

# Ultrarunning World

ROAD, TRACK & TRAIL MULTIDAY & ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS  
ISSUE 21







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One theme that has come to the fore for me, in this issue, is the concept of the journey and how it's fuelled by our own individual determination. Most of the race reports are about longer events and that is where the stories begin. I will never forget being regaled by Don Winkley in my first 10 day race and without doubt Don helped me considerably through the dark night with his stories of what he had seen, done and heard about.

Tales of the unexpected, the surprising, the hilarious, the unforeseen and the meeting of other journeys. Sharon Gayter's article recounts her passage from the source of the River Severn to the Sea (Bristol Channel), some 217 miles courtesy of the Severn Challenge. A training run in one sense and in another, a tracing, a pilgrimage from a beginning to an end and it is a story of balance borne of experience. It is these experiences that teach us about deeper more subtle aspects of life. Slower rhythms that we don't get the opportunity to explore in our day to day lives. Parts of the route of the West Highland Way are remote areas with little sign of civilisation and offer periods of solitude and a chance to connect with the environment in a way that our modern urban life doesn't allow. From the Cambrian Mountains and the Brecon Beacons in Wales, the Scottish Highlands to the Dolomites in Italy, the Serra del Montsec in

Catalonia and the Pyrenees in Spain, we share these stories that in some sense are ancient, archetypal expressions of the human spirit in its quest for wisdom, understanding joy and satisfaction.

Emerging from this immersion in nature we bring forth the indomitable Spirit we all possess. Joanna Biala's account of her experience at the EMU 6 day race in Hungary unveils a journey that began long before she reached the start line beside the Lake at Balatonfüred. Heather Strowd went to New Jersey for the 3 Days At The Fair to extend her horizons in the 72 hour race as did Stephen West, trying on the 60 hour Enduroman in the Hampshire New Forest.

Gary Dudney explores the explosion of 100 mile races in the US, a distance that is more American than any other.

More tracing, this time through our industrial heritage and the Grand Union Canal with Ali Young and Alex Whearity, winners of the 145 mile race from Birmingham to London and for Alex, the Canal Slam. Sarah Cameron's MiLKil, a non-stop 500 km race across France is another tale that exemplifies persistence and self-mastery that rides on hope and aspiration, bringing change and transformation. As Sri Chinmoy once wrote:

The determination in your heroic effort  
Will permeate your mind and heart  
Even after your success or failure  
Is long forgotten.

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- Front cover: Martin Bacher on  
the Dolomites Ultra Trail 2019.  
Photo courtesy Martin Bacher  
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- Back cover: Julia Fatton,  
women's winner at the 2019  
Ultr'Ardèche. Photo by Laurent  
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### Ultrarunning World Magazine

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Send inquiries, original and previously unpublished race reports/articles to the above email address. Last dates for article submissions: January 1st, March 1st and April 1st. Adverts received will go in the next available issue. Please include a 40-50 word bio, some accompanying photos (if you have any) and a headshot for the contributors page. More details on request. Thank you. Copyright © Ultrarunning World 2007-2019. All Rights Reserved.



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# SUNDAY 3rd MAY 2020



# CONQUER

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# 70% ENTRIES SOLD



# 2019 IAU 100 km Asia and Oceania Championships

Athletes from Asia & Oceania participated in the **IAU 100 km Championships** for the region which took place in Aqaba, Jordan. There were five Federations taking part in the event (Australia, India, Japan, Jordan and Lebanon). It was double gold for Japan (Hideaki Yamauchi 7:11:42 & Mai Fujisawa 8:20:44).

## Individual provisional results

### Women

1. Mai Fujisawa (JPN) 8:20:44
2. Amelia Griffith (AUS) 8:57:02
3. Konoka Azumi (JPN) 9:03:22

### Men

1. Hideaki Yamauchi (JPN) 7:11:42
2. Brendan Davies (AUS) 7:49:16
3. Deepak Vasudev Bandbe (IND) 8:04:16

It's been announced that the **2021 IAU 50 km World Championships** will take place in Taipei, Taiwan. The event will take place on October 31st, 2021 and will be organized by the Chinese Taipei Association of Ultrarunners (CTAU).

Not many ultras are abandoned but the recent **No Finish Line**, the 8 day race in Monaco was halted after a 39 year



old Frenchwoman was swept off a pedestrian dyke by a wave and suffered a broken pelvis in atrocious weather conditions. Runners unable to get home were provided accommodation in a large tent overnight.

Daniele Juan Alimonti (804 km) and Mimi Chevillon

(682 km) were declared the winners after the event was stopped with some 21 hours to go. ■

**Kim Collison** (pictured, top right) set a new winter Bob Graham Round record of 15:47, cutting it by over 2½ hours. The record was previously held by Jim Mann at 18:18. ■

**New York Ultra Running** (NYUR) Grand Prix Series for 2019 has come to a close and deserves a special mention as the series is run in conjunction with: Greater Long Island Running Club, Taconic Road Runners, Richmond Rockets,



Happily Running and the Broadway Ultra Society. The 10 race series was won by Byron Lane and Jodi Kartes-Heino who also won the Ted Corbitt 100 (briefly mentioned in Recent Races). ■



The year has seen some great performances with Courtney Dauwalter winning UTMB by over an hour at her first attempt and just before Camille Herron set a new Women's world record by 8 miles at the World 24 hour Championships at Albi in France, **Maggie Guterl** became the first woman to win **Big's Backyard Ultra** with 60 laps (250 miles) beating Will Hayward (HKG) 59 laps and Dave Proctor (Pictured above, photo by IRunForUltra) (CAN) 52 laps and Katie Wright (NZL) 50 laps, winner of the Riverhead Backyard Ultra in Australia earlier this year with 30 laps – first woman to win a BYU. ■

## Big's Backyard Ultra Results.

This is the hottest ultrarunning format with Laz seemingly the most famous RD in the world overseeing a variety of events testing the best runners in the sport including the 500km Vol-State road race and the Barkley Marathons and he even made the front cover of the iconic American Sports Illustrated magazine recently. After the 2018 Lazcon, he's currently planning a walk crossing the US north to south. [Vacationwithoutacar.com](http://Vacationwithoutacar.com). ■

# New Media



## Last Women Standing: The Barkley Marathons 2019

In 2019, inov-8 ambassador and breast cancer survivor Nicky Spinks attempted to become the first woman to complete The Barkley Marathons – renowned as the world's toughest ultra-running race. Only 15 men have completed the distance in the time limit since the race's inception in 1986. This film tells the story of Nicky, and her fellow female runners, as they battle treacherous terrain, wild weather and the twisted mind of Barkley Marathons organiser, Lazarus Lake.



## The Inspirational Runner Podcast #87

**Maggie Guterl Big Dog's Back Yard Ultra Champion 250 miles Last One Standing & Still Not Out.**

Podbean have another awesome episode out with Maggie Guterl from Pennsylvania who was the first female winner of the Big Dog's Backyard Ultra.

The race consists of a 4.1666 mile loop on the property of Lazarus Lake in Bell Buckle Tennessee, the runners have 60 minutes to complete the loop and get back on the start line ready to go again before they are timed out, sounds easy right, well how do you think you would feel after 60 loops of non-stop racing because that's what it took Maggie to become the world champion of Big's Backyard Ultra - 2½ days, 60 hours, 250 miles frame it what ever way you want, it was an outstanding performance and one that has

really catapulted Maggie into the lime light in the world of ultrarunning. Not that Maggie is new to the sport having run her first 24 hour in 2011, making it to the National 24 hour Team in 2015 coming fourth woman in Torino with 235 km. She has taken part in the Barkley twice and Western States twice.

## Ultrarunning History Podcast and Stories – Davy Crockett



Davy Crockett's Ultrarunning History podcast has been documenting the exploits and the culture of ultrarunning from the 1800's talking about events that shaped the sport as we know it today. He has recently published a 4 part series on people who have attempted or claimed they were attempting a journey on foot around the world.

## 38: Part 1 – Around the World on Foot (1875-1895)



## Lost Dogs & Englishmen by Dave MacFarlane

Ultra Runners Robbie Britton and Dan Lawson take on the 650km Jordan Trail, starting in the north of the country near the Syrian border and ending at the Red Sea. In an attempt to break the record for the fastest known time, they journey through some of the most ancient landscapes of the Middle East. The film is supported by Odlo and the Jordan Tourism Board.



# Recent Races



### 07.09.2019 USA 100 m/km Ted Corbitt 100

The Ted Corbitt 100 was a tribute to Ted Corbitt's 100th birthday. Organised by the Broadway Ultra Society (BUS), the course was a 1.453-mile flat loop on smooth asphalt pedestrian paths circling a stream and a lake in Hendrickson Park in Valley Stream, Long Island. First run in 1994 at Juniper Valley Park in Queens, NY and won by Roy Pirrung, the event was part of the [New York Ultra Running \(NYUR\) Grand Prix Series](#) for 2019.

The 100 mile race was won by Byron Lane in 21:33:08 and first woman was Jodi Kartes-Heino in 24:48:51. The 100km event was won by Aaron Heath in 9:08:50 and first woman was Juliette Ciaccia in 12:34:50. [Results on UltraSignUp](#)

### 07.09.2019 GBR 100 m Centurion Track 100

The inaugural Centurion Track 100 is an elite level event, designed for runners to compete in the best conditions with a focus on record setting. Time limit is 17 hours. Taking place at the Julie Rose Stadium in Ashford on a 400m track the event is organised by Centurion Running, known for their trail and off-road races held in the South-East of England.

Winners were Thomas Payn in 12:25:30 and Debbie Martin-Consani in 16:21:03. 6 starters. [Race report](#). [Results](#).

### 13.9.2019 USA 205m Tahoe 200

The Tahoe 200, circumnavigates the largest alpine lake in North America, Lake Tahoe mostly on the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT) and comes in at 205 miles. The event starts at Homewood CA and also features 100/25 km options and was first held in 2014. Organised by Candice Burt and her Destination Trail company the Tahoe 200 is part of the 200 Slam, which also includes Bigfoot 200 and Moab 240.

The race was won by Michael John McKnight in 50:56:55 and first woman was Angela Meyer in 64:02:00. Website: [www.tahoe200.com](http://www.tahoe200.com). Full results on [UltraSignUp](#).

**13.9.2019 GBR Offas Dyke Race/The Mercian Challenge**  
Offa's Dyke Race follows the Offas Dyke footpath which starts on the shore of the Severn Estuary in Sedbury on the outskirts of Chepstow and finishes in Prestatyn in North Wales. The race is 185 miles long and features 9085m of elevation. The Mercian Challenge is the first 100 miles of the Offa's Dyke footpath finishing in Montgomery, with a total of 5180m of elevation and has a 42 hour cut-off.

This year's ODR winners were Jack Scott in 49:43:50 and Hayley Stockwell (8th overall) in 72:26:29. 64 starters, 28 finishers. The MC winners were Shawn Mills in 25:19:49 and Hannah Crossley (7th overall) in 31:42:20 17 starters, 13 finishers. [Full results](#).

