of the steeper, more technical second half, with its gruelling climbs and deep, slippery wooden stairs set into hillsides. And so began the power hiking. I welcomed the change and worked hard to keep a strong pace, taking on as much fuel as I could handle.

The Marin section is a complex network of out and back trail and several loops, so we saw several aid stations several times. So there we were, 30 miles in and back at Cardiac for the second time, where I paused to search in my drop bag for appealing fuel. Leaving Cardiac I was looking forward to what sounded like

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a stunning 8 mile stretch through Muir Woods, apparently a great place to soak up the Marin headlands. The forest was cool and peaceful and I felt that rare fire of endurance for the next few miles. The sort where your energy levels feel limitless and you can pass runners again and again without emptying the tank. The fire was finite though, and by mile 34 the struggle returned for a two mile section of tarmac. Back at Muir Beach, mile 39, I stopped for a few seconds to refuel on Skratch labs energy drink and banana before pushing onwards. Here waited a stinger of a sharp climb, the one we'd cruised down as the sun rose against a backdrop of deep blue Pacific Ocean. It was a testing hike, with a few short metres of easier ground between consistently steep rollercoaster hills.

When we reached Tennessee Valley aid for the second time at mile 42 I was not in super shape, with a complaining IT band and all out muscle fatigue. I usually love the feeling of pushing on tired legs in the late stages of an ultra but couldn't seem to tap into that feeling no matter how hard I tried. My A goal of 9 to 9 hours 30 had slipped out of grasp but I was still moving ahead, determined to do my best with what I had. The final monster climb leaving Tennessee Valley is a smooth dirt track, and runners still able to run this are doing brilliantly.

Several short-lived stints were possible before the last aid station mercifully appeared, Alta, where I vowed to push hard for the final 6 miles across the Golden Gate Bridge and to the finish.

Views from the trail before the bridge was astounding. Winding single track with the towering curves of international orange framing the sky ahead, and San Francisco's Crissy Field and Golden Gate Park stretched beyond. Once on the 1.7 mile bridge we were silenced by the roar of traffic and gentle upwards curve of the pavement. This bridge is not flat. I ran hard until we reached the finish, crossed the line in 9 hours 42 minutes, 31st female and 150th overall, 10th in age category.

No finish line beer was consumed. Within half an hour I was curled on the dirt next to an aid table, unable to stand for light-headedness and nausea. I'm now sure this was postural hypotension, which I've only ever had after 100 mile races like the West Highland Way and Western States. It's symptomatic enough that my body was working on overtime for this race, perhaps influenced by jet lag and overall fatigue at this point in the year. It may have been connected to pushing beyond comfort for the final few flat miles, blood pressure up and heart working hard, before the sudden stop

and no cool down. I'll be hyper vigilant in future races, and keep moving after the finish line, which can slow the pooling of blood in the legs and lessen the big fat drop in blood pressure.

I've flown home with some lessons. To perform at my best late in the year I needed to allow more space for recovery after UTMB, before new training and preparation. After such positive gains in strength from long training weekends in the alps I'd pushed my boundaries enough to enjoy and excel at long, demanding climbs by the time UTMB weekend rolled around. I didn't have the time or the training ground to recover and excel again for TNF, let alone straight off a transatlantic flight!

Still, the North Face 50 is one incredible racing experience, from the beautiful varied terrain to first-class race support and the experience of running across the Golden Gate, not to mention the elite spotting, if that's your thing. At the sharp end, Tim Freriks decimated the field with a 6:02 finish, whilst European sky running prodigy Ida Nilsson led the ladies in 7:07. Full results available on the website.

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The Desert Ultra Namib Desert, Namibia



On November 20 thirty four runners lined up for the start of the 2017 edition of Beyond the Ultimate's Desert Ultra at the base of the Spitzkoppe Mountain in Namibia, and I was privileged to be among them. The Desert Ultra is a 5 day, 250km, self-supported ultramarathon across the Namib Desert. While this was not my first foray into multiday ultrarunning events, this was by far the harshest and most extreme environment I have ever run in. With temperatures soaring above 45 degrees Celsius, and an unrelenting sun beating down at all times, this race is a challenge for even the most seasoned of desert runners.

The five stages of the race vary in length from a short 22km to a 92km long day. As it turns out, getting an accurate distance in the desert is difficult, especially on the first day. We were told that stage 1 would be 47 km, however for the first 12 km there was no trail, we were simply told to head for the gap between two mountains we could see in the distance. Because the course had been measured in a straight line with GPS and running that direct straight line was impossible, the stage ended up being more like 51 or 52 km, depending on the route one took in that first leg before checkpoint 1.



The race route took us around the Brandeburg Mountain, mainly on sandy tracks used by the local people to get around the desert. At times the tracks were firm and rocky, and therefore easy to run on, and at other times they were soft and sandy, and the going was easier on the desert floor alongside the tracks. With most of the night camps being in sandy river beds, occasionally the route was along these dry riverbeds in deep, soft sand making the going extremely slow and difficult. The one thing that was ever present was the harsh sun beating down upon us. The only shade to be found was at the tented checkpoints, where fresh water and friendly faces awaited us each time.

As a mainly self-supported race, runners are expected to carry everything they need for the 5 days on their backs. The exceptions to it being totally self supported are that the race organizers provide water for drinking along the way, and hot water in camps for the preparation of food, though we did need to have a 2.5litres carrying capacity for water and were required to fill it entirely at each checkpoint. The other exception is that the organizers do provide tents for sleeping in at each night's camp.

One thing that sets this race apart from other multi-day races is that race director Kris King's main goal is to get as many racers across the finish line as it's possible. What this means is that if a racer has a bad day and is unable to complete a stage, if they are cleared by the fantastic people at Exile Medics, they will be allowed to continue on the next stage (albeit though they will not receive a medal). It also means that a short course option is offered on the long stage. For those runners unable for whatever reason to complete the full 92km, a 67km option was offered. The runners taking the short course option still receive a medal and have a separate results listing from those who do the full course. This, in addition to the small size of the race makes for a very personalized experience. Kris King and other members of the Beyond the Ultimate staff, plus the medics and local crew get to know each runner individually, thus ensuring as many successful finishes as possible.

The race takes place at the end of the dry season in Namibia, which means water is very scarce. The riverbeds are dry and there is very little in the way of green vegetation. Despite this, it is still possible to see some wildlife along the way. A highlight of the race took place on the morning of the short stage, when a large herd of desert adapted elephants came wandering past the camp along the dry riverbed. Ostriches were also sighted, and although we didn't actually see a lion, tracks were sighted directly beside the trail, so there are lions in the area for sure. We also were given a safety briefing on what to do if we saw rhino, which unfortunately we did not. This is not to say there is nothing to see along the way... many different lizards and birds, donkey farms, plus the ever changing face of the desert itself. Every day brought something new in the way of vegetation, terrain, colours, and rocks. This ancient desert is a geologist's dream, with purple amethyst crystals and translucent rose quartz there for the picking for someone with sharp eyes.

If you are thinking of a multi-day desert race, I highly recommend this one. The crew at Beyond the Ultimate does an excellent job of putting on a near seamless race. They have other races in their series as well...the Ice Ultra which takes place in northern Sweden each February, and the Jungle Ultra which takes place in the Amazon rainforest of Peru each June. Having also done both of these races, I can testify that the same unique, personal racing experience awaits you at these destinations as well. The company is also planning a Mountain Ultra edition of their races at an as yet undetermined location, planned for sometime in 2019.

Check out their website at <http://beyondtheultimate.co.uk> or find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Beyondtheultimate/>

(Note: I don't work for the company, I just love their races!)

<https://accidentalultrarunnerblog.wordpress.com/>

Carolin Botterill



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Photo Courtesy Of Grand To Grand Ultra

170 miles. 7 days. 6 stages. **Self-supported. Grand Canyon to Grand Staircase.**

The Grand to Grand Ultra. One of the most challenging foot races out there. There are many aspects that draw athletes from around the world to events like this. There is something so enticing that hooks us in to see just how far we can push ourselves mentally, physically, and emotionally in endurance events. We are drawn to the challenge, the thrill of the unknown, the adventure. We are drawn to the people. When we surround ourselves with like-minded, driven individuals, it is a powerful force. And I can tell you first hand, being surrounded by 119 of the most incredible, authentic, badass, competitors from around the world and

going through this experience together is something I will always cherish, as this event and the relationships developed are truly life-changing.

We are drawn to events like this in some of the most remote places in the world, with some of the most beautiful, treacherous, unforgiving terrain out there. We are drawn to the fact that we will be able to see this landscape up close and personal, in a way many others can only dream of. We are drawn to nature and the beauty in the intricate simplicity and the connectedness we feel with ourselves, our surroundings, and those around us. Nature reminds us that there are no mistakes, everything is just as

it should be, in perfect order, and harmony. We can get so caught up in the whirlwind of life, yet an event like this is so special because it forces you to slow down, to appreciate, to evaluate, and to be so present in each given moment. We reap the non monetary reward of an experience of a lifetime and unforgettable memories to add to life's journey.

Races such as this become symbolic and metaphoric to our lives- the highs the lows through peaks and valleys, the grief the pain, the joy and tribulation coming out on the other side. The risk, the sacrifice, embracing the unknown, not with fear, but rather excitement to propel us forward. It becomes a way of life. From the outside looking in, it may seem like all of us

adrenaline junkies are just chasing after the next race or adventure, which to a certain extent we are. However, it doesn't just affect us in tackling epic adventures, but it becomes instilled in us that you really can do anything that you set your mind to. We begin to understand the powerful mind/body connection, and that it is our minds that can create either the blockage or the pathway to success. We acknowledge that it isn't always going to be a smooth path, but hold tight to the overall vision and having the patience and persistence to see it through. Whether it be a race, a relationship, a new job, really anything that comes our way.

We can research and find many articles addressing the

tangible aspects of endurance events... training plans, nutrition plans, the perfect gear to buy, etc. But what about the element that is not so tangible? What does it take mentally to complete an event like this? We focus so much on training our bodies, but the mind is just as an important muscle to train as the body... and here is my experience...

Training for Mental Toughness and the Grand to Grand

“You have to make it fun and enjoyable in your own mind to get up and do the hard things.”

Don't overcomplicate it. Keep it simple: Just do it... I would wake up every day and say “feet on the ground, just do it, get out the door.” Take it day by day and not focus on the magnitude of what was ahead. The thought of back to back long runs with added weight seemed unbearable. The thought of

putting in 70- 85 mile training weeks seemed so far-fetched. I knew going into an event like this, it was going to push me to both physical and mental limits that I had not yet experienced. I focused not only on building a strong body through running and strength training and proper nutrition, but I also knew I had to focus on building a strong mind and there is no “training plan” for that. As hard as it was some days to get out the door, I visualized and imagined what was ahead and that energized me. I thought of the people I had yet to meet from around the world who were also out there training and the future relationships we would build from going through a unique experience like this together. I thought of the beautiful landscape we would experience up close and personal that is so remote and many can only dream of seeing it. I thought of the freedom of being cut off from civilization. I thought of the joy of crossing the finish line

each stage after enduring each day. I acknowledged that hard times were going to come and exist, but that they would pass, and there would be “joy in the morning” each new day I woke up. I thought of the charity I was raising funds and awareness for (The Alexis Miranda Foundation helping children with autism in Ghana). I thought of the people supporting me across the globe in Ghana and how grateful they were for me to be representing them in a global event like this and what an honor for me. I thought of my support system, friends and family who continuously support me in all of these crazy endeavors. I thought of the personal events in my own life that lead me to this moment.... Building blocks throughout the years and truly embracing the though... “if you believe it, you can achieve it.” Dreams to Reality, setting a goal, making a plan, executing, and making it happen! I thought about what a gift it

was to be able to train for and eventually participate in a one of a kind event like this. In my mind, I had already seen myself finishing the race.

In addition to the visualization, I knew I had to continue to push beyond perceived limits and do things differently than before when training for marathons. To break through some mental barriers, I would finish the training I set out to do for the day- thinking in my mind I was “done”... reach home... and then turn back around and go out for more miles... The internal dialogue went something like this- “It hurts... keep going... now dig deep and reach new levels.” Over the summer, I did a 50K mountain race peaking 4 mountain summits in Colorado. The race ended up being about 32 miles, and it took me over ten and a half hours to complete. When I finished, I didn't think I had anything left in the tank and that was my cue that it was time to re-lace my shoes and go out the door for more. I ended up reaching a total of 44 miles for the day, the longest I had ever run in one day and that was empowering for an average athlete like myself... The pace did not matter, it wasn't about the time on the watch. It was about keeping my fatigued legs moving, while simultaneously stretching what I thought was possible, continuing to push beyond those perceived limits, finding joy in the moment... and waking up and doing it all over again the next day...