### 14.09.2019 AUS Glasshouse 100

A 100 mile trail race that takes place in Beerburum, Queensland, first held in 1996. Featuring a variety of events including 100 m/km, a relay, 54 km and shorter events. The 100 miler was won by Noel R Rheault in 20:13:15.9 and first woman was Cheryl Kiernan finishing in 25:11:39.2. [Full results](#). Website: [Glasshouse Trail Series](#).

### 15.9.2019 GER Goldsteig Ultrarace 488

This year's Goldsteig Ultrarace was a 438 km long trail race and started in Marktrechwitz, Bavaria with one finisher, Colin Searle in 154:37:09. The 2020 event will be 166km. [Race website](#).

### 19.09.2019 ITA 24/12/6 Hours Lupatotissima

Lupatotissima is a 24 hour race that takes place at "Nino Mozzo" the Municipal Athletics Track of San Giovanni Lupatoto, in the province of Verona. First held in 1995, the race is perhaps the premier 24 hour Italian event and now includes 6 & 12 hour events. It has hosted the World and European 24 hour Championships on several occasions and will be the venue for the 2020 European Championships. This year the race was won by Alberto Furlan (ITA) with 203.814 km and the women's winner was Alina Teodora Muntean (ITA) with 191.664 km. [Full results](#).



### 14.09.2019 ENG 100m Robin Hood 100

The Robin Hood 100 is a relatively flat race that starts and finishes in South Wheatley heading into Sherwood Forest to cover the homeland of the legendary entrepreneur Robin



Hood. The race first took place in 2014 and has continued to grow with this year's race having 94 finishers. Organised by Hobo Pace and directed by Ronnie Staton the race was won by Simon Booth (GBR) in 17:22:00 and first woman was Tanya Rzhanova (GBR) in 22:16:00. [Full results](#).

## 14.09.2019 CHN 105km Ultra Trail Shennongjia Salt Road Challenge

The UTSS Shennongjia Forest International Trail Run is billed as the most scenic route in China and one of the most technically difficult cross-country races in Central China. It takes place in Gallery Valley, Hongping Town, Shennongjia Forest District. The competition has been certified with UTMB and ITRA double points, and the mountain index reaches 9 points. Among them, the cumulative climb of the 62km track has reached 4270 meters and the cut-off time is 18 hours. The cumulative climb of the 105km course is 6750 meters with a cut-off of 28 hours. This year's winners were Jia-Ju Zhao in 15:00:21 and first woman was Yuan-Yuan Wu in 18:13:03. 142 finishers. [Full results](#).



## 15.09.2019 JPN 100/60 km Tango 100 km

Taking place on the road around the Tango Peninsula following the coastline of the Sea of Japan starting in Kyotango, this is one of Japan's most popular ultras. Won this year by the Badwater 135 winner, Yoshihiko Ishikawa in 07:27:20 and first woman was Narumi Mukai 09:05:58. 1086 finishers. [Full results](#) and on the [DUV](#).

## 16.09.2019 ITA 6 Day+ Italian Ultra Marathon Festival

The Italian Ultra Marathon Festival (UMF) takes place on a (newly) asphalted flat 1 km loop, 50 metres from the sea in Policoro, Italy. The venue features bungalows (extra charge) and a place for personal tents, campers/vans/cars with all essential services on site. The event itself has 6 day/48/24/6 hours/100/50 km plus marathon options.

Of the 31 runners in the 6 day race, first man was Pascal Coindeau (FRA) with 765.103km and first woman was Sophie Jenniges (BEL) with 538.593km. In the 48 Hour Radi Milev (BUL) finished with 294.754 km and first woman, second overall was Sonia Lutterotti (ITA) with 290.331 km. 20 finishers. [Full results](#). Race [website](#).

## 19.09.2019 AUS 100/50 km Surf Coast Century

Surf Coast Century is described as a spectacular 50km and 100km trail ultra along Victoria's Surf Coast. With 100/50km solo events and a 100km relay (team of 2, 3 or 4) there's several distance options available. The start/finish area is in Anglesea, Victoria, on the Great Ocean Road

at Anglesea Lions Park and is organised by Rapid Ascent Ultra Running Events. This year's 100k was won by Ash Watson in 7:57:09 and first woman was Sarah Ludowici in 10:08:05. 351 finishers. [Full results](#).

## 21.09.2019 POR 53 km Grande Trail Serra d'Arga

The 10th edition of this 53km trail race in Dem, Caminha in Portugal is based around the Serra d'Arga, a sacred mountain with 3000m of gain, other shorter options were available over the weekend. The 53k winners were Carlos Miguel Da Costa Ferreira in 05:30:18 and Elisabete Santos in 07:24:02. 415 finishers. [Results on the DUV](#).

## 21.09.2019 USA 24 Hour NorthCoast 24 Hour Endurance Run

The NorthCoast 24-Hour Endurance Run, commonly known as NC24, is held on the shores of Lake Erie at Cleveland's scenic Edgewater Park, Ohio. The course is a .8822 mile, 8' wide asphalt all-purpose trail loop and the event has come to be the USATF 24 Hour National Championships. First man this year was Harvey Lewis with 210.447km. First woman was Kristy Denton with 168.952km. 112 finishers. [Full results](#).



## 21.09.2019 UKR 24/12/6/3 Hours Self-Transcendence 24 Hour Kiev

Organised by members of the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team (SCMT) the event takes place on a flat, paved 989.09 m loop mostly under trees in the Expocenters Park in Kiev. Race Director is Stutisheel Oleg Lebedev, veteran of 11 Self-Transcendence 3100 mile races in New York.

This year's 24 hour and 12 hour events were the National Championships. The 24 hour was won by Andrii Tkachuk (UKR) with 240.548km and first woman was Olena Shevchenko (UKR) second overall with 219.289km. [Full results](#).



## 21.09.2019 UKR Self-Transcendence 24 Hour Tooting Bec

The second SCMT 24 hour taking place that weekend was the 24 hour in South London at the Tooting Bec athletics track. One of the oldest 24 hour events in the world taking place today, this event is a sell-out every year and Race Director Shankara Smith has maintained the standards set by her father, Tony Smith, who first created the event in the early 1980's. The race was won by Robert Payne with 251.989km (156.578 miles) and Jo Newens was first woman, third overall with 221.373km (137.555 miles). There were 46 starters, 37 finishers and there were 31 runners who reached 100 miles or more. [Full results](#).

# Recent Races



## 20.09.2019 USA 170m Grand to Grand Ultra

The 9th Grand to Grand Ultra, a self-supported race takes place in the Utah and Arizona desert starting at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. The route then ascends the Grand Staircase and ends at Bryce Canyon, 170 miles over six daily stages. The gathering point is Kanab, UT. The race was won by Joseph Taylor in 34:16:55 and leading woman was Sarah Lavender-Smith in 45:34:07. 78 finishers.

[Results.](#)



## 27.09.2019 GRC 246km Spartathlon

The 37th Spartathlon continued to draw the interest of many of the world's top ultrarunners who weren't taking part in the European 24 hour Championships in Albi. This non-stop road race from Athens to Sparta commemorating the journey of Pheidippides, an ancient Athenian long distance runner, who in 490 BC, before the battle of Marathon, was sent to Sparta to seek help in the war between the Greeks and the Persians. According to the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, Pheidippides arrived in Sparta the day after his departure from Athens. This year saw new winners on the podium with Tamas Bodis first man in 23:28:37 and Zsuzsanna Maraz first woman in 27:15:12. 197 finishers. [Full results.](#)

## 27.09.2019 USA Beebe Farm 48/24 Hour Run

Beebe Farm ultras are held at the Harold Beebe Farm in East Dorset, Vermont, nestled in the narrow valley between the Green Mountains and the Taconic Range. Featuring 48/24/12/6 hour options plus others. The 48 hour was won by Arun Bhardwaj with 165.6 miles and first woman was Susan Kokesh with 152.53 miles. The 24 was won by Christina Friedman with 103.72 miles and first man was Jason Baer 100.23 [Full Results.](#)

## 28.09.2019 USA 24 Hour Hinson Lake 24 Hour Ultra Classic

The Hinson Lake 24 Hour Ultra Classic takes place in Rockingham, NC. The course is the 1.5032 mile inner loop that circles the lake. The surface is a soft clay maintained trail through the woods which has 15 small wooden foot bridges and a 300 foot bridge that crosses over the lake. The race was won by Regina Sooey with 102.163 miles (164.415km) and first man was Kenneth Bell 101.193 miles (162.855km). [Full results.](#)

## 28.09.2019 NZL Self-Transcendence 24 Hour Track Races Auckland

Taking place at the Sovereign Stadium (within the Millennium Institute of Sport and Fitness) Auckland, on an Olympic standard, synthetic, certified 400 metre track. The event also includes 12 and 6 hour races and a team relay. The 24 hour was won by Natalie Schmitt (FRA) with 206.093 km. First man was Mike Field (NZL) with 201.227km. 16 finishers. The 12 hour was won by Bryan McCorkindale (NZL) with 113.175km and first woman was Valerie Muskett (NZL) with 98.176km. Race report and [full results.](#)



## 24.09.2019 AUS 500/325/175/100 km Ultra Trail Gold Coast

The event takes place on a 25km loop in the Nerang State Forest, situated 20km inland on the famous Gold Coast. The course is predominantly on 4WD fire trails and is hilly (895 metres of elevation gain per 25 km loop). The races form part of the prestigious Asia Trail Master Championship series. The 500 km race was won by Todd Hazelgrove in 98:08:49 and first woman was Karen Barrett in 107:34:53. 5 finishers. [Full results](#)

## 26.09.2019 USA 72/48/24 Hours Crazy Owl Endurance Races

The Crazy Owl Endurance Races feature 72/48/24 hour races organised by the DuPont Trail Marathon Association, and take place at Sellers Park, 600 Barksdale Ave., Dupont, WA. The course is on a mostly dirt trail that is 2.25 miles per loop. The 72 hour was won by Thomas Jackson (USA) with 380.207km and first woman was Sharon Evans (USA) with 220.882km. The 48 hour was won by Andrew Nelson (USA) with 188.293km and first woman was Van Phan (USA) with 162.946km. The 24 hour saw Christopher Desierto (USA) take the top spot with 184.672km and leading the women was Kristen Hansen (USA) with 115.872km. [Full results.](#)



## 48/24/12/6 hours Stundenlauf

Aareinsel Brugg 2020

### 28.09.2019 (SUI) 24/12/6 hour 24-Stundenlauf Aare-Insel Brugg

The venue is on the river island in Brugg and the course is a flat paved 934.8 meter loop. First held in 2008 the event in recent years has been alternating with the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team in Basel to host National Championships. In 2019 Brugg was the venue for the 8th Swiss 24 Hour Championships and the first Swiss 6 hour championships. The 24 hour race was won by Dominik Kelsang Erne (SUI) with 214.555km and first woman was Olga Fikarova Zrzavecka (CZE) with 151.484km. The 12 hour was won by Timothy Frouws (RSA) with 109.619km and first woman was a tie between Giulia Paggiola Sprunger (SUI) and Raphaëlle Arnaud with 91.832km [Full results](#).