I did quite a bit of journaling, collaging, and reflection throughout the training



Photo Courtesy Of Grand To Grand Ultra

Race Report

process, again focusing on the positive and inspirational quotes I came across along the way. I wrote down before I left “quitting is not an option” (unless medically unable to go on) because once you give yourself the option to quit, it is too easy to throw in the towel. It truly became a battle of mind over matter out there. And your mind will give up far before your body does. The easy thing to do would have been to quit. This fleeting thought crossed my mind multiple times. The heat, the weight of the pack, the blisters, the exhaustion and the unknown of what lies ahead will certainly grab a hold of your mind, and the negativity will spiral if you allow it. At times fleeting thoughts came of “what the hell am I doing this for? Why, Why, Why?” “This is unbearable and so much harder than I thought...this is for those super intense athletes and I am in over my head...this is crazy... I can’t... I’m want to stop” and IMMEDIATELY I had to shut those thoughts down, flip the mental switch, and replace them with “I can, I will, and what I “want” to do is different than what I am GOING TO DO. “ I am going to finish this, damn it!” Then either sing a song, let out a scream, a whole body shakeout, give an uneasy laugh or half ass smile, a high five or pat on the back if someone was near me or a simple one liner pick up... basically anything besides entertaining negative thoughts.

Funny thing because so many people think you have

all these big deep thoughts when you are out there BUT when you are in the thick of it, I tell people the thoughts are actually very simple - because you are so hyper focused on the task at hand and using every ounce of energy to just move your body forward and that is something I have never experienced and could not prepare myself for in training.

Before I left Kanab, Utah for the race, a man who completed the race last year shook my shoulders and said “whatever you do, don’t stop, don’t quit, don’t stop, don’t quit. You are going to want to give up so badly but you will regret it for the rest of your life.” Again, so simple, but when times got hard, I pictured Vince saying this to me and could actually bring back that feeling for an instant that I felt when he told me this of anxious anticipation and excitement and suddenly the pain I was currently feeling in my body ceased to exist for a moment (mind over matter).

The long stage (day 3) was where I started to fall apart. We had already logged 58 miles in two days, and we had a long haul ahead of us. At the first checkpoint, I saw four people that I had been with during the race drop out. The race director told us before our journey began that there was a 20% DNF rate each year, and I was



Photo Courtesy Of Grand To Grand Ultra

starting to see it unfold. We reached checkpoint 2 and four more people I was around dropped out. It was then that the magnitude of what was ahead hit me like a tidal wave, the tears started flowing and the self doubt crept in. The thought of being on my feet, in constant motion, completing 52 miles (75% of it loose sand, including a section with 30+ sand dunes) which could take upwards of 34 hours, suddenly totally overwhelmed me. My tears of uncertainty quickly turned to tears of joy, as the people surrounding me at that moment believed in me more than I believed in myself. There is such beauty in the camaraderie in this event, and I truly began to feel what it meant to be a part of the Grand to Grand family. These people were not going to let me fail. We were all in this together and the pain, agony, the urge to want to give up at any given moment that I was feeling, nearly everyone was feeling, and we needed to lean on each other to make it through. Leaving checkpoint

two, the tears streaming down my face were tears of gratitude for how thankful I was to be here in this moment, with these good hearted souls from around the world, united for a common purpose. People who were strangers just a few days ago, taking such a heartfelt interest in my well being and ultimate outcome in this race was so touching.

I would love to say that it was “smooth sailing” after checkpoint two, but we had only just begun. Another man, Joe, and I made a pact to stick together the entire long stage, no matter what. Hours upon hours of trudging through relentless loose sand. It felt as if it was never ending and we were going nowhere fast. I reminded myself I had to take this (literally) step by step rather than think about the magnitude of what was ahead. Bring it back to the basics. Keep it simple. I had to break it down into manageable chunks... Steps lead to flags, flags lead to checkpoints, checkpoints lead

to miles, miles lead to stages completed, and all that will ultimately cumulate to get me to the glorious finish line.

At one point during the long stage, it was freezing in the middle of the desert at an ungodly hour of the morning. We were the definition of sleep walking zombies. I have never been so exhausted and probably will never reach such a deep level of fatigue again. I did not know how I would carry on. My pack felt like it weighed 1,000 pounds, every inch of my body hurt, my feet were screaming in pain, my mind and body were shutting down. There was not a whole lot of conversation at this point, but a mutual understanding we were going to do whatever it takes, along with a whole lot of swearing from me. God bless Joe's soul for putting up with it all. All I could do was focus on Joe's feet and follow his footsteps and he began weaving in and out, as the exhaustion set in and we could not even walk in a straight line anymore. I wanted nothing more than to curl up in my sleeping bag right then and there and have someone come and pick me up. I was convinced the next checkpoint was NEVER coming and I WAS DONE. Then it hit me.... "The only thing in the ENTIRE world I have to worry about right now is putting one foot in front of the other... THAT'S IT!" We were cut off from the outside world for the entire week, and my only "job" was to keep moving. Inner thoughts "JUST DO IT!... flip the switch. You have no choice but to keep moving forward... otherwise, these coyotes howling in the distance are

coming for you.... and how lucky are you that you get this 'freedom' to only worry about ONE thing!" My cursing continued but internally, I kept repeating a very simple phrase.... "Forward. Forward. 1-2-3- forward" another simple phrase repeated over and over and over. "You can do this" "You're doing it" "You are turning a dream into reality" At each checkpoint there were also inspirational quotes on the board. Two that resonated with me were "You don't realize how strong you are until strong is the only choice you have" and "It is going to be hard, but hard is not impossible." I must have repeated these phrases thousands of times.

I had to remember why I started. I pulled strength from the charity, knowing I was a part of a much bigger story and purpose. There were people around the world following this journey I was on, and that in and of itself was humbling. I thought of a future trip to Ghana to meet these children and families. I thought of the struggles many families go through daily raising children with autism or various disabilities. On the flipside, I thought of the joy in the breakthroughs with these children and celebrating each new milestone that is achieved. I thought of the children I have worked with over the years with autism who have changed my life and taught me so much more than I could teach them. I thought of the families and children I had yet to meet in the years to come. I pulled strength recalling words of encouragement from loved

ones before the race and even during the race from printed emails that were delivered to camp each day. I was brought back to the visualization in my training. I pulled strength from seeing those previous visualizations turn to a reality. Those "strangers" that I had visualized were now friends by my side, and a group of six of us battled it out and completed the long stage hand in hand in 29 hours, 35 minutes, and 19 seconds. I have never been so happy to cross a finish line that day and the ultimate finish line at the end of the seven day journey. My total time spent on my feet throughout the week was 66 hours, 27 minutes, and 39 seconds. I learned so much about myself and others along the way. I firmly grasped the power that we possess with our thoughts and how those thoughts affect our actions. I learned when you want to give up, you have to dig a little deeper, and that we always have just a little bit more to give, and that we are "better together." The competitors of the 2017 Grand to Grand Ultra left our unique mark out there on the course. 119 of us started and 92 finished. We are forever united in the G2G experience that is so hard to explain to others, but we don't have to... we know, and we

will forever cherish that week spent together.

Bottom line: Follow your passion. Align your vision. Make a plan. Chase after it. Know no limits. Be flexible. It is going to be hard. It is going to hurt. Tough times don't last. It is only temporary. Endure the pain. Be comfortable being uncomfortable. Choose joy. Be present. Focus. Control Your Thoughts. Be patient. Trust the process. Dig deep. Reach new levels. Your mind will give up far before your body. What the mind believes, the body achieves. You can't do it alone. Unify. Take care of yourself and others. Hold on strong. If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. Cling to the positive and build momentum with those thoughts and actions. Maintain a light, joyful, grateful heart and attitude that radiates and is infectious to those around you. Imagine the possibilities. Empower. Bring out the bold and just keep moving... forward. Break on through to the other side. There are far greater things ahead than what we leave behind. The best is yet to come... onward.
www.g2gultra.com



Photo Courtesy Of Grand To Grand Ultra

Q & A WITH SARAH SAWYER

After making her multiday debut at Racing The Planets Sahara Race in 2014 and finishing fifth female, Sarah took on RTP's Ecuador event in 2015 winning the race. In 2016 she finished third in the Berlin 100 mile race in 18:39:44 and second place at the Atacama Crossing.

2017 started well for Sarah with second place at the Thames Path 100 in 21:09:10 and then winning the Essex 30 mile race in 4:50 followed by a great finish at the Mont Blanc event the CCC before Sarah's win at RTP's Patagonia stage race.



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Abichal Sherrington – Q. When did you start thinking about the Patagonia race?

I'd done 3 previous multi-day races, Jordan (2014), Ecuador (2015) and Atacama Desert (2016), and I basically use multi-day races as an excuse to travel to new places I want to visit! So when RTP announced that their 2017 race was going to be in Patagonia, a place that was top of my travel list, it took me all of about 0.2 seconds to sign up! I actually signed up in March 2016 but then I had various other races beforehand so I didn't really think about Patagonia again until the summer of 2017.

Q. When did you start your training? What was your training plan?

I didn't actually train specifically for Patagonia until September. However, I train all year round for different races, so I started my Patagonia training with a really strong base of endurance and mountain running as I'd been training for the CCC all summer. So it was just a case of building on this and making it specific for self-supported multi-day racing. The most important thing when training for a multi-day race (and the thing which I find to be the hardest) is running with your weighted rucksack - it's not natural to be running with a 7kg load on your back! So 3-4 times a week, I was running with my full pack, there were also easy runs without the pack for general aerobic fitness and one speedwork session a week. I think some people fall into the mistake of thinking that training for a multi-day race is just about churning out lots of long miles,

obviously you need that strong endurance, but if you're going into them with the next objective of 'competing' as opposed to 'completing', then speedwork is as important as it is for any ultra. The pace in Patagonia ended up pretty relentless at times as I was pushed hard, so I was very glad that speedwork had played an important part in training. I also did daily weighted rucksack hikes - this basically involved me filling my rucksack up with 7kg of chickpeas and hiking purposefully up and down Brighton's hills, but is a great way of building leg strength and getting me used to carrying the full pack in a low-impact way. I also made sure virtually all my runs were off-road to try and mimic the terrain I'd be running on in Patagonia, and whilst Patagonia wasn't anywhere nearly as hilly as the CCC (about 16,000 feet over the 155 miles), I made sure I was getting a minimum of 10,000 feet of elevation a week. My mileage was between 70-85 miles a week, so not crazily high, but it was all completely targeted to Patagonia.

Q. How has having a coach helped your running?

I started working with my new coach, Ian Sharman, at the end of June. I love having a coach as I always want to learn when it comes to my running and for me, the more knowledge you have about something; the more you will enjoy it. I know a couple of people he coaches and he came highly recommended. Also, a key thing for me was the breadth of his running experience - everything from speedy 5/10ks to a 2:30 marathon to the fastest trail 100 mile time in the US. I also like to mix up my running, so I'd never describe myself as an ultra runner as improving my shorter road PBs are of equal importance to me as racing well in ultras. I wanted a coach with the experience to coach me

over a whole range of distances and terrains and Ian more than fitted the bill. From the very start, he introduced some different aspects to my training and I'm absolutely delighted with my results over the last 6 months.

Q. The 3 months prior the CCC were great for you. What did you do that was different?

The 3 months prior to the CCC were some of the best 3 months of training I'd ever had. I am by no means a mountain runner; in fact I describe myself as a bit of a fairy who likes nice runnable trails like the South Downs! However, when I found out I'd got a place in the CCC, my mission was to make Sarah Sawyer the best she could be at the CCC. I don't believe in doing things half-heartedly to tick a box, if I'm going to do something, then I'm going to give it 110%. And that was my approach to CCC training. My husband and I spent as many weekends in Wales as we could, running up and down Pen y Fan and Snowdon, and even when I was training closer to home on the South Downs, all my runs were about hills and getting as much ascent as descent into my legs. I ran up and down one 0.5 milehill twenty times in one training run! However, although my training had a different slant with such an emphasis on trying to turn me into a mountain goat, my overall approach to training remained the same and I'll throw myself wholeheartedly into whatever I'm doing. After 6 months of hills and mountains my next two races couldn't be more different (Seville marathon and Crawley 24 hours) but I'm looking forward to getting stuck in a completely different type of training.



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Q. When you were injured, your non-running training seems to have taken a new direction; your perspective changed and the result was you were strengthened in new and different ways. What was the inspiration there?

Despite the second half of the running year ending on a high with CCC and Patagonia, I had a really rocky start to the year, as I became anaemic which basically wiped out my running for the first 4 months of the year. I cancelled most of my races, and the couple of races I did run were total flops. However, the hardest thing for me was not having to miss some races; it was just that running became such hard work. I love running and I'm the type of person that bounces out of bed at 5am and heads out for a run with a big smile on my face. So it was really hard for me to lose this love and enjoyment of running. There were several times when I had to cut a run short and I walked home in tears because I was struggling to run even 3 miles. However, I don't believe in self-pity, there are always umpteen people who are in a worse off position than you are, so I don't think there's any point feeling sorry for yourself, the best thing you can do is just get on with things the best you can. So, I ran when I could, I did a lot of cross-training at the gym as physically it wasn't as tiring as running, but the most important thing was dealing with it mentally and not beating myself up about my times being so much slower. Instead of dwelling on how bad my running was compared to where it had been before, I tried to focus on the improvements I was making as I tried to get back to fitness.