### 28.09.2019 AUS 24/12/6/3 Hours Butter 24

First held in 2017 when it was known as the Brisbane Track Ultra, Butter 24 was this year the Australian National 24 Hour Championships. The event was held on the track of the University of the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane QLD. Organised by AAARacing & Coaching who also host the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail 100/200 mile races. Top places:  
24 hour: Dean Ivy 185.312km Kathryn Austin 163.797km  
12 hour: Ben Dennien 109.541km Nicole Jukes 102.032km  
06 hour: Robert Trims 76.604km Kerrie Bremner 60.198km  
[Full results](#).

### 29.09.2019 AUS 6 Day/72/48 hours Adelaide 6 Day



The Adelaide 6 Day race takes place at Thorndon Park Reserve in Adelaide, South Australia. The course is a loop on a 1430m cement path, with 10m elevation per lap. With 72 and 48 hour options the event drew a bigger overall field than the inaugural event in 2018 and the dates have been announced for the 2020 event indicating that multiday running is alive and well down under. Indeed the winning performances by both women and men were world class. Darren Edward Linney (AUS) recorded 834.392km for the 7th best performance in the world this year. Annabel Hepworth (AUS) finished with 711.747km, the second best women's performance in the world this year. A smaller field in the 72 hour nevertheless saw some excellent performances with Sharon Scholz (AUS) taking the win with 403.088km. First man was Matthew Chamberlain (AUS) with 339.621km. The 48 hour race was won by Jacqueline Lee Cresp (AUS) with 237.348km, 8th

Australian this year at the 48 hour distance. First man was Colin Brooks (AUS) with 207.214km. The event will take place Sep 27-Oct 3 2020. [Full results](#).

### 4.10.2019 FRA 48/24/12 Les 48 heures de Royan

The Royan 48 Hour race takes place on an approximately 1km gravel loop around the playing field at the Stade d'honneur de Royan.

The first edition of the race took place in 2008. This year the race was won by Louis Fouquet with 339.094km. The women's race was won by Yolande Roches, third place overall, for the third year in a row with 296.885km. The 24 hour race was won by Pierre Mitev with 193.248km and the first woman was Marie-Agnes Cabioch with 167.807km. [Full results](#).

### 4.10.2019 48/24/12/6/3 Hours USA Back On the Ranch Trail Run

The event takes place at the Elks Unocal Event center in Santa Maria, CA. The course is approximately a one mile loop on a hard pack dirt road that has about 50 feet of gain and loss per lap. This year was the second edition of the event and the first man in the 48 hour was Jeff Collins with 241.530km. First woman was Claudia Newsom 170.365km. In the 24 hour first was Etienne Audras with 172.521km and first woman was Meili Mathuren 163.895km. [Full results on UltraSignup](#).

### 7.10.2019 JOR 250km/5 Stages Wadi Rum Ultra

The Wadi Rum Ultra, newly renamed the Ultra X Jordan is a 5 stage, 250km desert race that uses Amman as a hub. Runners have to carry their daily provisions but not luggage which shifts the focus of the event slightly. The race was won by former Marathon des Sables winner Salameh Al-Aqra (JOR) who finished in 24:02:00. Women's winner was Jordan Foster (GBR) 8th overall in 30:54:00. 55 finishers. [Full results](#).  
[Race website](#).

### 08.10.2019 TUN 100k Stage 100 km del Sahara



This was the 19th edition of the three stage 100 km del Sahara which takes place in the Tunisian Sahara desert and starts at the Campement Zmela Labrissa, 20km south from the oasis of Ksar Ghilane and the finish is close to the oasis of Douz. There are three categories of runners (100km) nordic walkers (80km) and walkers (50). The

## Recent Races

event is part of a trio of desert races which include the 100km du Senegal and the 100km of Namib Desert. This year's winners were Luis Alonso Marcos (ESP) 08:36:23 and Lorena Piastra (ITA) 11:36:47. 34 finishing runners. [Full results.](#)

### 09.10.2019 SVK 100 Hours No Finish Line Bratislava

The inaugural No Finish Line event in Bratislava continues the expansion of the NFL project which has been so successful in Monaco. This non-competitive event still lists the distance covered by athletes and first among the men was Patrice Loquet (FRA) with 394.500km and first among the women was Mireille Cormier (FRA) with 264.000km. 123 finishers. [Full results.](#)



### 11.10.2019 USA 240 miles Moab 240 Endurance Run

This 238 mile single loop trail race forms part of Destination Trails 200 Slam. Start of the race is at Marble Mountain Sno-Park Cougar, WA and finishes at White Pass High School, Randle. The race was won by Michael John McKnight (USA) in 59:30:12 and womens winner was Sarah Emoto (USA) 81:18:42. Mike has completed the Triple Crown of 200s twice now, this year winning all three 200 milers setting a new men's record time for the Triple Crown in 172:00:50. 86 finishers. [Results on UltraSignup.](#)

### 11.10.2019 GRE 50 Hours Road Salonica Run

Starting in Thessaloniki this 50 hour road race takes place on a 1km loop with two long straights of 490m each, two turns and the running surface is mostly paved (the material is very unique: solid thick sand), on the pedestrian pathway in the Thessaloniki city centre. The race was won by Lintita Chokia (ALB) with 279.00km and first man was Nikolaos Kontis (GRE) with 262.00km. 172 finishers. [Full results.](#) [Race website.](#)



**KALAHARI AUGRABIES  
EXTREME MARATHON**  
SOUTH AFRICA

### 12.10.2019 RSA 250km/6 stages Kalahari Augrabies Extreme Marathon

The 20th Kalahari Augrabies Extreme Marathon this year saw 38 finishers for this self-sufficiency run in the Great Kalahari Desert. Hylton Dunn (RSA) was the first to finish in 24:37:31 and first woman was Helen Buley (RSA) third overall in 32:54:45h. [Full results.](#)

### 18.10.2019 FRA 106km Trail Festival des Templiers

The Festival des Templiers - Endurance Trail is 106km long starting in Millau, France. With a time limit of 22 hours and shorter options of 61k and 50k available, this is a very popular event with 5125m of gain and loss. First home were Remi Berchet (FRA) in 11:29:31 and first woman was Claire Bannwarth (FRA) in 14:16:50. 925 finishers. [Full results.](#)

### 18.10.2019 HUN 48/24 Hours Road Balatonfüred Ultramarathon 48

Race HQ was at Kisfaludy beach car park and the course was a 2km certified loop along the Golden Bridge Promenade. Many options from half-marathon to the 24/48 hour events. The 48 hour was won by Imre Szucs (HUN) with 289.678km. First woman was Judit Mohacsi (HUN) with 230.159km, 17 finishers. The 24 hour was won by Lilla Cseke (HUN) with 207.920km. First man was Richard Boros (HUN) 203.500km. 41 finishers. [Full results.](#) [Race website.](#)



### 19.10.2019 FRA 450km Stage Via Iberica

The Via Iberica is a 7 day stage race covering 450km starting in Urdos and after climbing through the Pyrenees at the Somport pass, the route crosses the Argon to finish at Riumar in Catalonia with a total of 7000m elevation gain. Twelve hardy souls finished the journey with Maurice Thepaut (FRA) finishing first with 45:25:35 and Carmen Hildebrand (GER) first among the women, third overall in 47:30:50. [Full results.](#) [Race website.](#)

### 26.10.2019 FRA 24 Hours 24 Hour World Championships Albi



This years 24 hour World Championships was hosted by Albi in France. The event took place on a 1500m loop along with a 24 hour open event.

The World Championships was won by Aleksandr Sorokin (LTU) winning the men's title in a national record of 278.972km and adding a kilometre to the championship record with 278.972km. Camille Herron (USA) smashed her own World Record by 8km finishing 8th overall with 270.116km.

The open race was won by Nathan Flear (GBR) with



248.655km and women's winner was Irina Masanova (RUS) with 224.081km.

### Top WC finishers

#### Men

- 1 Aleksandr Sorokin (LTU) 278.972km
- 2 Tamas Bodis (HUN) 276.222km
- 3 Olivier Leblond (USA) 275.485km

#### Team

- 1 USA 799.754km
- 2 Hungary 782.241km
- 3 France 779.076km

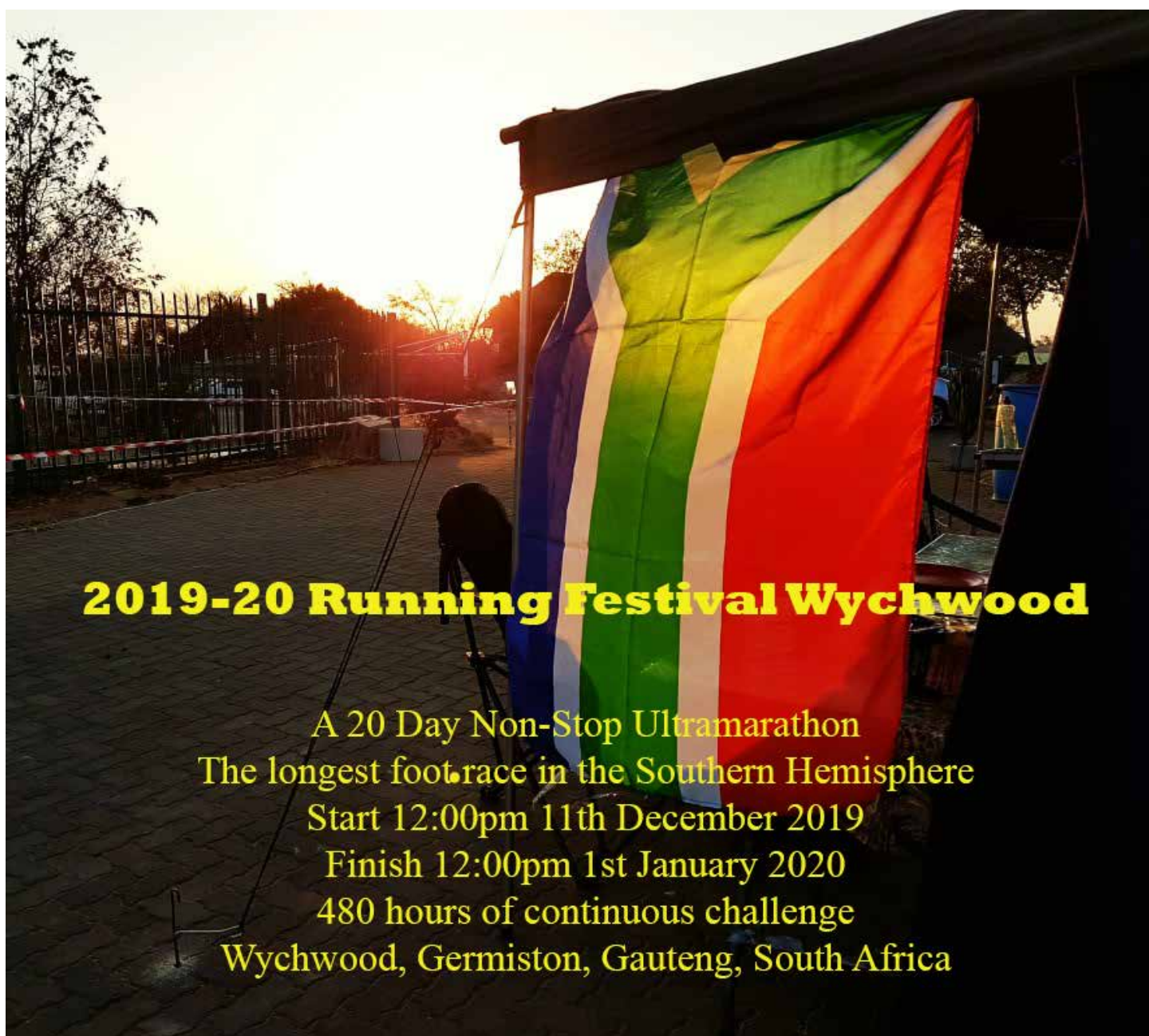
#### Women

- 1 Camille Herron (USA) 270.116km
- 2 Nele Alder-Baerens (GER) 254.288km
- 3 Patrycja Bereznowska (POL) 247.723km