And whilst I obviously wish these first few months of the year hadn't happened, in a way I'm glad that they did, because one it's made me so grateful for every good run and race again, and also it showed me that if you hang on in through the tough times, the good times will come back.

Q. The 3 pieces of advice you give are popular mantras especially not giving up if you're not injured. That takes us into the realm of the mind and bringing forth our will and determination. Was this a natural process for you?

For me giving up just never enters my head in races, it's not even an option. I need to caveat that by saying I've never had a serious injury in a race, and if I did, then I wouldn't hesitate to DNF as our health is more important than any race. However, I could never bring myself to quit just because things had gotten a bit tough. I've had some absolute race shockers. I was running the SDW100 in 2016 and was continually violently sick from mile 65 onwards and couldn't keep anything down and I ended up death marching from mile 75 onwards. Similarly, in the TP100 this year I was really undertrained and my iron levels were still really low, and I massively struggled from the half way point and had absolutely nothing in me and this ended up a 40 mile death march to the end. On both occasions the easy option would have been to quit, I wasn't going to achieve my pre-race targets and in particular at the SDW100 at mile 70 I was just a few miles from home. However, for me, ultras are a bit like life, sometimes everything goes brilliantly but sometimes things go

a bit shit, so what does it say about me if I give up when things turn a bit shit?

Q. You used the word mantra, a very helpful and ancient technique for working with the mind. Have you or do you practice meditation?

I don't practice meditation, although I practice yoga 3 times a week, and I think that certainly helps the way I view life and running in general. One of my favourite mantras is 'accept what is, let go of what was, and have faith in what will be' and I try and apply that to running and life, which I think gives me a very positive outlook.

Q. You mention several times how happy you have been recently. Do you think there is a connection between your state of mind and your performances?

I absolutely think there's a correlation between happiness and performance. Apart from earlier this year when anaemia made my running such hard work, I always run with a big smile on my face, even if a race is going badly, a smile can hide a multitude of pain. Everything in life is better when you face it with a smile!



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Limestone Way Ultra

Helen Pickford

The Limestone Way Ultra is only in its second year but it ticks lots of boxes already.

The three big boxes:

Takes place on a Sunday - some of us work on Saturdays and 'most' ultras tend to be Saturdays. Tick.

It's a 'journey' rather than just a 'run route', point to point. I like 'journeys' rather than just 'run races'. Tick.

Its 'Timing awards' gives everyone a goal to aim for, gold, silver or bronze certificate based on time windows.

In addition it was 'fully marked' and had three fully stocked checkpoints - not particular tick box material for me but it would certainly attract those that are running scared of map/ compasses and those that like their picnics, (that's 99% of runners right?).

Oh and for me, it was local - spanning the gorgeous white Peak and dark Peak District landscapes.

Its smaller sister run the 'Ultra Half' started just over half way and contained 17 glorious miles of mud, hills and slippery limestone.

Immaculately organised, Ultra runners were shipped from the finish at Hope in the Dark Peak to Ashbourne in the White Peak passing through a multitude of shades of grey at 5am in the morning. Runners were to choose their start times within a 30 minute window, which meant you never really knew where you were in the field. The first 5 miles are on the very gentle gradients of the Tissington Trail. It then takes a turn off into some delightfully muddy fields. Although runners were given maps at the HQ start there was little need for map reading skills, most turnings or tricky stiles were carefully marked with brightly coloured arrows. Where the route left the traditional Limestone Way trail there were further signs to aid all runners. Three checkpoints en route, amply stocked with bananas, cakes, flapjacks and gels as well as water and juice. The

first one at the top of quite a steep hill in the little village of Bonsall some 14 miles in was a welcome sight.

The route between Bonsall and the next checkpoint at Monyash was a plethora of sloppy fields, muddy trails, charming but sometimes tricky ascent and descents, and pleasant forestry trails. The diversity of the route kept every runner on their toes.

The checkpoint at Monyash was even better stocked with a multitude of cakes, salty snacks, gels and bananas. It even had the 'chair of doom' - anyone for a sit down? No! Don't do it!

From Monyash to Peak Forest, the route took our footprints through some more delightfully grassful pathways. The navigation was immaculate, at every conceivable point there seemed to be a bright arrow hanging from either the stiles, lampposts or other obscure objects. Even the cows were behaving and looked less startled than the DOE (Duke of Edinburgh) groups who littered the trails with their immense gear.

Miller Dale was perhaps quite tricky - some 100 or so sticky steps and a further drop down a slippery limestone slope. From there onwards the Limestone Way Bridleway meandered up the valley with added slush to clad the trail shoes even further. This was all part of the fun of the playground of this Ultra event. Despite the 5500ft of climb it never felt that hilly and there were even some 'fun'

descents to play with including down one of the very few tarmac sections into Hay Dale. Just before the descent if you were lucky you would see a goat on the roadside tied up perhaps 'marshalling' the event to ensure everyone followed the correct route? The picturesque limestone out rocks embraced the valley of Hay Dale allowed for effortless running even 34 miles in.

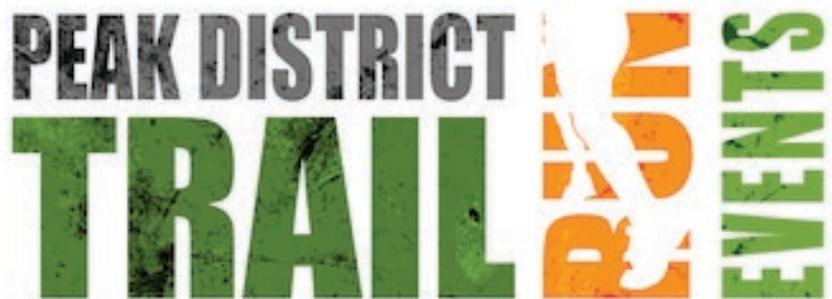
Peak Forest was again very well stocked with all the goodies needed to feed the energy for the final climb which gave way stunning views of the Dark Peak Skyline, with the notorious Kinder and Mam Tor shining in the distance.

The last 4 miles are all downhill or flat but not that fast, hold on tight for Cave Dale. Tricky at its best and risky at its worst, with streams of water pouring down the slippery limestone, tip toeing down the polished rock cautiously was the nature of the game.

The last two miles of flowing trails allow for speedier running, but were not without the muddle and bustle of the previous 41 miles, especially as the ultra half runners had churned up the course even further.

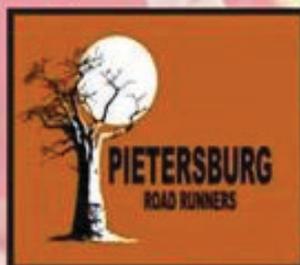
Tea a hot meal and cake awaited the exhausted runners at the end. The Limestone Way certainly contains the essential ingredients of a successful Ultramarathon.

Trailrunningpeaks.co.uk/results/limestone-way-2017/





Proudly Presented By



PIETERSBURG ROAD RUNNERS

100 Mile & 24 Hour Track Race

PRE-ENTRY ONLY

(Pre-Entry Closing date: 30 November 2017 @ 16:00)

100 MILE MEN - 11:56:56, Derek Kay, Durban, 07 Oct 1972

100 MILE WOMEN - 16:20:01, Cheryl Torr, Durban, 11 Oct 1986

24 HOUR MEN - 258,063km, Johan van der Merwe, Taipei, 08 Dec 2013

24 HOUR WOMEN - 190,400km, Hazel Moller, Pietermaritzburg, 20 Sep 2014



Date: Saturday 14 April 2018

Time: 09:00

**Venue: Peter Mokaba Stadium
Dorp Street, Polokwane**

(South: 23°55'28.56" & East: 29°27'52.48")

- The race will be held under IAAF, ASA and LIMA rules and is an IAU Bronze Label Accredited event.
- The race will be held on a 400 meter Synthetic track at the Peter Mokaba Stadium, Polokwane, Limpopo, South Africa.
- The laps completed by the athlete will be electronically recorded. Running direction will be alternated every six (6) hours.

LAST ANNUAL VOL STATE ROAD RACE 2016 (EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED)

Part 1

Karen Jackson



Photo courtesy Bill Schultz

That's the tag line for a popular reality show that runs during the summer. In fact, I think the Vol State might actually make a more interesting reality show. The disparate and often diametric personalities and accompanying sub-plots of this year's race created more entertainment

organically than any reality show ever thought of constructing through an audition process. Maybe many people weren't even aware of the possible story lines. (Just as an example, among runners from my own state, you had the two ultra-couples, Mega Couple Joe, who at start time was the course record holder, &

wife Kelley Fejes vs. Bo Millwood and I, perennial mid-packers in most standard distance races but pretty accomplished at multi-days.) I'm guessing the team waiting at the rock for the finishers was acutely aware and enjoyed this year's cast of characters and their antics as much as any year. I could write an entire race report just about that. It would have reality, comedy, tragedy, mystery, suspense and probably some horror, all in one. Oh, and maybe a little Disney-esque "happily ever after" thrown in the mix (more on that later). At any rate, when you come to Vol State, no matter how good your plan is, it probably doesn't "expect the unexpected." This was no truer for me any year like it was this year.

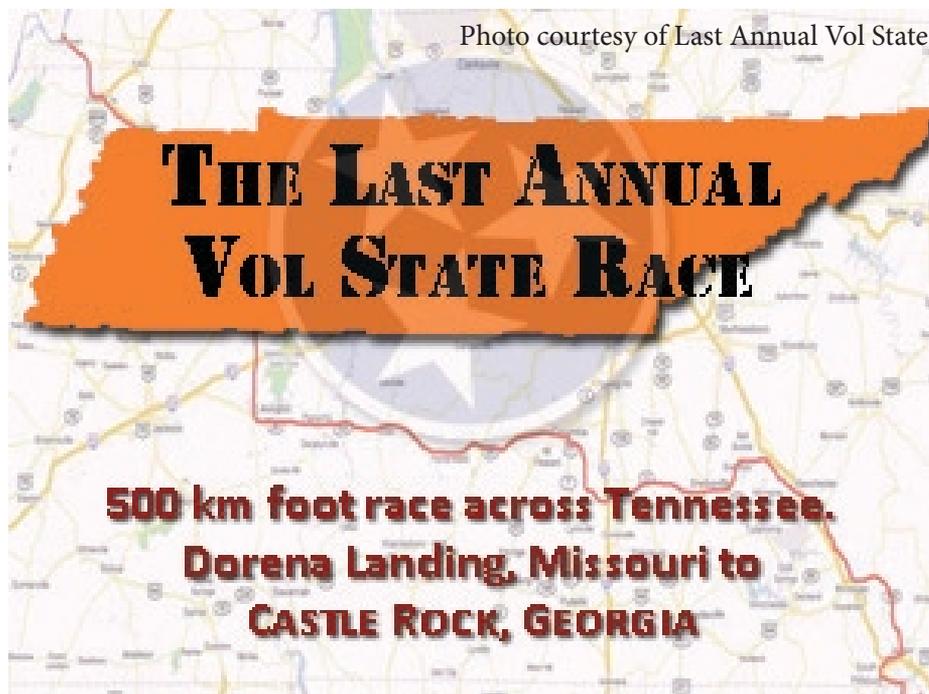
Yes, The Last Annual Vol State Road Race is a "race." Yes, people run it to see how fast they can complete it. They run to win. They run to break course records. Except for the elite few up front though, the rest of us are competing with the course, with ourselves, with the clock, usually to finish in some predetermined window of time we deem "successful." And some are there for the journey, just to finish and enjoy the views. Some know it will take 9 plus days to reach their destination. In a way I'm envious of that. I keep saying "next year we'll run it as a picture lap." (Whenever I run a loop course, I usually walk one lap with my phone or camera and take pictures, especially if it's a scenic course or I want to get pictures of people I've run with). But, as for this year, I still couldn't shake the competitive urge to race, to do better than I've ever done and yes, to "win."

LAVS has two categories, categories that were established and defined by the participants themselves and not by the race organizers; Crewed and Screwed. Crewed runners are runners that support someone or a team by providing aid

along the way. They don't need to run with packs, though some choose to do so. They can be picked up and driven to a hotel at the end of their day and brought back right where they stopped to pick up again. They have anything they need at a moment's notice. Solo runners, aptly known as "screwed," are solely responsible for themselves. They only have what they can or choose to carry and must acquire anything else along the way. Screwed runners may not accept any aid from a crewed runner, their crew or anyone associated with the race. So much as getting in an air-conditioned car is grounds for having your status as "screwed" changed to "crewed." Believe it or not, people are willing to sacrifice their screwed designation for five minutes of comfort at LAVS. That's how hot it gets.

The only exception to the "no aid" rule is the road angel. Road angels are people who are not associated with the race but who are aware of the race over the years and turn out to help. This is my third year running LAVS and every year the aid from road angels has increased. It includes people riding the course with coolers of cold drinks, fruit and assorted snacks to coolers on the side of the road labeled "runners, help yourselves" to full-on pop-up in the middle of nowhere aid tents, staffed by locals who've come to love the race and its participants. They follow the Facebook page and the check-ins to know who to expect, when and what you look like before you ever arrive.

This is my third attempt at Vol State as a screwed runner. My first attempt was my second multi-day and first solo multi-day. I went with a plan. I couldn't stick to it beyond the first day. I finished in 6 days, 5 hours and some change. At my second attempt, I thought I had it all figured out. I ran it solo before but partnered this time with my best friend, love of my life, partner-in-crime, Bo Millwood. It was our first attempt at running a race partnered with the intent of staying together start to finish. (Side-note: you want to find out if you get along with someone run 314 miles self-supported with them). We were going to cut out



all the b.s. from my previous year, like going a mile off course just to get good Mexican food and long hotel breaks. We slept outside except for two hotel stays (by contrast my previous year I stayed in a hotel every night). All this cutting out the b.s. got us 6 days and 10 hours. That's right, five hours SLOWER. Also in 2014 and 2015, I was the 2nd solo female to reach the rock. (Sue Scholl who holds the female course record overall was first in 2014 and my most aggressive plan never included finishing that fast.) In spite of my best planning, I hadn't come under six days and had been the bridesmaid two years in a row.

That would be the frame for our plan for 2016. Breaking six days would be first priority. And second would be competing at the end if that was in the cards. Many people come to Vol State thinking they can break five days, no problem. After crewing the race in 2013 and running in 2014 & 2015, I knew anything under six days really was a solid performance for most of us. Even seasoned "fast" runners get punched in the face by the Vol State eventually. I thought if we stuck to our plan and didn't get distracted by racing early, by that urge to put up a big number on day one, we would be in the mix at the

end. I said more than once, anybody who does better than us, if we stick to this plan, is just plain better, worked harder and deserves it. But looking around at the talented women on the ferry at the start, I wondered if I'd even be competing for top two. There was Kelley Fejes, of course. She's faster than me on any given day and she had the added bonus of running with her husband, Joe, who was the current course record holder. There was Julie Aistars, a former King of the Road, at Vol State, running for the fourth time. Wendy Murray is a talented runner who has beaten me more than once in standard distances and also has multi-day experience and the chops to lay down a sub-six, I'm certain. And Sandra Garrett, who I didn't really know much about but I was told she was "legit." Of course there were other women who might well have challenged for the front also because you always have to expect the unexpected here.

In a way I think this talented pool of women played into my being able to settle on sticking to the plan we had laid out from the beginning. It took the pressure off of the idea of racing and put the focus on getting our best finish.

Race Report



Photo courtesy Bill Schultz

I keep talking about our plan. I guess you're all ready to hear what this plan was. First of all, the previous two years, I scheduled myself to be back at work on Thursday (7 days after the start). It made me stick to a schedule, worst case scenario, I need to finish early enough Wednesday to get home & go to work Thursday. On the other hand, it was pressure looming constantly on the horizon, causing us last year to make some pretty bad decisions (like moving for 36 hours without a real break).

Step One: eliminate the added pressure of a self-imposed deadline. Bo & I both took off through the weekend and didn't

have to be at work until the following Monday. This allowed for the possibility of the race turning into a "picture lap" if everything went to hell in a hand basket. If everything went according to plan though, it gave us ample time to rest before heading home and the option of spending an extra day or two in Tennessee to cheer for people and hang out at the rock. Turns out, those extra couple of days we planned for came in handy.

Step two: Figure out what changed from 2014 to 2015 that resulted in a slower finish. First was the weather. Though both years were hot because, you know,

it's July in Tennessee, on asphalt. 2014 did have that little cold front near the end which helped in the final push up Sand Mountain. Since we couldn't change the weather, we decided to change when we ran to minimize the impact of the weather. Also, in 2014, like I mentioned before, I stayed in a hotel every single day. In 2015 we did not. We decided better rest, getting showers and real food would provide enough of a boost in speed that the time off course would trump the quick nap & go style from last year. Bo & I decided we would stop at Martin, only 29 miles into the race, on day one.

A note about partnering with someone: you both must accept that you will always be moving the pace of the weaker runner. In a multi-day this may change, regularly, like more than once a day. Bo & I found out that I was usually stronger at the beginning of our "day" and he took a while to warm up. But once he did, I was hard-pressed to keep up. We always go into any race with the agreement that if one person feels significantly better and feels the need to go, there will be no hard feelings. This race was no different. As long as we were both able to maintain our minimum acceptable moving speed though, neither was motivated to leave the relative safety and companionship provided by running together. We did begin to develop kind of a sling shot approach in order to keep moving faster. Whoever was moving faster at the time would go ahead with a predetermined spot to stop ahead. That person could already be getting the process under way of finding water, food, restrooms, checking into a hotel, etc., while the other person caught up. It cut down on some of the frustration for both of us, I believe, by allowing the person who felt good to get some miles at their own speed without making the slower person feel like they were a burden.

Back to the plan. It's hard to verbalize how much of a benefit not having that deadline was. Our whole demeanor was different from the beginning. It made us less anxious and less tempted to feel like we needed to put up a big number on the first day. Let me define a "big number." The first two years my plan

had me making it to Parker's Cross Road, about 80 miles, at the 24-hour mark. It sounds doable for someone who can make 100 in more or less 24 hours. The first two years I made my 24-hour check-in while having breakfast at Misty's All Star Café in Huntingdon, 65-67 miles, depending who you ask. So this year, the plan was not to even try for Parker's. Understanding that a 5 day 500k requires five 100k days in a row, 65 miles sounded like a good start for people who just wanted to break 6 days. Five days 23 hours and 59 minutes would be acceptable. 6:00:00, not so much. But then again, we knew possible things could happen along the way to change our definition of success, and they did. Once again, expect the unexpected.

Stopping at Martin, 29 miles in, and only about 6.5 hours after the 7:30 start, was a hard pill to swallow. Bo was worried that I would be tempted to push on. We'd had rain and cool temps to start with and were still moving well. Add that to the fact that it felt like there was a pack of hounds breathing down our necks, it was going to be hard to accept letting all those runners simply breeze by. We knew though, that by Dresden, Gleason & McKenzie, one-by-one, most would succumb to the need for rest. They would run on through the heat of the day, draining their bodies and minds and setting them on a schedule that would require either a huge break to get on nights, or have to keep running on through the hot Tennessee days.

Meanwhile we holed up in the air-conditioned comfort of the Econo Lodge in Martin, waiting for the fall of night. I'm sure upon seeing the 12-hour check-in sheet, many runners & spectators were left scratching their heads, our names near the bottom of the mileage list. In fact, when we ventured out of our hotel room around 8pm, Paul Heckert, who we figured to be the last runner behind us, passed us on the road. And we still had to eat. We sat down and ate at Taco Bell, right by the motel, finally hitting the road a few minutes before 9pm. We immediately started a run/walk rotation of running 12 minutes and walking 3 minutes. We were moving faster than we



Photo courtesy of Last Annual Vol State

ever would have without that break and quickly started catching people. Some we saw and spoke to. Others, we were aware had gone down for the day in towns we were now passing through. Bo & I have referred to Vol State as a chess match before. A giant, weeklong, game of leapfrog. We knew many of the people we caught & passed would pass us again. We banked on our running at night being more consistent while others would fade away, decreasing in mileage day by day, as the heat and complications that come with running in it took their toll. Stick to the plan. Racing can be done on the last day if there's anyone within reach.

Thursday night went well. We both moved well and at a speed that was comfortable for both of us. Some of the notable incidents from the first night included: my first fall of the race, on the sidewalk in Dresden, looking for the farmer's market instead of at the ground in the dark; going off course in Dresden, straight past the farmer's market, instead of turning just before it, and having to back track to make the turn; and being given a police escort through a section the officer said was infested with water moccasins. In spite of a nearly 8 hour total break in Martin, we ended up, you guessed it, at Misty's All Star Café in

Race Report



Photo courtesy of Last Annual Vol State

Huntingdon for breakfast at the 24 hour check-in. Henry Lupton joined us here as we caught up to Jeff Deaton & Byron Backer who were already finishing up breakfast. We were happy to have stuck to our plan. Now all we had to do was eat & knock out the 15 or so miles to Parker's Cross Road where we planned to go down again in the heat of the day. Now that the sun was up, we were well aware that this might be a five-hour trek over a pretty nasty and desolate stretch.

Part of our plan was to assume each section would be completed at our slowest acceptable speed, three miles per hour. This is a formula Bo & I came up with at our last multi-day, The Tarheel 367, in November/December. Anything below 3 mph would be deemed a death March or zombie walk and was time for a break. Any time we completed a section faster than 3 mph, it was just bonus. It either allowed us take a longer break

or a few extra miles before stopping, depending on the circumstances.

The trip to Parker's was exactly what we expected; it was Miserable, Hot and Desolate. We jumped back & forth with Byron, Jeff & Henry. We made it to the Knights Inn still pretty full from breakfast though. And we went through our routine. One acquires the hotel room, while the other hits the closest convenience store for a couple beers & some cold drinks when we woke up. We each drank a beer at every hotel stop so as to relax due to the flip-flopped day and night schedule we were on. We quickly unpacked everything from our packs to allow things to dry. Hug up the clothes we were wearing to dry, showered and got in bed as quickly as possible. We also used the available time to charge any electronic devices and maybe take a quick scan of our Facebook page, check messages and look at the check-ins and

see how people were doing. We rarely used our phones while moving except to check location or directions.

Per our routine, when we got up, we got moving as quick as possible but again, we took the time to sit & eat. This time it was Dairy Queen next to the hotel. We saw Julie & Jan for the first time since the start. They were hitting the road just as we sat down. We took our time and didn't let ourselves feel pressured to keep up with them. This was going to likely be a big night into the next day. It was one of the longest days we had planned from an hours moving standpoint. We would need all the fuel we could get. Depending on how things progressed, we would either stop in Linden (124 miles) or press on to Hohenwald (143 miles).

My sleep at the Knights Inn had not been restful. In spite of the frigid air conditioning in the room, I was sweating through the sheets until they

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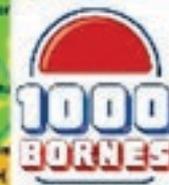
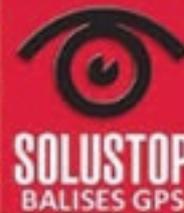
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Race Report

were soaked. Bo actually thought I had showered while he was asleep and got in bed wet. I'm not sure what accounted for this. It was the only day that it happened. Change of life? Effects of running in the heat earlier? Who knows? But later that night I struggled the most of any time in the race. We hit Lexington just as a storm moved through and could not find Bo a poncho (I had packed one myself) but did manage to get him a plastic bag in order to continue. We moved well again that night, noting all the places we had stopped last year needing to stretch or take a break but felt good enough to pass right by in the cool evening air on rested legs and full tummies. Once again we found ourselves with Henry and meeting Nathan Marti for the first time.

Somewhere between Darden & Parsons, my hips tightened up and no matter how I struggled to change my stride, I could not loosen them up. I couldn't muster more than a fast walk, granted my fast walk is pretty fast. Still, it was discouraging to think about the possibility of walking the rest of the race. I'd stop and do some long lunges trying to loosen them. I felt otherwise ok. I wasn't especially sleepy, even in the middle of the night. I knew Bo was having to hold back to stay with me. We were making acceptable progress though, so he didn't complain. It was too early at this point to think of abandoning one another or the plan. Coming into Parsons we did take advantage of a bench in front of a business. Bo set an alarm & we planned to rest about 15 minutes.

This was our first encounter with kids playing Pokémon Go, roaming the streets at 3:15am, chasing some virtual character. Their dogs woke the whole neighbourhood & ended our nap, as it also did for some other runners. We made our way on into town trying to decide what to do. We stopped again on another bench and ate some of our emergency snacks, ok, and Bo's emergency snacks, because I carried no food, only water. It looked as if we would pass through Parsons before anything opened for business. Just as we'd resigned ourselves to heading out of town, we saw lights turn on in the gas station across the way & decided that even though we'd stopped twice already, it was worth it for restrooms, coffee and hot food. A man who had stopped for gas on his way to a



Photo courtesy Bill Schultz

fishing tournament spoke to us. He had been one of our road angels last year & recognized us! While we ate we once again played the leapfrog game with Julie, Jan, Nathan and maybe some others. We didn't rush. Again, it was worth the stop. By the time we hit the other side of town, nearing the Tennessee River for the first time, I was moving well again and Bo seemed to be staying consistent. Last year we had made our 7:30 am check-in as we crossed the river. This year we would be well beyond before 7:30 Saturday (48 hours).