#### Team

- 1 USA 746.132km
  - 2 Poland 721.124km
  - 3 Germany 696.846km
- World Championships 346 finishers  
Open 24 Hour 38 finishers

[Full results.](#) [Race website.](#) [World Athletics Race report](#)



**2019-20 Running Festival Wychwood**

A 20 Day Non-Stop Ultramarathon  
The longest footrace in the Southern Hemisphere  
Start 12:00pm 11th December 2019  
Finish 12:00pm 1st January 2020  
480 hours of continuous challenge  
Wychwood, Germiston, Gauteng, South Africa

# New Races



*With so many events being created all around the world at the moment we take a brief look at a small selection of events we have noticed recently. Some events are current organisers spreading their wings and others are brand new, from individuals to large organisations.*

**Festival de Trail** The Ultra Trail New Caledonia is a trail festival that takes place in the Great South of New Caledonia. On a course combining the seaside, the mountain, the forest, the lakes, 6 races will be on the program: 132/70/32/18 km and two hikes of 12 and 5 km. With a start and finish line at Plum, sumptuous prehistoric landscapes will punctuate your journey. Qualifying races for UTMB giving 5 and 3 points. Race starts on the 30-31 May 2020.



A 100 mile track race in a 25 hour time limit  
(clocks go back that night giving you an extra hour)



24/25th October 2020  
Huntington outdoor Athletics Track,  
California Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire. PE276SJ

**25 Hour Track 100** Famous for his arduous adventures, Mark Cockbain has a new event: A 100 mile track race in a 25 hour time limit taking place the 24/25th of October 2020 when the clocks go back for winter, giving an extra hour to complete the 100.

The venue is the Huntington outdoor Athletics Track, California Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire. PE276SJ.

Website: [25 Hour Track 100](http://25HourTrack100.com)

**HK360** A 7 day 360 km stage race that encircles Hong Kong. The number of participants is restricted to 100 (+30 for the half, 180km). The course is described as "quite flat and follows a lot of the coastal trails and paths." starts Friday 10th April to Thursday 16th April and is located at the start is located at Tin Hau Temple (Clearwater Bay) with the finish at Shek O Beach (HK Island).



**Artsakh Ultra** In 2020, AdventureCORPS will host a six-day, point-to-point, 160-mile (260km) trail running stage race in the Republic of Artsakh, formerly known as Nagorno-Karabakh during the Soviet era, just east of Armenia. From the website "Beginning in the northeastern Armenian city of Vardenis at the start of the Janapar Trail, after 15 miles (24km) and at the top of a 9000-foot (2743m) pass, competitors in the Artsakh Ultra will leave Armenia and cross into the Republic of Artsakh. From here they will follow the Janapar Trail – with a few side diversions to see ancient sites – and transect the majority of this magnificent country. The six nights on the trail will include tent camping the first three nights and hotel stays the final three nights."

### Ultra Race Romania

50km|6stages|self-supported starting 10th-16th August 2020. The event will take place in Buzău area, which crosses the south-eastern curvature of the Carpathian Mountains. Discounts are available if you can take friends. Mohamad Ahansal has signed up so it's a great opportunity to mix with the elite.







Val D'Aran by UTMB®, the new trail-running event in the heart of the Pyrenees. The first edition will be held next July, 3rd, 4th and 5th, 2020. 160 kms, 10,500 m ascent, and the highest point is 2,610m. From the website “Val d'Aran, “The Essence of the Pyrenees”, is the only Atlantic facing valley in the Central Pyrenees and is the source of the Garonne River. Val d'Aran has an extension of 620km and 30% of its territory is above 2,000m of altitude, with peaks reaching 3,000m – features that make it the perfect location for nature lovers. Bordering with France, it has a unique climate, eternal snows, exquisite gastronomy, the uniqueness of its own language and a strong cultural heritage.” With 101k and 55k options.

1000 MIGLIA		50 K
6 GIORNI	100 MIGLIA	6 ORE
48 ORE	10 GIORNI	100 K
1000 K	24 ORE	MARATONE

**Italian Championship of 1000 miles, 10 Days and 1000 km.** A new winter edition from the creators of the 6 Days of Pantano, first held in 2012 and now taking place on the Italian coast in a holiday village called Policoro. With some serious miles to be had and something for every runner this is a great opportunity to kick off the Spring with a big hit. The event takes place starting the 5th to 21st of March. Info and registration: [www.6giornidelpantano.com](http://www.6giornidelpantano.com)



The Loch Ness360° Challenge, a new Ultramarathon in Scotland, the Loch Ness360° Challenge is a new three-day

running or cycling event in Scotland happening between Friday 29th – Sunday 31st May 2020. It's 129 km and over 3000 m of ascent. Following the Loch Ness 360° trail along the Great Glen Way and South Loch Ness Trail around the famous Loch starting in the little village of Dores. Time limit is 24 hours and it looks like there's a waiting list already.



Crush the Cargill 24 Hr Challenge 2019 Mount Cargill, known in Māori as Kapukataumahaka, is a volcanic outcrop which dominates the skyline of northern Dunedin, New Zealand. The event is a 24 hour challenge running up and down the mountain which rises to a height of 676 metres (2,218 ft). Website is a bit vague on details other than it being biodegradable and your responsibility - no aid stations, no track markings, no prizes, no race packs and it's pretty clear about that. The event starts 10am December 14th and is a fundraiser for The Valley Project.




The other end of the spectrum sees another new race by UTMB joining the circuit, which comprises trail races that serve as automatic qualifiers for the original Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc (UTMB) in Chamonix. The new addition, called Panda Trail by UTMB (for more info), is held in Sichuan province and is now the second branded event to be held in China, alongside Gaoligong in Yunnan. There will be three distances to attract runners of different abilities; an ultra-distance race of approximately 120 km, plus two shorter races of approximately 60 km and 30 km. Full course and registration details will be announced on 20th January 2020, when entries will officially open.

## Runfurther - an ultra race champs series for all

Karen Nash (Current Chairman of Runfurther)

The original series was set up by Mark Hartell back in 2006 and the new team took over in 2014. The aim is to provide a competitive series for all off-road ultra runners in the UK as well as encouraging the growth of the sport and providing a welcoming community for those who want to get involved.

Each year we select 12 races for our series and encourage runners to complete at least four. We team up with race organisers, assisting them by attracting more runners and providing prizes from our sponsors. The championship is based on points from each race with male and female winners awarded 1000 points and other runners points based on a proportion of this. We have V60, V60 and V70 too.



The image shows a screenshot of the Runfurther website's leaderboard for the UK Ultra-running Championships 2019. The table lists various races and the points earned by participants. The header includes the Runfurther logo and the text 'The Home of Ultra-Running'. The table has columns for Race Name, Points, and other details. The races listed include: 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles, 100 Miles. The points are listed in the second column.

Top of the current leaderboard

Some runners complete a Grand Slam of all 12 and get a coveted hoodie. All Runfurther runners who complete four races get a reward like a Runfurther neck-tube.



Old and young, all are welcome



Old and young, all are welcome

We divide the races into short, medium and long with runners needing one from each category and one extra to count. Some do not manage four every year and that is no problem. We also include team prizes at our annual AGM and awards ceremony.



Grand Slam hoodie

The races are varied and we try to include something for everybody. Most are on paths and tracks but some have pathless sections. They vary from rolling countryside to mountainous areas. Occasionally the route is marked but usually it is not. We avoid races that are laps or mostly on road. The races are biased to the north of England as this is where most of our members are but we do try to include at least one race in Wales, one further north or in Scotland and one or more in the Peak District or further south. We try to choose races with lower entry fees and also races that will be helped by the promotion we might bring rather than those which fill easily.

Signing up for Runfurther is free. Runfurther Ltd is owned and controlled by the runners so once you have run two races that year you are welcome at meetings and can vote at the AGM. You can download a membership form from our website [www.runfurther.com](http://www.runfurther.com) or by filling in a form at a race. We also have a public Facebook page and a strava group. The committee emails are on the website.





Flags and banners

Our sponsors are currently Romney's who provide mini mint cakes for all runners at the events we attend, Injinji and Ultimate Direction via one of the original organisers Si Berry at Betarunning, Tent Meals and Mountain Fuel. We are also hoping to have a shoe sponsor in the near future.



The boards and prizes

runfurther.com the home of ultra-running .... step beyond and run further ..				
UD ULTIMATE DIRECTION		injinji 2018		
	Event	Location	Miles	S/M/L
Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Haworth Hobble	South Pennines	32	S
Sat 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Lakes Mountain 42	Lake District	42	M
Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> April	Calderdale Hike	South Pennines	40	M
Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> April	The Fellsman	Yorkshire Dales	61	L
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Marlborough Downs Challenge	North Wiltshire	33	S
Sun 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Northants Ultra	Northants	35	S
Fri/Sat 22 <sup>nd</sup> /23 <sup>rd</sup> June	SW 50 / SW 100	South Wales	50/100	L
Sat 7 <sup>th</sup> July	Pennine 39	North Pennines	39	M
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> August	Long Tour of Bradwell	Peak District	33	S
Sat 1 <sup>st</sup> September	Grand Tour of Skiddaw	Lake District	44	M
Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> September	Hardmoors 60	North Yorkshire	62	L
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> October	Round Rotherham	South Yorkshire	50	L

Example of our races (check out the website for this year's)

Our prize giving and AGM are usually in November and we announce the following year's races then. The races change from year to year to keep the series fresh and to help promote new races but we usually include some favourites each time too. We would love you to join us and to hear of other races for our series next year.