With the daylight, came renewed energy for both of us. Well, daylight & Starbucks cold Frappuccino drinks from the gas station on the river. Moving on towards Linden, we caught a group of 4 guys. I believe it was Nathan Marti, Jeff Deaton, ClarkAnnis and forgive me, I can't remember who the 4th person was. Bo and I were back on a run/walk rotation and actually felt a little bit like jerks when we passed them. They commented how well we were moving. I made a remark about how you have to take advantage when it comes because it can change in an instant. We carried on and were greeted by a road angel, as it was a group of four. Also along this stretch someone had set out lawn chairs and aid for runners. We were moving too well to risk a stop there, but it was tempting. We got pretty far ahead but coming into Linden, Jeff had broken from the group and caught us. We visited with him on the way into town while deciding what to do. I caught sight of an open post office and decided to duck in and mail the extra pair of Luna sandals I was carrying home to myself & Bo decided to do the same. I had determined the ones I was wearing would survive the distance. The extras didn't weigh much but they were just another item to deal with when I needed something from my pack.

In Linden we had to quickly decide, stop here? Or continue on, nearly another 20 miles to the hotel in Hohenwald? It had remained overcast ever since that storm back in Lexington. We thought if we were going to have to make daytime miles, we might not get a better day. Sooner or later we had to pay the piper. We decided to go



Photo courtesy of Last Annual Vol State

for it. The road splits at a Y, the junction of Highway 412 and Highway 100. There's a gas station in the Y. It closes pretty early, 6:30 or 7 pm "whenever the traffic stops," according to the man behind the counter. Last year we hit it after they closed and had to settle for water from an outside pump before heading to Hohenwald. This year we made it around lunchtime.

We ate, refilled our packs & prepared to make it on in to Hohenwald. This was also our first encounter with Nathan DeWall and Francesca Muccini, two crewed runners who were trying to stick together. I know them to be fast runners and was surprised to see anyone

of their caliber using a crew back here with us. Even though they hit the road ahead of us, we started catching them. They seemed to be taking regular breaks with their crews. We'd get close then pass while they were stopped. They'd run us back down and we'd repeat the process over and over again. In spite of the clearing clouds & rising temperature of the afternoon, Bo & I were still managing a fair amount of running. My power walk was in full effect and Bo would let me get ahead and then he'd run me down, pass me and run until he felt like walking again and wait for me to pass. We played this game all the way to Hohenwald.

I have only ever used John Price's book

Race Report



Photo by Karen Jackson

for directions. I can't speak to the mileage on the other available turn sheets. But if you're using John's book & this section seems long, it is. I have measured it twice and mapped it on various GPS applications. His book shows 7 miles from the gas station at the Y leaving Linden (127.5) to the first gas station in Hohenwald (134.5). It's every bit of 12. Even if you're packing enough water and food for 12 miles it can be a mental disaster, feeling like you aren't moving fast enough to cover seven miles as the two hour mark comes and goes and maybe the three, three and a half, even four hours when you finally see civilization. Knowing this really helped keep us from feeling defeated. Even

though it had become blazing hot, Bo & I were both in good spirits coming into Hohenwald. On our sling shot plan now, I made it to the gas station first and went in and bought us both slushies' to drink outside. We didn't need much but just a break from the heat for a few minutes to make the final stretch to the other side of town and the Embassy Inn. Patrick Doring was also at the gas station. The first time we saw him since the ferry. I asked if he was going to the hotel. "Why? What's at the hotel?" was his response. I was almost speechless. "Beds, air conditioning, showers," I said, trying to convince him there was no shame in taking advantage of that. He would not be swayed though. We had been told earlier

by Nathan D's wife that the Embassy was full but they were really nice & if we explained our circumstances, they might get us a room turned over quickly from another exiting runner. I called ahead & sure enough, they took care of us. We were so relieved. After making the decision to press to Hohenwald, not getting a room was not an option we wanted to consider.

Our settling down process repeated. Bo stopped for beer & other drinks. I went ahead to the room to check in. They even gave us a reduced rate because we were only staying a few hours, providing we turn our key in when we left so they could turn the room for possibly others behind us. We had beer, shower, sleep.

We did not cut our break short to compensate for the extra miles. In fact, we probably stayed longer. This being a small town, even the fast food joints close early. We managed to hit McDonald's leaving town about 45 minutes before closing. As we passed the Sonic, we saw Henry outside fixing his feet. We yelled & waved and indicated we were going to McDonald's. The service at McDonald's, while friendly enough, left something to be desired this close to closing time. The girl working the counter was aware of the race. "Y'all must be pacing yourselves, or just walking it all. Lots of people went through during the day." We thought we had moved up pretty well through the rankings so I'm not sure what her definition of "lots of people" was. We tried not to be offended by the suggestion that we were slow. The stop took a little longer than we would have liked but not too long. We ended up having to take our coffee with us though, as we'd already finished our food before they brought it to us. Even though it was night, it was our morning & we always start our morning with coffee. This year we were into Hohenwald, took about a 7-hour break and were leaving town earlier than we came in & out of town with no break the previous year. Since we stopped at McDonald's we were able to pass up the Wal-Mart and keep going out of town. Next stop: campground at Natchez Trace. Bo had an especially difficult time

getting started Saturday night. It was a straight shot to the campground so again, the sling shot method was in effect. It was a beautiful night and there was a wide shoulder with not much traffic. I caught up to Clark, who was walking with a gallon jug of water. I visited with him a bit and Bo caught up. I got to the campground first though. Disappointingly the restrooms were locked this year. They did have water and snacks for the runners in the picnic area, which we took advantage of and continued on. What follows the campground is a long stretch of road construction that has been going on at least as long as I've been coming to Vol State. This is the first year I got to experience it at night. Both having trudged that section in the heat of the day last year; Bo & I discussed how we hated it for any one stuck on that stretch in the day. I moved way over to the right, usually a no-no when running roads, but there were construction barrels on that side, blocking traffic from a wide & newly paved shoulder that I'm not sure many people took advantage of. After the road construction, there is a nice stretch of winding down hill. The shoulder nearly disappeared though. Luckily in the early hours of Sunday morning, there still wasn't much traffic to contend with. As I jogged, hiked, fast walked down, I caught a glimpse of a cooler at the end of a driveway. It was marked "for runners only" or something to that effect. It had a couple of small bottles of water that were still cold. I decided to turn my flashlight off and wait for Bo to make sure he took advantage of the water. I knew we would come through Hampshire with nothing open. Anytime we could find water and save what was in our packs was an advantage for later.

Sure enough, we came into Hampshire still in the dark. We did stop outside the market to get drinks from the Sun Drop vending machine, ubiquitous in Tennessee. Patrick was curled up on the side of the building asleep. I'm not sure he knew we were even there. By contrast, both of my previous attempts at Vol State, I had been in Hampshire for lunch at the market after they opened at 1pm on

Sunday. Last year, notably, it is the place where Andrea Stewart took the lead as first solo female and never relinquished it. After leaving Hampshire we ran into Nathan D and Francesca again. I started talking to Francesca and she & I began clicking off the miles pretty quickly. She was struggling with the idea of whether to continue without Nathan. He'd had some issues and wasn't moving as fast as possible. Up until now she had waited always. It wasn't long before I realized we'd gotten so far ahead of both Bo and Nathan that we couldn't see them. I let her go. It was the last I'd see of her. She absolutely killed it after that.

Continuing on, we made our 72-hour check-in outside of Columbia that morning. We found Henry outside the Quick Mart coming into town and stopped for some food as he was continuing on. All of us were headed for the Richland Inn on the other side of town. With the sunrise, it heated up quickly and Bo really wasn't feeling it. We were greeted by an 80-something year old gentleman who wanted our names and where we were from, as he wanted to follow our progress. We talked to him longer than we really wanted, but he was so nice and so interested in the race we didn't have the heart to just blow him off. Again we saw Henry who was having trouble locating the hotel on his GPS & I gave him some info and off we all went again. Rounding the square in Columbia, I saw an open restaurant, Puckett's. Sensing Bo was in need of a little pick me up, I thought this could do the trick. We could get a sit down dinner & a beer before going down at the hotel. Well, guess what? To everyone else in Tennessee, 10am is considered breakfast. The waitress wasn't even sure if they served beer that early. She had to go ask! We probably were the only ones having beer with our breakfast buffet but we did not care! As we walked in, an employee familiar with the race remarked, "wow! Y'all are fast!" The McDonald's incident melted into the past. Thank goodness we had our beer there. The convenience stores were not selling them that early when we hit the hotel. On the way to the hotel a man with a cane saw us

consulting our directions and asked where we were going. We told him the Richland Inn. "The Richland Inn? That's far. You need to call a cab to get there. It's probably a mile away."

Richland Inn, roughly 179 miles, Sunday, 11:30am. Repeat the usual break process & hit the road. As we got out and surveyed our meal options, we noticed the Shoney's next door & on the turn, had a buffet. We decided this was probably as fast as the gas station and better than potato wedges. Quick meal & down the road we go. As prior starts have gone, I was moving slightly better at first but Bo got into the groove quickly and we headed for the Bench of Despair at the Glendale Market. One of the highlights of the bench is seeing the names of those who've gotten there before you. The proprietors leave cold drinks for those who come during off hours and a marker for you to sign the bench. It gets repainted every year. Andrei Nana joined us for the first time at the bench. I was shocked again to see such an accomplished runner coming from behind. He had been running earlier with Team Fejes, who had dropped out by now due to their own battles with the Tennessee heat. I had assumed he was still up there somewhere. All three of us made the 7:30pm check-in Sunday night from the bench, took pictures and continued on.

Not much farther up the road from Glendale, the Nutt's have set up a bonafide aid station. Last year when we passed through, no one was out but we helped ourselves to Gatorade and fruit. This year, we ran up & Henry was sitting in a chair and the family was outside offering any and everything you could want or need. Take every possible drink. Food, if you can think of it for a run, they have it. Batteries, Chapstick, Bug spray. These people are amazing. It was hard to decide not to hang out. But the night was young & we needed to get some miles. Henry headed out a few minutes before us, be we weren't far behind.

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To be continued.

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Start (24 h): Sat 12 pm noon, Start (12 h): Sat 24 pm midnight
12-24h-basel@srichinmoyraces.ch , <https://ch.srichinmoyraces.org>
- 12 May Self-Transcendence 6+12 Hour+100 km Race Nitra** * *Sri Chinmoy Hero-Cup*
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Pod gastanmi 4F, 82107 Bratislava, Slovakia
Pranjal Milovnik, Tel +421-(0)905-64 83 15
Start (12 h+100 km): 7 am, Start (6 h): 13 pm
scmt@scmt.sk , <https://cs.srichinmoyraces.org>
- 26 May Self-Transcendence 6+12 Hour Race Prague** * *Sri Chinmoy Hero-Cup*
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Letovska 532, 19900 Praha-Letnany, Czech Republic
Tel +420-(0)603-177 566, Fax +420-(0)2-252 77 400
Start (12 h): 7 am; Start (6 h): 13 pm, AD: 1 May, late registration + 10 €
praha@srichinmoyraces.org , <https://cs.srichinmoyraces.org>
- 2 June Self-Transcendence 50 km+100 km Race Amsterdam**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, attn. Nitish Zuidema, H.N. Werkmanweg 17,
2031 BA Haarlem, Holland, Tel +31-(0)23-516 03 60, Fax +31-(0)23-516 03 61
Start (50 km): 12 pm noon, Start (100 km): 9 am, AD: 27 May, late registration + 5 €
amsterdam@srichinmoyraces.org , <https://nl.srichinmoyraces.org>
- 2-3 June Self-Transcendence 12+24 Hour Race Chisinau** Moldavian National Championships
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Ion Frunza, Florilor 30/1a, ap. 28, MD-2068, Chisinau, Moldavia
Tel +373-(0)692 55 274, AD: 27 May, Start (24 h): Sat 21 pm, Start (12 h.): Sun 9 am
moldova@srichinmoyraces.org , <https://md.srichinmoyraces.org>
- 17 June Sri Chinmoy 50+100 km Race Paris**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, 9-13 rue Srebrenica, Apt. 48, 75020 Paris, France
Tel +33-(0)1-43 71 15 19, Mobil +33-(0)630-19 16 39
Start (50 km): 12 pm noon; Start (100 km): 7 am, AD: 10 June, late registration + 5 €
contact@srichinmoycourses.fr , <https://srichinmoycourses.fr/>
- 29.-31. 6. Self-Transcendence 12+24+48 Hour Race Vinnitsa, Ukraine**
Ukrainian National Championships in the 48 Hour Race
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Igor Mudrik, Tel +380-67-811 80 23, People Friendship Park
Start (48 h): Fri 12 pm noon, Start (24 h): Sat 12 pm noon, Start (12 h): Sat 24 pm midnight
info@races.org.ua , <http://races.org.ua>



**LIVERPOOL
HOPE
UNIVERSITY**
Est. 1844

Run for Hope: 6-hour Individual and Team Race Friday 27th April 2018

Run for Hope is a 6 hour run organised by the Department of Social Work, Care & Justice at Liverpool Hope University. It is being held to raise money for The Whitechapel homelessness project and in aid of supporting a group of young Palestinians to attend the Big Hope 2 conference in June 2018.

The run is open to both serious athletes and those who wish to support the good causes above and have some fun and exercise. The race will take place on the University campus and will be run under UKA laws. We invite everyone to either take part in the run or support/sponsor those who enter.



Entry details

Individual entrants must be a minimum of 20 years of age on the day of the event. Teams of six will run/walk in relays: 1 hour per team member.

Entry fee £30 individual / £60 per team.

We would also expect each team to raise a minimum sponsorship of £150.

The race will begin at 10am and finish at 4pm on Friday 27th April, with registration from 9am. There will be prizes for top individual runners and teams.

Entry forms and further details available from Alistair Jewell jewella@hope.ac.uk
Or enter online @

<http://store.hope.ac.uk/product-catalogue/big-hope-2>

Please note there is no handling fee for entering through the Hope Store.

Upcoming Races

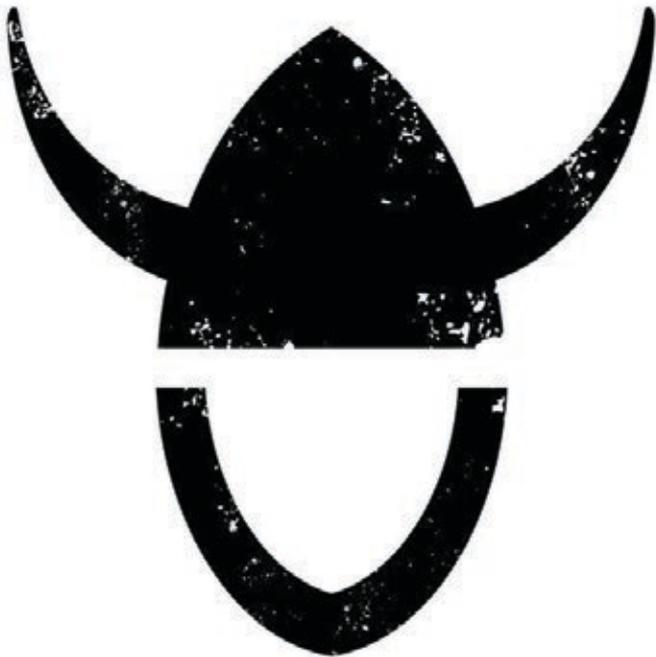
- 20.-22. 7. Self-Transcendence 24+48 Hour Race Kladno**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Letovska 532, 19900 Praha-Letnany, Czech Republic
Tel +420-(0)603-177 566, Fax +420-(0)2-252 77 400, AD: 1 July, late registration + 10 €
Start (48 h): Fri 12 pm noon, Start (24 h): Sat 12 pm noon
praha@srichinmoyraces.org , <https://cs.srichinmoyraces.org>
- 5 Aug. Self-Transcendence 6 Hour Race Kharkov, Ukraine**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Gennady Ozerov, Tel +380-50-16 85 118, Artem Park, Kharkov, Ukraine, Start: Sun 10 am, info@races.org.ua , <https://races.org.ua>
- 8 Sept. Self-Transcendence 6 Hour Race Kosice**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Hlavna 79, 04001 Kosice, Slovakia
Peter Hlac, Tel +421-(0)905-783 363, Start: Sat 10 am, AD: 14. 8., late registration + 10 €
info@behkosice.sk , <https://cs.srichinmoyraces.org/beh-6h-kosice>
- 15 Sept. Sri Chinmoy 6 Hour Race Munich** * *Sri Chinmoy Hero-Cup*
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, An der Würm 28, 81247 Munich
Tel +49-(0)89-12 02 15 13, Fax +49-(0)89-12 02 15 29, Start: 10 am
munich@srichinmoyraces.org , <https://de.srichinmoyraces.org> , AD: 14. 9., late reg. + 10 €
- 22.-23. 9. Self-Transcendence 6+12+24- Hour Race Belgrade**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Hilendarska 24, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia
Tel +381 (0)11 245 20 25, Mobile +381 (0)63 113 97 27
Start (24 h.): Sat 12 pm noon, Start (6 h): Sat 12 pm noon, Start (12 h): Sat 21 pm
scmt.rs@srichinmoyraces.org , <http://rs.srichinmoyraces.org/>
- 22.-23. 9. Self-Transcendence 24 Hour Track Race London**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Shankara Smith, Run and Become, 4a Eccleston Street, London SW1W 9LN, UK, Tel +44-(0)207-222 13 14, Mobile +44-(0)77 34 29 80 24, AD: 15. July
Start: 12 pm noon, races@runandbecome.com , <https://uk.srichinmoyraces.org/london-24>
- 22.-23. 9. Self-Transcendence 6+12+24 Hour Race Kiev, Ukraine**
Ukrainian National Championships in the 12+24 Hour Race
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, Valentyn Ionov, Tel +380-97-42 72 395, Expo Center
Start (24 h.): Sat 12 pm noon, Start (12 h): Sat 24 pm midnight, Start (6 h): Sat 12 pm noon
info@races.org.ua , <http://races.org.ua>
- 6 Oct. Self-Transcendence 6 Hour Race Amsterdam**
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, attn. Nitish Zuidema, H.N. Werkmanweg 17
2031 BA Haarlem, Holland, Start: 10 am, AD: 1 October, late registration + 5 €
Tel +31-(0)23-516 03 60, Fax +31-(0)23-516 03 61
amsterdam@srichinmoyraces.org , <https://nl.srichinmoyraces.org>
- 20.-21. 10. Sri Chinmoy Trophy 6+24 Hour Race Cesano Boscone** * *Sri Chinmoy Hero-Cup*
Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, c/o Runner Store, Viale Legioni Romane 59
20147 Milano, Italy, Tel/Fax +39-02-48 37 66 05
Start (6 h): Sat 12 pm noon, Start (24 h): Sat 12 pm noon
info@corsessrichinmoy.it , <https://it.srichinmoyraces.org>

* The *Sri Chinmoy Hero-Cup* combines six 6-hour races staged by the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team in Europe. The races are in relative short travel distances. The female and male Cup winners will be crowned ***Sri Chinmoy 6-hour Hero-Cup Champions*** at the final 6 Hour Race Cesano Boscone in Milano, Italy on 20 October. More information: <https://de.srichinmoyraces.org/hero-cup>

Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team Germany e.V. Member of the Sports Association Rheinessen
Axel Gressenich, An der Würm 28, 81247 München, Germany
Tel +49-89-12 02 15-13, Mobile +49-151-50 98 64 83, Fax +49-89-12 02 15-29



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**VIKING
WAY ULTRA**
WINTER EDITION

26/27th Jan 2019

MONTANE CHEVIOT GOAT ULTRA

by John Parkin



Photo: Paul Wildman Mitchell – Wildman Media

It's 5pm on Friday and I've just announced the winning name of the soft toy dog, at the school Christmas Fayre where I'm Head teacher, as Merry. Children and adults are drifting off after a pretty intense couple of hours of fundraising and fun. I check my watch; I've a 3 hour 12 minute drive (according to Google if I don't stop) to Ingram ahead of me. My tea, a cheese ploughman's sandwich, a bag of crisps and a Yorkie bar that I bought this morning, is in the van door and I'll arrive just in time to register and then get some sleep before a 5:30 race start if I can set off soon. I wonder how merry I'll be feeling this

time tomorrow.

Registration is quiet and I get my tracker, number, t-shirt and Montane Chief to wear. Slumbering in the corner next to the desk is The Czech Machine himself, Pavel Paloncy, twice winner of the Spine and Pennine Way record attempt challenger last year. One of the reasons I've been so excited to start this race is the chance to toe the line with some people who I have found inspirational but never met. I shookshake his hand and we chat about running, he's a nice guy and a lot bigger in real life than I expected!

Then it's back to the van and go to sleep, alarm set for 4am when I wake and have some

porridge and get ready for what lies ahead. I'm not as well prepared as I would have liked physically, I'll put that out there now. A few weeks ago I split my shin to the bone and have had 3 weeks off from any training while it heals. This has felt like a lifetime and had initially dampened my enthusiasm for lining up against the best at my best. I've decided to set off with the leaders and tough it out – I will fade badly but how many chances do you get to run with your heroes? Jim Mann is also here and he is a friend of a friend although I don't know him and it's all a bit surreal. I've completed the big 3 UK fell rounds and Jim holds the winter records and the record

for the number of Munros summited in 24 hours among other achievements. Like I said it's a bit surreal.

Adding to the feeling is my film crew. I've been followed and filmed in preparation for the race over the last few weeks after answering a call to talk about why I started running and Montane even sent me some kit to wear to help out. I shake their hands and give a quick interview on the start. I'm nervous and Kerr asks me how long I think it will take? 12-14 hours I say but this is a real guess. My fastest Fellsman is 13:25 so that's a ball park figure, although I'm not as fit as I was then and this is in winter. And

Photo: Paul Wildman Mitchell – Wildman Media



I don't know the way. And I'll be starting and finishing in the dark. And likely on my own.

We count down and set off and here I am running with the eventual winners Jim Mann and Andy Berry and third placed Pavel and it feels ok. The pace is fine, I even run up a few hills and I'm coasting along. Then the pace picks up ever so slightly and we thin out in a line over rough ground that becomes increasingly snow covered. I haven't reccied this part of the course but I have my map and Garmin Etrex so I'm not concerned and crack on at what I consider to be a reasonable speed. The tracks I'm following break off but the course goes straight on. My first real choice of the day and I follow the course (does

this mean technically I'm in first place, I wonder chuckling to myself?). This means I am breaking new ground and boy is that hard work! I can't imagine how hard this must be to do for the whole race and later when I speak to Tim who has dropped back from the lead group he confirms that they were taking it in turns and he had to do a turn as well.

I'm going ok, well in fact, and inside the top 10 which is punching above my weight for a race like this. This is when I make an error of judgement and I only have myself to blame. Coming down off a hill I assume I am about to enter the bag drop checkpoint so finish my water and have a bit to eat. I've coasted down the hill with a spring in my step but as I turn the corner

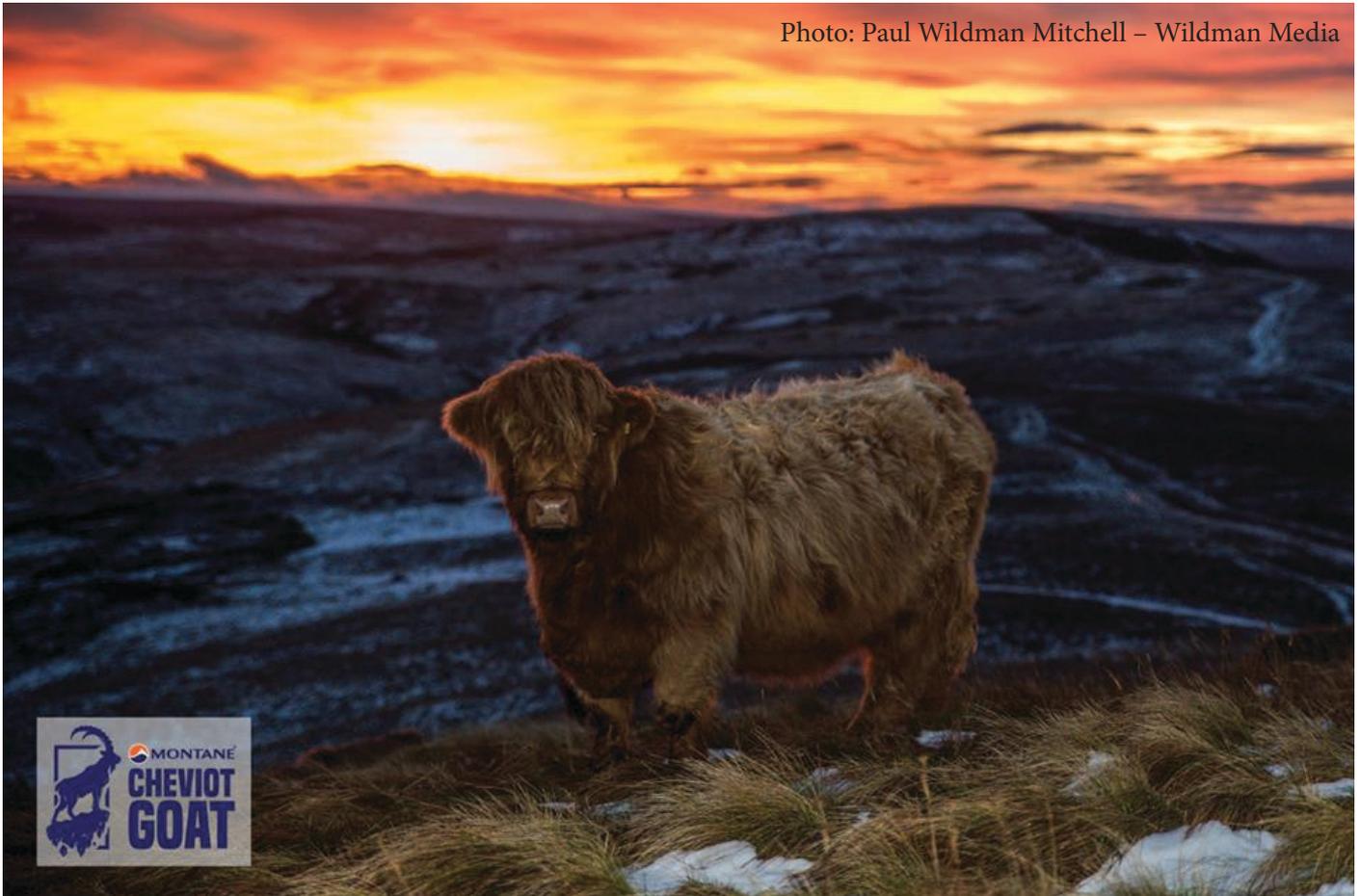
I realise I've forgotten about a hill, and it's not a small one. My head goes and my legs follow. Several people pass me on the way up and down to the actual bag drop checkpoint and I have a word with myself when I'm there to not stop for too long. At least when I get out I'll be on the hills again – it really is stunning.