# Ultrarunning World

## ADVERTISE YOUR EVENT HERE >>

# Notes from America: Goin' Old School in the USA

Text and images by Gary Dudney

Badger Mountain 100



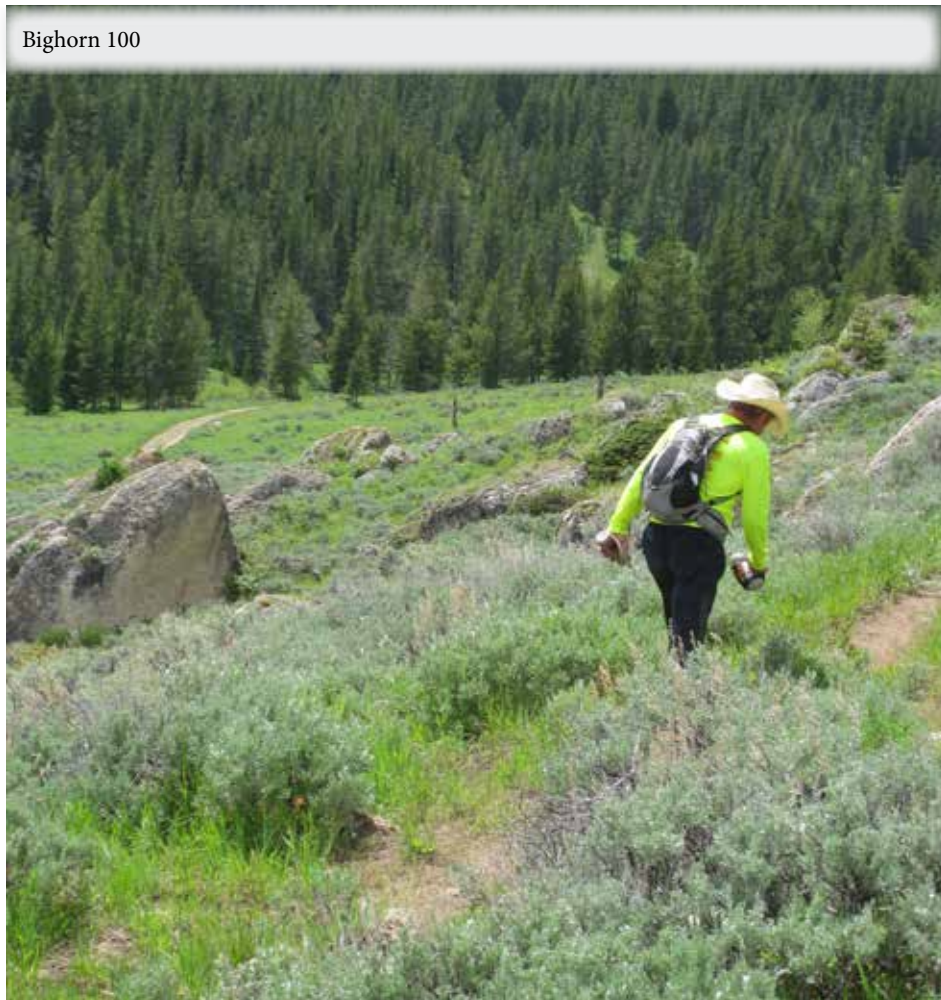
If that old school ambiance is something you really prize, I have some suggestions for you. I've been on a quest for several years now to run a hundred mile trail race in every state in the USA, so I've sampled a myriad of races that are anything but the classics. I can report back that 'old school' is alive and well in the sport of ultrarunning, if you know where to look.

What do I mean by old school? I mean a family-style welcoming atmosphere and relaxed, friendly race directors who go out of their way to greet you at packet pickup. The crowd is small enough that you can get to know about every face over the course of the weekend. There's not a lot of glitz and gimmicks. The

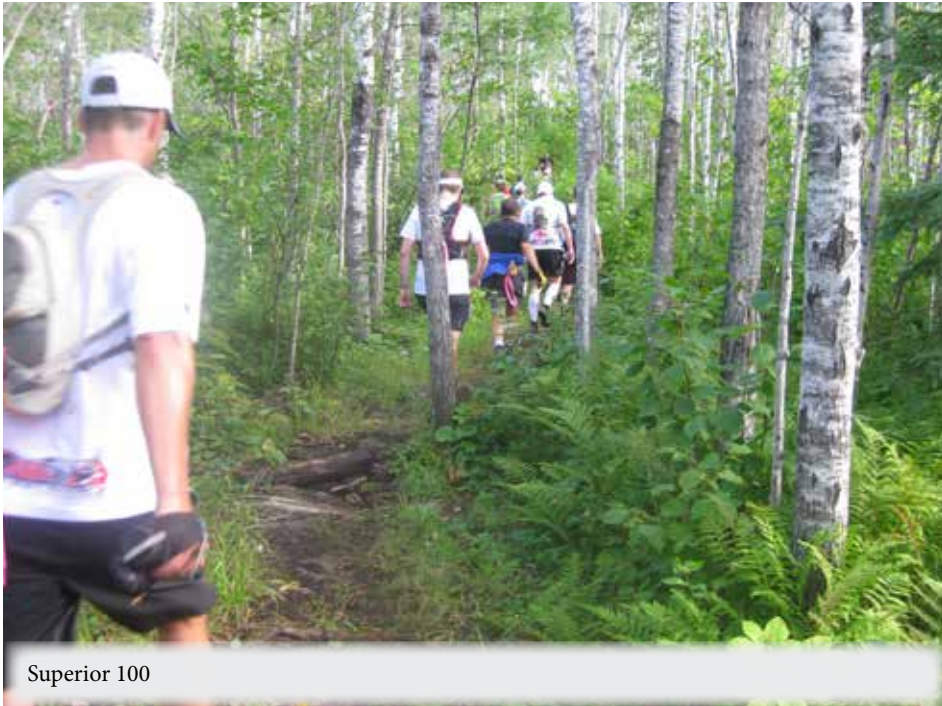
In the USA nowadays, you can't swing a dead skunk without hitting a hundred mile trail race. They're everywhere, spread out across almost every state, every season, every month of the year... practically every week of the year. Not that long ago, there were only about ten 100s on the calendar for the whole year. Now there can be ten well organized, totally awesome 100 mile trail races being held somewhere in the country on just one weekend.

The big problem when you come to the States for a hundred mile race is deciding which one to do. Of course many runners opt for the standard classics, like Western States, Wasatch, Vermont, Angeles Crest, Old Dominion or Leadville. These races have grown into fairly big productions and often require getting through a lottery to enter. While they're all fabulous races, some argue that they've lost some of the 'old school' charm that gave them such a warm and inviting vibe back in the distant days of the last century.

Bighorn 100







Superior 100



Georgia Jewel 100



focus is not on frontrunners but on getting everyone down the trail to the finish. There's a sense of community and being in it all together. There's no lottery. You can just sign up, sometimes right up until race day. Aid station volunteers seem delighted to see you, their kids are running around helping out, and the homemade cookies they're serving are delicious. Every finisher gets treated like a big deal and those who don't finish still get the royal treatment.

Anyway, you'll know it when you experience it.

The South is full of races that exude old school charm. Maybe it's the famous southern hospitality or just the family oriented nature of outings down south. The Lake Martin 100 in Alabama is a good example. The race orientation meeting on Friday is like a family reunion. Past finishers get up and tell stories that practically bring people to tears. On the race website, RD David Tosch writes, "we will encourage you, push you, help you, and even yell at you if necessary, to get you to the end." The course is gorgeous, four loops through forest, down old carriage paths, and along lake shores. You come back to the cabin after every loop where music is playing and half a dozen people offer to help you with anything that will keep you moving.

The Uwharrie 100 in central North Carolina has a very similar vibe. RDs Dan and Amanda Paige welcome you with open arms at the packet pickup and the love continues right up to the moment you finish, they personally hand you your buckle or commiserate with you if you fall short. It's another forested four-loop course, this time over a figure eight that brings you repeatedly back to the center aid station where there is a row of big cooking pots going steadily day and night producing a range of homemade soups. There was all the bacon you could eat and a full course breakfast on Sunday morning. The Uwharrie Forest is famed for its many Sasquatch

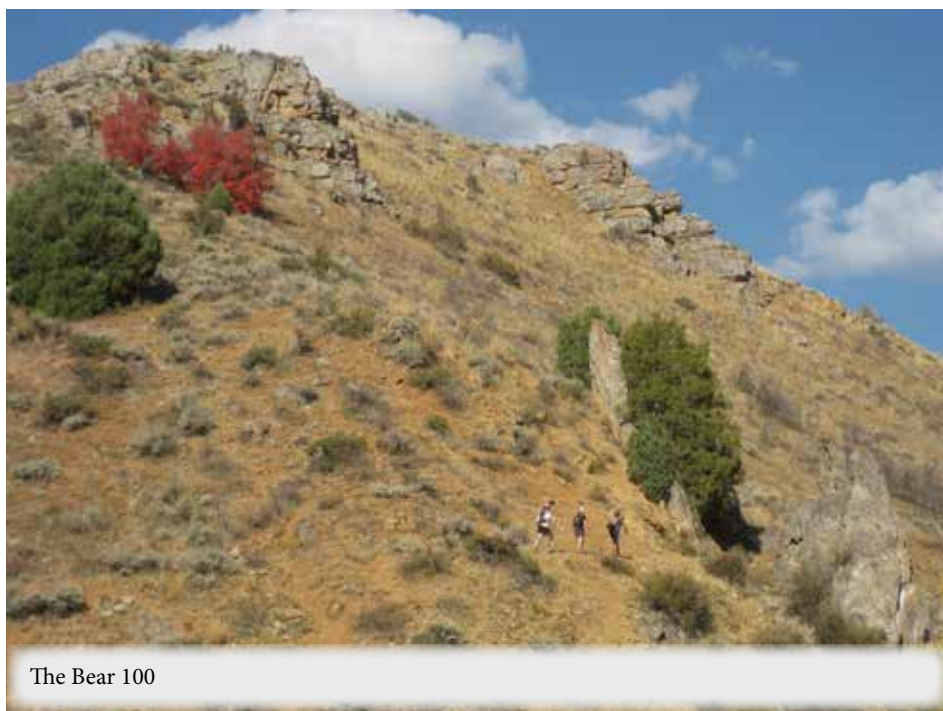


## Featured Article

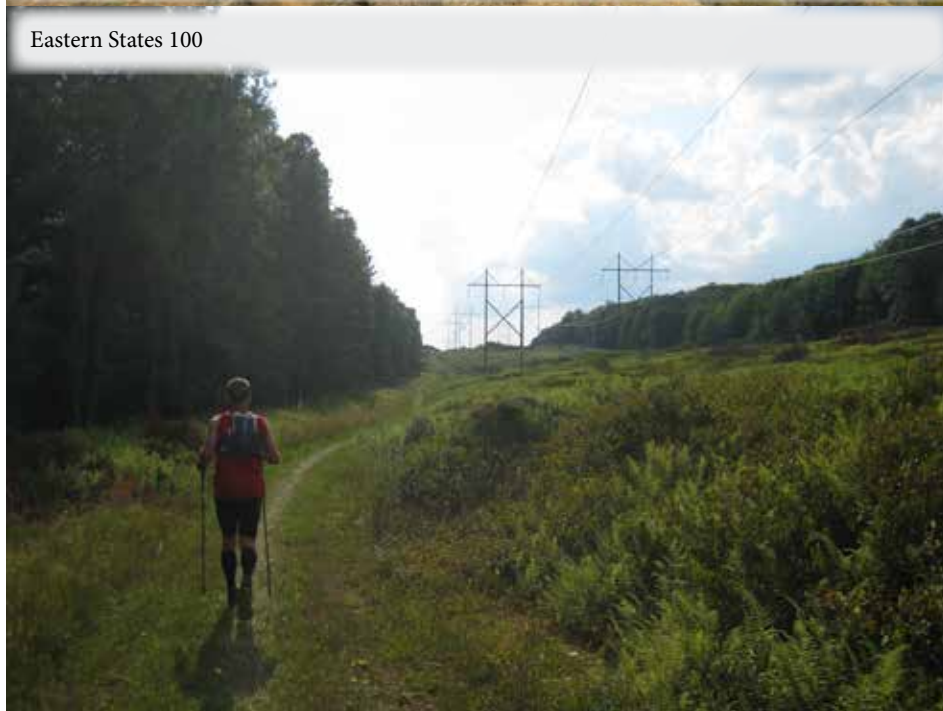
sightings so the place is bursting with local color.