Except that straight out of the checkpoint it's on to a road for what seems like forever. Roger runs past me like I'm standing still saying at least it's a chance to get the speed up and the overall time down. I watch him run off then have a little walk before starting to run again and turn the corner, eventually, to see a beautiful hill climbing in to the distance. There's a skier half way up building a ramp

so he can practice his jumps. He's hoping he can get enough speed up now the snow is starting to lose the crispness of the early morning and he gives encouragement to me as I trudge off. At the end of this section we join the Pennine Way – I know this bit – and then I remember and my heart sinks, I know this bit! This is a race for people with big hearts and strong minds – not only for the runners but also the support crew who seem to be at every turn and offering water and encouragement even if in the middle of nowhere. The section from Windy Gyle to The Cheviot is beyond hard.

Usually in a race at some point I'll have a little cry about something and then pull myself together. I'm too cold and tired to even feel

Photo: Paul Wildman Mitchell – Wildman Media



sorry for myself today. I can't even muster the energy to give myself a talking to so I plod on and on with three people overtaking me before the summit. First Ben runs past and he's looking and sounding pretty chipper, then Carol who motors on at the out and back and shares a cheery word on her way to victory in the women's race. Big hearts and strong minds.

I know I'm in 13th place now and that I'll not catch up ahead but I can defend 13th because there's a real gap on the summit. Ben mentioned it was the next section he really wasn't looking forward to and that fills me with dread – I don't know this bit either! Tracks appear and disappear seemingly at will, darkness falls with a sunset that still

lingers in my memory now. There's no photos from me for the day, I had all on to motivate myself to eat and drink – at one point I was having a battle of wills with myself to see how long I really could go without food because it was so much effort to sort out. Not a day for the faint hearted.

Snow covered iced bogs are the order of the day for the next hour and in the dark this is relentless. On and on and on. Choose a direction and trust the ice? Follow the tracks that disappear? Make your own path? Every second a deliberate choice has to be made and it is as mentally exhausting as physical. I get it wrong only once and my left leg disappears – I'm wearing shin pads since my fall so no

damage done and I'm pleased they work and are comfy to run in.

I've been out for 12 hours at this point and I have to say the Montane Spine jacket and Cordillera tights have performed well. When I

reccied in them to be sure they were right for the job I was impressed – more so today. I usually have to wear a pair of shorts over tights to keep my vital areas warm, not so today with a windproof layer part of the upper section of the tights. And the Spine



jacket, I can't even describe how good that has been over 'just' a base layer, merino layer and my club vest. My nickname is Arctic John due to the amount of layers I wear but today I haven't even had to think about being cold or wet once, I might have to change my name!

On the top of the final climb I see Jacob from Montane who I meet for the first time having exchanged emails previously. I shake his hand and he enthuses positivity. It's just what I need as I put a burst of (relative) speed on to widen the gap to a torchlight that has been closing in on me. The end is so near and yet so far, across the final field I can see a car so I head towards it in my excitement but then realise I'm going the wrong way, and calm down and follow my map. The end. Flags, cheers, a medal and the satisfaction of a job well done and even within my estimated time frame finishing the 55 miles and 9,500 feet of climb in 13 hours 33. I sit and chat with to Carol, Pavel and Jim. That sentence alone is worth the day! I'm not really able to say much mind you and wolf down a plate of food and a couple of cans before I can contribute anything intelligible. Pavel needs a lift to the airport and I'm driving past on my way home so I offer a lift. I get changed and set off for home, stopping on the way for a short sleep so I arrive safely in time for Sally to go to work and I can take Louis to football.

As I left I shook the organisers hand and thanked him. "It's not a race but an expedition," I said and I think that sums it up. I spent the



Photo: Paul Wildman Mitchell – Wildman Media

whole day pitting myself against the course, most of it seen for the first time today and in full on winter ground conditions. My feet were hurting, then they stopped hurting because I couldn't feel them because of the cold, then they started hurting again as they thawed out. My legs hurt, I didn't eat or drink enough all day. My mind hurt from the concentration and

my spirit was broken down and built up again many times throughout the day.

Just as I get in the van I catch a look at my reflection in the windows and I'm grinning, the thought flickers across my mind that I will be better prepared next year and now I also know the route. It's a funny thing running events like these, for me it's

a microcosm of what life is about, a true test of who you are. It's not about where you come relative to others it's about whether you got the best out of yourself and challenged your perceptions of what is possible.

Montane Cheviot Goat Winter Ultra I salute you.



Photo: Paul Wildman Mitchell – Wildman Media

MULTIDAY AND ULTRAMARATHON CALENDAR 2018

Date	Country	3 letter country code	Distance	UT MB Q	Type	Course Type	Name	Location
1/4/2018	ITA		167/57/21/8 km		U	Trail	La Corsa della Bora	
1/5/2018	NED		201/100 km		M,U	Trail	Duinhopper 201	Hoek van Holland
6/01/2018	AUS	NSW	12 hour		U		Narrabeen All Nighter	Narrabeen
1/12/2018	SWE		151 km		S	Trail	Sandsjöbacka Ultra Triple	Billdal
1/13/2018	TWN		66/50/42/ 20/10/5 km		U	Road	Yangmingshan Ultra-Marathon	Zhishan Junior High School
1/13/2018	USA	CA	24/12/6 hours		U	Track	One Day in Auburn	101 Stadium Way, Auburn,
1/13/2018	USA	GA	24/12 hour		U	Trail	24 Hours Of Hostility	Dahlonega
1/13/2018	USA	CA	24/12 hour		U	Track	One Day In Auburn	Auburn
1/13/2018	GBR	ENG	108 miles		U	Trail	Spine Challenger	Edale
1/14/2018	AUS	VIC	56km		U	Mixed Surface	Two Bays Trail Run	Cnr Permien St and Pt Nepean Rd Dromana
1/19/2018	TPE		134 km		S	Trail	6th Super Race Stage Ultra-Marathon	Kenting National Park
1/20/2018	USA	FL	24/12/6 hours		U	Track	Fast Track 24	Palatka
1/20/2018	USA	CA	24/12 hour		U	Track	Celtic Winter Classic	Bakersfield
1/20/2018	USA	FL	24/12/6 hour		U	Track	Fasttrack 24 Hr	Palatka
1/20/2018	AUS		100/50 km		U	Road	Australia Day Ultra 100 Km	Australind Foreshore
1/25/2018	GRC		1000 miles		M	Road	Athens International Ultramarathon Festival	Ellinikon
1/25/2018	GRC		6 day		M	Road	Athens International Ultramarathon Festival	Ellinikon
1/25/2018	USA	FL	200/150/100/50 Miles & 100/50 Km		M, U	Trail	Skydive Ultra	Clewiston
1/26/2018	GRC		48 hours		M	Road	Athens International Ultramarathon Festival	Ellinikon
1/27/2018	GRC		24 hours		M	Road	Athens International Ultramarathon Festival	Ellinikon
27/01/2018	JPN		240 km		S	Road	Okinawa Hontō 3 days stage race (TOFR)	Naha
1/27/2018	USA	TN	24/12 hour		U	Trail	Black Toe Run	Watertown
27/01/2018	AUS	SA	100/50 km		U	Track	SA 100km Track Championships	Adelaide
1/31/2018	GRC		1000 km		M	Road	Athens International Ultramarathon Festival	Ellinikon
2/1/2018	CAN	YT	100/300 miles		M	Trail	Yukon Arctic Ultra	Whitehorse
2/2/2018	CHA		180/90/45 km		M,U	Trail	4ème Le TREG Ennedi Trail	Ennedi

Upcoming Races

2/2/2018	USA	NC	24/12/6 hour		U	Mixed surface	Black Mountain Monster	Black Mountain
2/3/2018	GBR	ENG	66 miles		M	Trail	Pilgrim Challenge	Farnham, Surrey
2/3/2018	USA	FL	118 miles		U	Trail	LOST	Okeechobee, 34974
2/3/2018	USA	SC	24/12/6 hours		U	Trail	Hallucination	Charleston
03/02/2018	AUS	TAS	82 km		U	Trail	Cradle Mountain	Cradle Mtn
2/9/2018	TWN		48/24/12/6 hours		M,U	Road	6th Taipei International 6/12/24/48 Hour Marathon Festival	Xin-shan Park, Taipei
2/9/2018	GBR	ENG	100 miles	4	U	Trail	The Arc of Attrition	Coverack
10/02/2018	CRC		236/155 km		S	Mixed surface	The Coastal Challenge	San Jose
2/10/2018	USA	UT	24/12/6 hour		U	Trail	Running Up For Air	Salt Lake City
2/15/2018			276 km		S		3rd Tour New Year Ultramarathon Stage Race	Gongguan Township
2/16/2018	AUS	ACT	48/24/12/6 hour 100 km		M,U	Track	CBR 48 hour	Masterman St, Bruce
2/16/2018	FIN		300/150/66 km		M,U	Mixed Surface	Rovaniemi Artic Winter Races	Rovaniem
2/16/2018	USA	NV	48/24/12/6 hours/100m		U	Road	Jackpot Ultra Running Festival	Las Vegas
2/16/2018	NZL		155 km		U	Trail	23rd Great Lake Taupo	Tongariro
2/17/2018	FIN		300/150/66 Km		M,U	Trail	Rovaniemi Artic Winter	Rovaniemi
2/17/2018	USA	GA	24/12/6 hours		U	Trail	Farmdaze 24	Brooklet
2/20/2018	PHL		281 km		S	Trail	Phillipines Run	Saud
2/21/2018	ESP		265 km		M	Trail	Transgrancanaria 360°	Maspalomas
2/22/2018	USA	TX	72/48/24/12/6 hours		U	Road	Jackalope Jam	Carbide Park, Hitchcock
2/24/2018	USA	CA	24/12/6 hour		U	Track	Riverbank One Day	Riverbank High School Track, 95367
2/24/2018	USA	TN	24 hour		U	Road	Run4water	Lebanon
2/25/2018	NZL		7 days		S	Trail	Alps 2 Ocean Trail	Omaru
3/2/2018	BEL		250 km		M	Trail	Legends Trail race	Achouffe
3/2/2018	USA	CA	24/12/ hours		U	Trail	San Diego Pirate's Cove 12/24 Hr Run/Walk	Lake Cuyamaca
02/03/2018	RSA	EC	100 m /76/44 km		U	Trail	South African Addo Elephant Trail Run	Addo Elephant National Park
3/3/2018	JPN		230k/200k/113k/91k		M	Road	8th Little Edo Oedo	Kawagoe, Saitama Pref
03/03/2018	AUS	WA	100/50 km		U	Trail	Lark Hill Dusk to Dawn Ultra	Port Kennedy
3/10/2018	SWE		6/3/1 hours		U	Road	Skövde	Skövde Boulognerskogen
3/16/2018	USA	AUS	48/24/12/6 hour		M,U	Track	Canberra 48 Hour (Cbr.48hr)	Canberra
3/16/2018	MYS		250/200/100/50 km		M,U	Road	TITI 250km Road Ultra Marathon	Hulu Langat Batu 14
3/16/2018	USA	MO	24/12 hour		U	Road	Howard Aslinger	Cape Girardeau
16/03/2018	USA		150 km 3 days		S	Trail	3 Days of Syllamo	Blanchard Springs Campground

Upcoming Races

16/03/2018	AUS	WA	48/24/12/6 hour		M,U		Canberra 48hr Race	Canberra
3/17/2018	USA	TN	24/12/6 hour		U	Track	Tennessee 6/12/24 Track Ultra	Clarksville
3/17/2018	USA	WA	24 hours		U	Road	Pacific Rim One Day	Longview
3/17/2018	USA	OK	24/12/6 hour		U	Track	Lhotse 24 Hour Endurance Challenge	Owasso
3/17/2018	GER		24 hour		U	Road	1. Heilbronner 24-Stundenlauf	Heilbronn am Neckar
3/22/2018	USA	ID	48/24/12/6 hour		M,U	Trail	Pulse Endurance Runs (Aka "Pickled Feet")	Eagle
3/23/2018	GBR	ENG	860 miles		S	Road	JOGLE	John O'Groats
3/23/2018	GER		128 km		S	Trail	Pfälzer Berglandtrail	Wolfstein/Pfalz
3/24/2018	USA	NC	24/12 hour		U	Mixed surface	Lost Runners 24	Reidsville
24/03/2018	USA	GA	24/12/6 hour		U	Road	Operation Endurance	Ft Benning
3/24/2018	ROU		24 hour		U	Track	Record Run 24H	Bucuresti
24/03/2018	AUS	VIC	50 km		U	Trail	Duncan's Run	Gippsland
25/03/2018	AUS	NSW	45 km		U	Trail	The Bailey Centre Great Ocean Run	Coffs Harbour
30/03/2018	GBR	NI	173 km		U	Road	Belfast2Dublin Ultra	Crown Saloon Bar BT2 7BA
3/31/2018	USA	CA	50K Ultra		U	Trail	VALENCIA Trail Race	91390
31/03/2018	RSA	WC	56 km		U	Road	Old Mutual Two Oceans	3 Main Rd,Newlands 7700, Cape Town
3/31/2018	FRA		24/12/6 hours		U	Road	Les 24/12/6 heures de Saint Fons	Saint Fons
4/2/2018	FJI		220 km		S	Mixed Surface	Lost Island Ultra	Nadi
4/5/2018	USA	CA	72/48/24 100/50 miles		M,U	Trail	Beyond Limits Ultra	Mountain Center
4/6/2018	GER		239/170 km		M	Trail	Jurasteig Nonstop Ultratrail	Dietfurt a.d. Altmühl
06/04/2018	AUS	VIC	135 miles		U	Trail	Down Under 135	Bacchus Marsh
07/04/2018	USA	GA	24/12/6 hour		U	Trail	Maria's Spring Fling	Kennesaw
4/7/2018	FRA		24 hours		U	Road	24 heures de L'Isère à Tullins	Tullins
4/7/2018	GBR	ENG	24/12/6 hours		U	Track	Crawley A.I.M. Charity 6,12 & 24 hour race	Crawley K2 Leisure Center
4/8/2018	GER		275/167 km		S	Trail	Die Bergischen 5	Solingen
4/8/2018	MOR		250 km		S	Desert	Marathon des Sables	Ouarzazate
12/04/2018	MOR		75 km 5 days		S	Desert	Ecotrail de Ouarzazate	Ouarzazate
13/04/2018	TWN		246/165/110 km		M,U	Road	Run Across Taiwan	Taichung Harbor
14/04/2018	RSA	LP	24 hour/100 miles		U	Track	Pietersburg Road Runners 100 mile & 24 Hour Track Race	Pietersburg Stadium, Polokwane
15/04/2018	AUS	ACT	50 km		U	Road	The Australian Running Festival (Canberra 50km)	Canberra
4/17/2018	USA	NY	10 days		M	Road	Sri Chinmoy Ten Day Race	Flushing Meadows Corona Park,Queens,NY
4/20/2018	GER		216/108 km		U	Trail	Hexenstieg/Hexenritt/Hexentanz Ultras	Osterode am Harz

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Upcoming Races

20/04/2018	ESP		125 km 3 days		S	Trail	Costa Brava Stage Run	Blanes
21/04/2018	USA	NY	6 days		M	Road	Sri Chinmoy Six Day Race	Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens, NY
4/21/2018	JPN		250 km		M	Trail	Sakura Michi International Nature Run	Nagoya
21/04/2018	RSA	MP	50/21 km		U	Road	Loskop Ultra Marathon	Middleburg
21/04/2018	USA	CO	24 hours		U	Road	24 Hours Of Palmer Lake	Monument
21/04/2018	USA	GA	24/12/6 hour		U	Trail	Dfl 24 Hour Ultra	Savannah
4/21/2018	ITA		24 hours		U	Road	10^ 24 ore di Torino	Turin
4/21/2018	GER		24/12/6 hours		U	Road	24 Stunden von Oberberg	Wiehl
21/04/2018	TUN		110 km 8 days		S	Desert	100 Km de Sahara	Ksar Ghilane
21/04/2018	AUS	VIC	24/12/6 hour		U		Coburg 24 Hour Carnival	Coburg (Melbourne)
21/04/2018	USA	NY	6 days		M	Road	Sri Chinmoy Six Day Race	Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens, NY
21/04/2018	USA	NY	6 days		M	Road	Sri Chinmoy Six Day Race	Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens, NY
4/22/2018	GER		340km/5stages		S		Berlin - Hamburg 2018	Berlin
22/04/2018	AUS	TAS	50 km		U	Beach	Convicts & Wenches	Greens Beach
4/26/2018	ITA		200 km/5 days			Trail	Sardinia Extreme Track	Oliena
4/27/2018	JPN		170/92 km		U	Trail	Ultra-Trail Mt. Fuji	Fuji
4/28/2018	ITA		285 km		M	Road	UltraMilano-Sanremo	Milano
4/28/2018	SGP		200 km		M	Road	Monster Ultra 200	MacRitchie Reservoir.
4/28/2018	USA	HI	303/211/102		M	Road	Epicman Ultra Endurance Run	Kailua-Kona
4/28/2018	FRA		174km/2stages		S	Trail	Le Radicatrail	Lillebonne
28/04/2018	RSA	MP	100 km		U	Trail	Recce Mission	Fort Highland Recce Base
28/04/2018	USA	VA	24 hours		U	Road	Virginia Run For Cancer	Hampton
4/28/2018	USA	DC	50m/50k/42.2 km +		U,R	Trail	The North Face Endurance Challenge - Washington DC	20165
4/29/2018	NAM		250km/6stages		S	Desert	Sahara Race Namibia	Windhoek
29/04/2018	RSA	EC	108/49 km		U	Trail	Outeniqua Quest	Beervlei
5/3/2018	HUN		6 Day		M	Road	EMU 6 Day Race	Balatonfüred
5/14/2018	USA	NJ	6 day/72/48/24/12/6 hours		M	Road	NJ Trail Series 3 Days At The Fair	Augusta NJ
5/25/2018	BTN		6 days		S	Trail	6th GlobalLimits Bhutan - The Last Secret -	Thimphu
6/17/2018	USA		6 days		S	Trail	Desert RATS Kokopelli 150	Kokopelli Trail
7/6/2018	USA	CO	6 Day/72/48 /24/12/6 hour		M,U	Trail	Silverton 1000	Silverton
8/19/2018	FRA		6 days/72 hours		M	Road	6 Days of France	Privas
9/10/2018	ITA		6 day/48/12/6 Hrs, 100 M/Km		M	Mixed Surface	Italia Ultramarathon Festival	Policoro (MT) 75010
9/21/2018	ESP		6 day stage race		S	Road	Way of Legends	Burgos
9/22/2018	RSA		48/24/12 +		M,U	Road	100 Capital Classic	Pietermaritzburg
12/28/2018	USA	AZ	6 Days,24/48/72 hrs		M	Mixed Surface	Across The Years	Camelbak Ranch
7/11/2021	EST		4,600 km		S	Road	Trans-Europe	Tallinn

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6 days	25/1 - 31/1
24 hr	27/1 - 28/1
48 hr	26/1 - 28/1
1000 miles*	25/1 - 10/2
1000 K*	31/1 - 10/2

Venue: Old Ellinikon International Airport

Race Directors: Costas Baxevanis, Costas Samios, John Chortis

Organized By The Association Of Greek Dayrunners And
The Athletic Cultural Association "Apollon" Of Western Attica

Website: www.dayrunners.gr

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Saturday 13 October 2018

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07.10.17

Mongolia Sunrise to Sunset: 20 years of adventure and charity

*The 20th anniversary edition of the spectacular **Mongolia Sunrise to Sunset** (MS2S) 42km and 100km ultra trail run takes place in the week from July 28th to August 4th, 2018. Race day is on August 1st.*

- **Registrations are now open!** Sign up on www.ms2s.org and join the MS2S in one of the world's most remote mountain areas. Reduced package prices until end of February!

In 1999, a small crowd of adventure seeking runners met at the shores of beautiful Lake Hovsgol in Northern Mongolia for the first ever Mongolia Sunrise to Sunset 100km trail run. The

organizers did not only pioneer ultra-trail running in Asia, but also established a charity organization to support the local population and the unique environment. "When we discovered this remote, untouched and stunningly beautiful area, we decided to put our efforts into preserving it. Over the years, we funded a litter control project, bought garbage trucks, hired park rangers, supported the local culture including shamans, and raised awareness with nation-wide TV spots", explains Nicolas Musy, one of the founders and race director of MS2S. All the proceeds from Mongolia Sunrise to Sunset are used to finance these charity

initiatives.

Two decades later, runners from all over the world will come together to take part in the 20th edition of the race, taking place on August 1st, 2018. MS2S is more than just a one-day marathon and ultra-marathon race: It offers a full week of adventure and exploration (July 28th to August 4th). Participants get in touch with the nomadic culture of the population and learn about Mongolian traditions, beliefs, and way of life. In the days before and after the race, they experience the unique nature by kayaking, horseback riding, mountain biking or fishing. MS2S opens new perspectives.

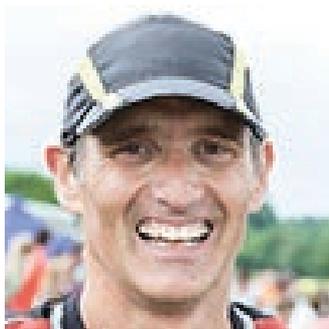




Arctic John Parkin, the head teacher at Oxenhope Primary School, won the inaugural Deadwater 235 mile stage race from Scotland to Wales in 2017. Visit John's blog for his interesting race reports at: showboater-daily100words.blogspot.co.uk



Alison L'Heureux originally from Massachusetts and now living in New York, is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst providing early intervention services for children with autism. Alison has completed the Boston Marathon six times.



He ran his first marathon in 2012 and first ultra distance in 2014. Since then Stephen has completed over 80 marathons and ultras, recording many of them on video for his Film My Run YouTube channel.



Carolin Botterill
Mother of three Carolin lives in Calgary, Alberta and has clocked up 1500 km in race miles since 2012. Specialising in stage races, she took part in the Ice Ultra, a 5-day multi-stage race covering 230km above the Arctic Circle in Swedish Lapland. Trying to live life to the fullest, she maintains a blog at: Accidentalultrarunnerblog.wordpress.com/



Karen Jackson from South Carolina is a Mom, Ultra runner, Pizza Expert, 49ers Faithful, small business owner and an Ambassador for Luna Sandals. Karen runs a lot of races and has run in four Vol-States. She maintains a blog at: Smilingsandalrunner.com

Stephen Cousins
Stephen Cousins has been running since his school days but only began racing in 2010.



Caroline McKay
Lives in Edinburgh and in 2016 came fourth in the West Highland Way and later that year became the first woman to run the West Highland Way in winter in 25:35. Caroline helps raise money for the African education charity she works for, Link Community Development. Features in the Warm Up column for Trail Running magazine Feb/Mar 2018. Visit Caroline's website: Chaptersinrunning.blogspot.co.uk



Elisabet Barnes
Elisabet Barnes is a Swedish ultrarunner currently living in the UK. Specializing in multi-stage races, Elisabet won the Marathon des Sables in 2015, winning each stage of the race and again won the event in 2017. She works as a coach, a motivational speaker and co-owns myRaceKit, a specialist shop for multi-stage racing equipment. Checkout her blog at: Elisabetbarnes.com



Sarah Sawyer
Sarah from Brighton, runs everything from Parkruns to multiday stage races. She won RTP Ecuador in 2015, was second lady at RTP Atacama Crossing in 2018 and won RTP Patagonia in 2017. She is an Ambassador for Likeys and later this Spring will take on the Crawley 24 hour race. Read her adventures on her blog - Shetravelssheruns.wordpress.com.



Helen Pickford is a swim teacher and sports massage therapist living in Sheffield, UK where she joined Sheffield Running Club after getting into off-road running. Has an impressive record on the DUV with 10 podium finishes out of 13 events and 2 fourth place finishes to her credit. Has run Druids and the Ring o Fire. Blog Runallthemiles.co.uk & Ultrativesportsmassage.co.uk

Sri Chinmoy Ten and Six Day Races

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