The Long Haul 100 in Florida near Tampa offers a winter run date but with mild weather and a course shaped like a three leafed clover that keeps returning you to tent city/ party central about every six miles. It's another race with great food, a very forgiving course, and family fun written all over it. A nice touch were some quirky signs spread around the course that welcomed you to Armadillo Alley or the spot where a log next to the trail was going to turn into an alligator after dark. Strangers and travellers from foreign lands are welcomed with open arms. The Georgia Jewel 100 in (where else?) Georgia and the No Business 100 that starts in Kentucky and winds through Tennessee are two more southern races with a homespun atmosphere and monumentally awesome trails. Either one will give you a feel for what an early, backwoods America must have looked like.

New England may have the reputation for being a bit more buttoned up than the rest of the nation, but there are at least two races I've done there that really capture the spirit of a bygone time in ultrarunning: the Riverlands 100 in Maine and the Eastern States 100 in central Pennsylvania. Riverlands is all gorgeous Maine forest land with glimpses of the mighty Androscoggin River, trails of roots and rocks, hilly jeep roads, and lots of friendly support. Fallen down stone walls running through the forest mark old farm boundaries and suggest that past and present all meet in this race to make for a great experience. Eastern States evokes a comparison to an older Western States, when a smaller group of runners were out in deep wilderness struggling with a tough course with minimal fuss being made over them. That old Western States experience is there for the having at Eastern States just with fewer conifers and more hardwoods making up the surrounding forest.



The Bear 100



Eastern States 100



Hawk 100





Mountain Lakes 100



IMTUF 100



Lake Martin 100

The Midwest is another area, like the South, where unheralded, seemingly modest races deliver huge old school running experiences. Try the Heartland 100 set in the tall grass prairie reserve of the Flint Hills in eastern Kansas. The night is magic under a horizon to horizon blanket of stars as you flow across endless slopes and watch the lights of oil derricks bob up and down in the distance. The country roads in the predawn darkness take you by old farmyards with a single light burning up on a tall pole. In the deep quiet silence of the long night, it makes your heart ache with loneliness.

The Hawk 100, also in Kansas, and the Black Hills 100 in South Dakota are two more races with hilly picturesque courses that feature relaxed and friendly atmospheres and a focus on every runner that comes out to play. The Hawk is small and the loop course returns you to the same aid stations over and over where the volunteers learn your name. I remember the race director walking me out of the Start/Finish aid station in the dark as I left for my last loop to make sure I had everything I needed. Black Hills starts and finishes in the motorcycle festival town of Sturgis, where you leave one kind of Americana for another Old West, wilderness style Americana in the scenic Black Hills. The trails are mostly classic single-track leading in and out of river cut canyons and along wooded ridges.

It would be a shame not to mention the fun and quirky Pumpkin Holler Hunnerd (yes, they spell it "hunnerd") down in Oklahoma near Tahlequah. Held around Halloween, the race swag is over the top pumpkin themed. The race director is a cut up. The first aid station is a pancake breakfast. The course loops around a nature preserve on back country roads. Just about every property you go by has either a wishing well or a tornado shelter in the front yard. If you don't have a good time at this race, you're beyond hope and shouldn't be running ultras.



## Featured Article



Uwharrie 100



Riverlands 100



Long Haul 100

The Superior 100 up in Minnesota is another Midwestern race that takes its old school roots very seriously. Race Director John Storkamp is careful to keep this race true to the original spirit of 100 mile trail running. The race dates back to 1991 and has always prided itself on being, “rugged, relentless and remote.” The finisher’s medallion is a big chunk of wood that makes you want to fall over when they hang it around your neck after you ran a 100 miles through a series of mud holes. But they are mud holes with great views of Lake Superior.

Finally, there is out west in America, home of the original 100 mile trail race, Western States, which is of course, still the Boston Marathon of trail racing, but it’s outgrown any chance at retaining its old school heritage. You should look instead at The Bear 100 in northern Utah or the Bighorn 100 in Wyoming. These are two races that marry spectacular western scenery and fundamental mountain ruggedness with all the best elements of old school practice, that is, a definite family vibe, laid back organization, welcoming aid stations, and community spirit. With either one, seeing the Cartwrights clomping down the trail on horseback in full Old West regalia would seem perfectly natural. At Bighorn you are told to sort of tip toe by Bear Camp so you don’t disturb the honest-to-God, real bear hunters who are camped there. This is the actual West, not the Hollywood version.

At the IMTUF 100 in the mountains of central Idaho, race director Jeremy Humphrey warns you during the race orientation, “We have every big animal at this race that you are afraid of: bears, mountain lions, wolves, moose, and rattlesnakes.” He even said we could get attacked by owls in the evening. Old school defines IMTUF. Race headquarters is Burgdorf Hotsprings, an isolated, falling down little 19<sup>th</sup> century resort that looks like nothing has been touched or updated since 1890. You go to IMTUF to trail run. You are challenged by one of



the toughest courses in the country. You finish or chances are you don't. Either way, you get an ultrarunning experience of a lifetime.

The last two hundreds I'll mention are Mountain Lakes in Oregon and the Badger Mountain Challenge in south-eastern Washington state. Again the race venue at Mountain Lakes sports world class scenery with alpine meadows, mountain peaks, pine forests, rushing rivers, and several small ponds and placid lakes, while the Badger Mountain course is an unusual panorama of tall hills rising off a treeless plain. The number of runners at both races is manageable. You can spend much of your time in quiet, suffering solitude if you choose, or you can take advantage of the old school spirit of these events and make friends with everyone you meet.

Any of these runs make for a great destination race, where you incorporate the event into a broader vacation in the area. Plus at these particular races, you'll not only be travelling to America, but you'll be travelling back in time, when the ultra community was smaller, everyone knew each other, and the races were like class reunions. Most of these races also offer shorter distances as well, so if you don't want to tackle a 100 miles you can always opt for a 50 mile or a 50K.

See you out on the trails and welcome to the USA.

[Amazon Author Page](#)

[My Website for Runners](#)

No Business 10

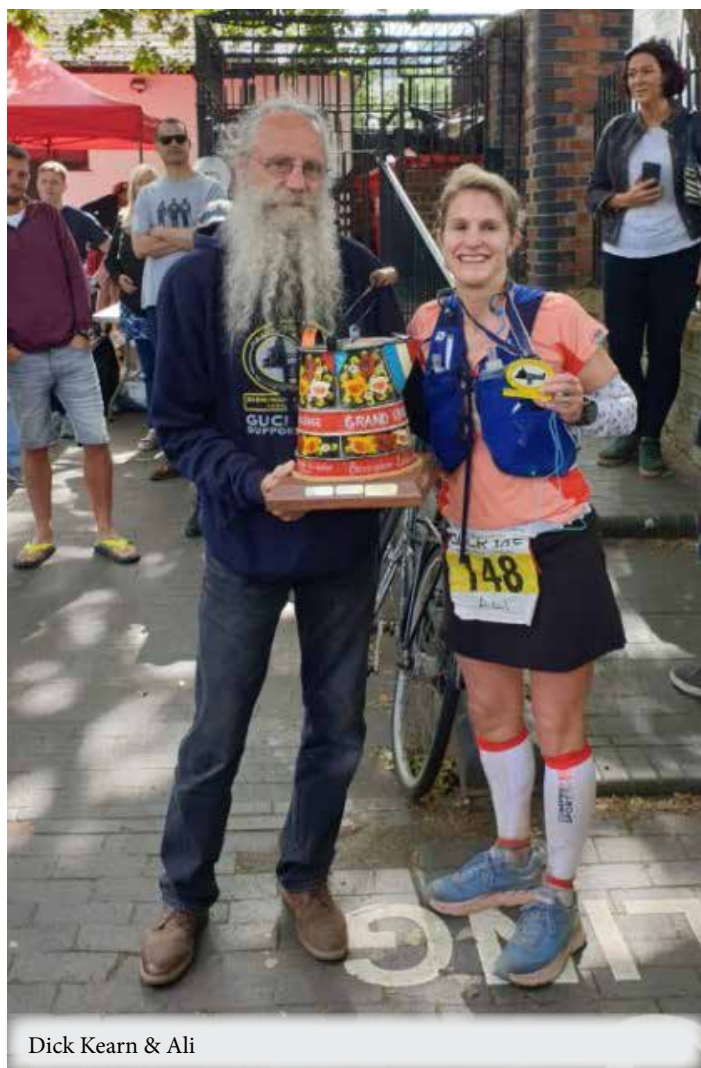


Pumpkin Holler 100



# GUC145 25th/25th May 2019

Ali Young



Dick Kearn & Ali

We drove up on Friday 24th May to Birmingham with crew Paul Magee and checked into the Travelodge Birmingham Central. We were joined soon after by Renee McGregor and Sarah Magee, my other two crew members. Lucky me to have such a crew. We wandered down the canal and ate at Pizza Express while discussing plans for the race and making contingencies for all eventualities (weather, illness, injury etc), before I go back to the hotel for an early sleep. Unfortunately, the hotel is located on a 'strip' with lively bars so it felt like we were in a club all night. I'm not sure I slept a wink but at least I had some calm hours with my eyes closed. I heard later some of my fellow runners staying at a different hotel were woken at 3am with a fire alarm and had to file downstairs.

Paul and I had a plan, needless to say a loose plan as anything can happen in 145 miles. The aim was to do the first marathon at 9 min/mile pace, the second at 10 min/mile pace and then go by feel. We planned 3 or 4 main stops to have more substantial food, some massage and to

change socks, limiting these to about 8 minutes though. The goal was to eat around 250 to 300 calories per hour and use gels and energy drinks when eating just wasn't possible any more. All other stops for restocking of water and electrolytes to be done as quickly as possible to keep me moving.

I had come into this race on the back of the London Marathon training, so apart from Country to Capital in January, the furthest I had run since May 2018 (the European Champs in Romania) was the marathon distance. That's fine though as it is my usual ultra strategy to do nothing more than marathon training. I know it's ironic to say, but I don't actually enjoy long training runs. An hour is usually enough for me before I get bored. If I can get a pal to do my 20 milers, that is ideal...otherwise it's podcasts all the way. My favourite event is parkrun and I'm thrilled to have been running regular sub19's this year.

One might question, why I do these crazy events if long runs are not my favourite part of running. I love the challenges, I like the big events to see what I can do but I also enjoy them for the team work it involves. Running can be a solitary affair and I love the team effort. Being part of



Maisie, Ali, Al Young





Neil Bridges, Ali

the 24hr GB team is so much of a team effort, the team is the priority not the individual.

4.30am alarm call and all systems go, ready for the 6am race start off Gas Street. This was going to be the 25th anniversary race. After a few words from one of the race organisers, Dick Kearns, it was time to start the journey from Birmingham to Little Venice in London along the Grand Union Canal

I had a chat with lots of different runners over the first few miles, but then the gaps open up in the race quickly. With a maximum 100 runners and a distance of 145 miles it can be a lonely race. My crew were going to meet me as much as possible to keep me fed and watered and the day was setting up to be a warm one. All of us seemed to quickly get a sweat on. Each time I saw my crew, they re-wet my arm sleeve to help me keep cool. Overheating is a problem for me and once again in this race it would become a problem.

At mile 50 I was promised a sit down and a change of socks. Knowing when I am going to get the opportunity to sit down, keeps me running. Some juicy blood blisters were already in fruition, we reapplied sudocrem, ate some noodles, had a very brief massage on my neck and cracked on.

A problem I can get in long races is a sore neck and with only 2 miles between seeing my crew again, my crew took



Paul, Ali, Neil, Renee, Ellie, Sarah

my pack off me giving me my waist belt with mandatory kit in (foil blanket and phone) to give my neck a break. I got to the planned bridge but another competitor's crew said, "your crew think they have missed you so have moved onto the next bridge about 1.5 miles away." My crew were following me via the tracker I had hired from race drone. What my crew didn't realise is that they had forgotten that the tracker was in my backpack and they had it. They were tracking themselves and not me. Very funny moment when they realised this, thankfully for me it didn't go on for too long otherwise I might have been chasing them for hours. My one worry was that people following my tracker might have thought I had jumped in the car for a few miles. Paul phoned the race organisers just to let them know what had happened. All very amusing.

We had organised buddy runners for the whole distance from 65 miles onwards as allowed in the race rules. Renee McGregor was my first for 10 miles followed by 10 miles with Sarah Magee as the sun was setting, head torches at

# Race Reports

Pic Credit Martyn Loach



the ready! We cracked out quite a pace through this but then the wheels soon started falling off and the effort was real. My feet were beginning to get painful and the effort to keep the pace up was getting increasingly hard to maintain. Next up was Fiona Conway through the Leighton Buzzard to Tring section. My usual upbeat cheery character pretty much ended and would continue to do so until the end of the race. Tom Powell was up for the next 10 miles to Kings Langley, although it was nearer 12 miles in the end until passing the 'miserable baton' on to Neil Bates for the section to Southall and Renee put in another 12 miles to the end.

My husband Al and eldest daughter Maisie drove out to Milton Keynes to see me. It would be their first time seeing me in full racing exhaustion, lying on the ground trying to eat noodles.

I like running in the dark, it's one of my favourite parts of a 24 hour race as it brings with it peace and calm. However, canals can attract a few choice characters and one notable point was when there was a young guy with his hood pulled up and his back to us, just standing in the middle of nowhere not going anywhere. Thankfully Neil was with me at the time and we were fully expecting him to turn with a knife in his hand...although all we would have to offer him would be some warm water & a gel. At that stage we were walking and this did get me running again. Nothing happened and Neil even said if I hadn't have been there he



Renee, Ali, Sarah, Paul

Supporters Nikki & Duncan



would have thought he had hallucinated the whole thing, we have no idea what he was up to.

Another obstacle at night are fishing lines. People fishing are not expecting anyone to be trotting along in the wee small hours so they set up their tents right across the path. A bit of hopscotch through.

Two pals unexpectedly appeared around 3.30am adorned with neon lights just to say hello... what a welcome sight and a great effort. This section would really cheer me up as two more pals arrived in the early hours on the canal and popped up a few times more. At Rickmansworth a group of Chiltern Harriers were awaiting. This crazy group had got up at 1am and run down to Rickmansworth, after seeing me they would run home too. My mouth was feeling really rank at this point so the suggestion of cleaning my teeth was a great idea. Trevor Lee Poole who was volunteering (from race registration on the Friday night until race end Sunday at 3am) was also here, he is a Chiltern Harrier and a friend. All the volunteers really did do a sterling job. After what felt like a bit of a party at Rickmansworth, it was time to 'get a move on Ali!' I could feel my crew limiting my stops now. This is the part of the race where it's easy to rest for longer, but that doesn't get you nearer to the finish. Food, drink, hip exercises, keep moving forward. After running for over 24 hours it's hard to estimate time and calculate distances etc. so I rely on my crew to do all that. I just have to keep moving...which was getting harder with every step.





Pretty much all through the race I had felt hot, I'm a little furnace when I run at the best of times. The temperature didn't drop below 16 deg C overnight and at no point did I require any extra layers. Infact my core temperature was becoming a worry as I was working way too hard, my body just couldn't cool down whilst running, so I had to walk a lot. Throughout the race, my crew had changed my arm sleeve ensuring it was wet and cold, by the early hours they were also adding ice into the sleeve and I started eating ice too. I suffered the same in Romania at the European Champs, and we've come up with a few strategies for this hopefully not happening again in Albi this October at the World Champs.

I know the last stretch of the race well, as I have taken part in the Country to Capital 3 times and it follows the same final 20 miles. This was not a good thing. There are several miles of long stretches of urban canal with no one to see, just mileage. The crew met me for my final change of buddy runnerback to Renee McGregor saying, "only 12 miles to go"... Oh my goodness I cannot tell you how I reacted to this. It really is quite comical, 12 miles amidst 145 miles and you'd think they told me I had to run the whole thing again. "I can't cope" etc etc.

Anyway, onwards.

I decided to find out if anyone was on my trail as I didn't want to be shuffling along and someone come past me. The crew checked with the last checkpoint and there was



a guy coming through in a 10 minute pace. Agggghh, I was shuffling at 12+. "Well he can have it, I just can't do it." Renee was having none of this attitude saying, "No way someone is coming past you, just get cracking, just keep moving forward." Step by step the competitive me started to kick in again and I was like a woman possessed. I kept asking Renee, "Is anyone behind me... Can you see anyone?" I knew I couldn't turn around myself without tripping over as I couldn't multitask at this stage. During my last few miles I regained a sub10 minute mile, honestly after that distance you feel like you are sprinting at that pace. Finally the finish was in sight. I Crossed the line with huge relief. The whole team were there with some other supporters too. 145 miles running, 36 crew pit-stops, 30 hours without sleep. It was finally over, I had done it... WE had done it.

There were 97 starters and 52 finishers with the last person coming through before the 45 hour cut off in 44 hours 53.

A huge thank you to the race organisers, volunteers, my crew, my buddy runners and all the friends and family that had made the effort to come out and support me.

Next up is 24 hour World Championships in Albi, France... with lots of parkruns of course.



# Grand Union Canal Race - 2019

Alexander Whearity



marathon had created a new found confidence and self belief. I was ready to get in the mix, but I needed a game plan. I spoke with my running buddy Paul Beechey (former winner of KACR 145, Endure 24 and LLCR 130) and he stressed the need to protect myself in the first 100 miles. The race isn't won in the first 100, but it can certainly be lost. My wife Wendy (winner of KACR AND LLCR 2018) stressed to me the importance of nutrition and running my race. I have been on Maurten since September last year and I had 6 pre prepped bottles ready to go. Mikaela (my stepdaughter) cooked me two pizzas to line my stomach throughout the first half of the race. In the week leading up to the race I went through different scenarios and visualised what

**“Let me in the bloody car, I don’t want to do this anymore”** (GUCR 2017 as I DNFd at 96 miles)

My journey to the Grand Union canal race 2019 (GUCR) began on that fateful May day in 2017. Ill prepared and cocksure, I turned up and thought because I had run a couple of 100 milers that I would boss the GUCR. I had no game plan, no strategy and no adaptation strategies. Reality bit me in the arse and I fell apart at 90 miles. I was too weak to yomp it out and binned it because I could. What came after was two years of DNF banter from the boys about the race that got away. The race had humbled me and I did not give it the respect it truly deserved.

Turning up at the start of the race in 2019, I was a different racer. Having gone teetotal on January 1st, the day of the GUCR would mark day 145 without a drink (a good omen). 2019 had been a brilliant year for me running wise. A solid Country to Capital, a new course record at Queen Elizabeth Country Park marathon and a fantastic 2:35 at the London







I would do for example, if I got cramp, got tired or was chased by a sheep (the last one happened).

I arrived into Birmingham the night before the race, registered at the Travelodge and met Paul Ali for a dessert and some pre race banter. I slept sporadically and got down to Gas Street early to soak up the atmosphere. It was great catching up with everyone and the weather looked very fair for the day. Lining up at the startline I stood with Sergey Ionov and Nathan Flear (the pre race favourites) and was eager to get underway at 6am. The last person I saw was Ali Young, who asked me how I was feeling, I replied...



"READY!" She nodded her head and we high fived. Little did I know we would both be standing at the top of the podium at the end of the race.

Dick Kearn gave his legendary introduction to all the runners and we started dead on 6am. My game face was on and I followed Sergey for the first couple of miles who set off at a hell of a pace. After 3 miles Nathan Flear and Ian Thomas caught up with me and we ran and chatted as a trio until mile 14 where we caught up with Sergey. I was taking on fuel regularly and the boys commented on how well I was taking on fuel. This is something I have been practicing

on long runs. Ian took a tumble as we went under a bridge at about 20 miles, which sadly affected his gait and contributed to his early exit from the race. I was so disappointed for him, as he was running well. Nathan and I pushed on about mile 25 and we had some good talks about Spartathlon (which I am running later this year). I needed a wee at 32 miles. Little did I know that this wee break would become so significant to my race. I noticed Nathan had suddenly started to put the hammer down as soon as I stopped and was in my opinion trying to put down a marker. I had two choices, I could try and hang with him and potentially blow up or I could stick to my race plan and conserve for later. I let him go and as much as I admire Nathan as a runner I am glad I did. The next 20 miles were pretty uneventful, I went to my favourite ice cream shop at 50 miles and bagged two Calipos. In 20 degree heat, I was holding up pretty well, wetting my Buffs and face at taps and taking on lots of fuel. Then mile 55 came. A stray sheep had got onto the path and I tried my best to clap it off to the side, but as I did this, the startled sheep began to gallop and chase me. Luckily I had to cross a lock!

As I got to 62 miles I noticed two lads were fishing, I politely said, "just coming through lads." As I did one of the lads threw his fishing rod back and God knows how, but his hook hooked my shoelace and sent me flying to the deck. What followed was a sketch akin to a combination of the Inbetweeners and The Chuckle Brothers. The boy kept saying, "Sorry, sorry!" The poor lad hadn't meant to hook an ultra runner, I think I gave him a fright. He tried feverishly to unhook his hook from my HOKAs, but we couldn't get me free. Luckily he had some scissors. After he cut me free I gave him a pat on the back and I was on my way. At mile 65 I spied someone in the distance walking. It was Nathan, he was having serious stomach issues. I walked with him and gave him an S cap, some Imodium and led us





# Race Reports



through the road section back onto the path. After that I didn't see him. He eventually dropped out at 85 miles as he couldn't keep any fluid down. It was a surreal moment going into the lead with 80 miles to go, but also very motivating. I had no idea how far people were behind me and I didn't think about it until 120 miles in. I saw David Bone at 67 miles and ran strong into Navigation bridge at 70 miles. I saw Darren Strachan, who helpfully told me I looked very focused. I had my pot noodle at this point and knew I was seeing buddy 1 (Wendy) in 10 miles. I felt very focused and strong.

I saw Wendy and crewman Adrian at 80. This is when I began to feel a bit sleepy. I told myself to wake up and we



jogged onto the 84 mile checkpoint. This is where I was introduced to Hershey's chocolate milk. Wow! It perked me up. Wendy asked me if I wanted anything else as Adrian was off to the supermarket, for some strange reason I said orange juice. It was amazing and the extra sugar and electrolytes really helped. I had a bit of a down spell at 90 miles, but had a 2 minute walk break and perked up as we went through Leighton Buzzard. Soon I would be coming past my infamous DNF point from 2017. I told Wendy I was ready to run and ran 6 miles in 53 minutes, which at this point in the race was very good. As I passed the DNF point I said to Wendy,

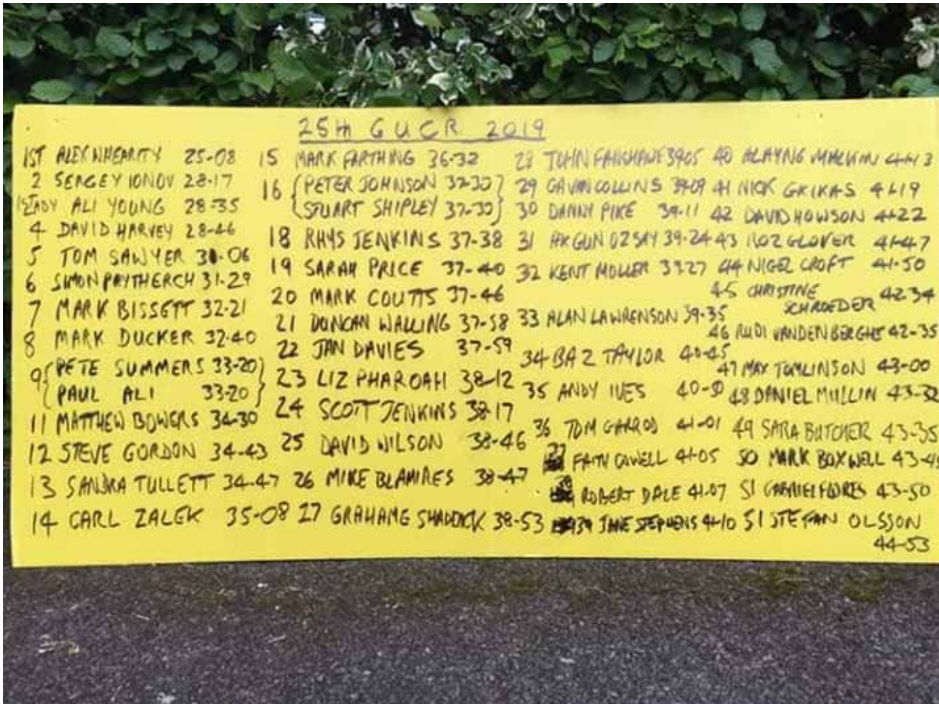
"Let's go and win this thing!" She responded with, "Just be sensible and you will." I ran strong into the Tring checkpoint at 99 miles. We had a slight navigation issue, but it didn't matter, we were running well. Phil took over buddying duties and we ran extremely consistently for the next 15 miles. Wendy tagged back in and we realised we were going to get into the Springwell checkpoint 30 minutes before opening time. A quick call to Cathy and Keith at HQ and an impromptu walk/fuel break meant

we got there as they were arriving to check in.

At this point Keith told me I had 2 hours on Sergey. This was mine to win! Wendy thoughtfully kept reiterating the need to be sensible. We'd hate to face plant now. Lovely messages from Paul Beechey and Paul Ali made me realise it was my time to shine. I had a tough few miles on the lead up to West Drayton where I kept being hit by flies and cobwebs. Some mild expletives and arm waving aside I managed to keep my composure. With 16 miles to go Phil tagged back in. I ditched the headtorch and started to run. I was fuelled by adrenaline and red bull. We ran well to Bulls bridge and had 13 miles left. As I ran into the last checkpoint I started to become tired. I remember saying to Keith, "I have worked hard today." He agreed and told me to get my backside to the finish. The next 6 miles seemed like a real slog, but in reality we were running really well. It was communicated to me after the race that I ran the 125-145 mile section, quicker than I had run the 80-100 mile section. I saw Wendy with 6 miles to go and everything had begun to tense and chafe up. I put my sunglasses on and got my head down. With 2 miles to go there are some interesting bridge inclines, I walked and took on the emergency Red Bull. Phil told me that it had been a pleasure to run with me, I apologised for my moaning. As we had a ¼ of a mile to go Phil told me to go for it and let me run into the finish on my own. It was surreal to run in as the GUCR winner and be met by wonderful cheers. I crossed the finish line in 25 hours and 8 minutes. The 4th fastest time in the 25 year history of the GUCR. I went through so many emotions as I crossed the finishing line. Firstly, happiness. I got to share this with my wife Wendy who has been one of my biggest supporters. She has helped me develop a race strategy that we executed to perfection. I was so happy to exorcise the demons of 2 years ago and show some real race craft. I was so happy for Sandra Tullet,







25th GUCR 2019

1st ALEX NEMETHY 25-08	15 MARK FARTHING 36-32	28 TWIN FAIRHURVE 39-05	40 ALYNG MACHIN 44-13
2 SERGEY IONOV 28-17	16 {PETER JOHNSON 32-30}	29 GAVIN COLLINS 39-09	41 NICK GRIKAS 44-19
3 EASY ALI YOUNG 28-35	{STUART SHIPLEY 37-30}	30 DANNY PIKE 39-11	42 DAVID HOWSON 44-22
4 DAVID HARVEY 28-46	18 RHYS JENKINS 37-38	31 ALEX GUN 42-54	43 NOZ GLOVER 44-47
5 TOM SAWYER 38-06	19 SARAH PRICE 37-40	32 KENT MOWER 37-27	44 NIGEL CROFT 44-50
6 SIMON PRYTHORCH 31-29	20 MARK COUTTS 37-46	45 CHRISTINE CHADEDER 42-34	
7 MARK BISSETT 32-21	21 DUNCAN WALLING 37-58	33 ALAN LAWRENSEN 39-35	46 RUDI WANDENBERGHE 42-35
8 MARK DUCKER 32-40	22 JAN DAVIES 37-59	34 BAZ TAYLOR 40-45	47 MAX TOWNLSON 43-00
9 {PETE SUMMERS 33-20}	23 LIZ PHAROAH 38-12	35 ANDY IVES 40-00	48 DANIEL MULLIN 43-32
{PAUL ALI 33-20}	24 SCOTT JENKINS 38-17	36 TOM GARROD 41-01	49 SARA BUTCHER 43-35
11 MATTHEW BOWERS 34-30	25 DAVID WILSON 38-46	37 FATH GAVELL 41-05	50 MARK BOXWELL 43-45
12 STEVE GORDON 34-43	26 MIKE BLAMIRE 38-47	38 ROBERT DALE 41-07	51 STEPHAN OLSSON 44-53
13 SANDRA TULLETT 34-47	27 GRAHAM SHADOCK 38-53		
14 CARL ZALEK 35-08			



chapter. Below is a quick summary of what worked for me and the mistakes I made. This may be helpful if you are planning on doing the GUCR next year.

What went well?

- Nutrition- mixed up foods massively. Love Maurten as a good source of carbs. Orange juice was my saviour
- Positive attitude- there will be rubbish points in the race. No need to fear them. Stay positive and stick to the plan
- The plan- protect self up to 100 miles. Fuel up and push when you can. Walk bridge crossings for natural walk breaks



after her battle with cancer she came back in style and smashed the race, finishing 2nd lady. Sandra and Russ are two of the most lovely people you will ever meet and I look forward to spending more time with them in Sparta. I was so pleased for Wendy's GB 24 hour teammate Ali Young who finished in an impressive 28 hours and 35 minutes, finishing 1st lady and 3rd overall.

As I sat in a chair at the end of the race holding the amazing trophy, I thought about how this had all started.

My brother Oliver passed away 9 years ago very suddenly and I began to run to exorcise the demons of the terrible loss of one of my best friends. I thought about what he would say if he was sitting next to me. He would have probably said, "you are a d\*\*\*head running that far mate!" Things come full circle, don't they. I chatted to Pam, Keith and Dick, amongst others then limped to the car. Sergey came in 2nd in 28 hours and 17 minutes. I had put an hour into my lead in the last 20 miles. Since the race I have had much time to reflect on the next





## Race Reports

- Pre-prep- all Maurten bottles were prepped before race and pizza. Hoka Arahis are so stable and comfortable
- Buddy runners- were fabulous with making me take on fuel
- Running my own race!!

To improve

- Navigation- made some silly errors that added a mile or 2. Always read the maps.
- First 50 miles was too quick. Watch pacing early on

- More real food later on in race

Since the race I have received so many lovely messages, some from people I have never even met. I have achieved a Spartathlon AQ for 2020/21 even with the new more stringent qualifying structure. In the car on the way back to Reading I broke down in floods of tears. A combination of exhaustion, happiness, relief, but I think I was emotional due to it all going so well. Wendy told me I inspired her and that meant so much to me as her GB 24 hour success has really inspired me

I am looking forward to running the Kennet and Avon canal race (145

miles) in July and Liverpool to Leeds in August and cannot recommend the canal races more highly. The organisation and volunteers are first class. The iconic nature of the GUCR is something to behold. Good old fashioned ultra racing, with some of the nicest people you will ever meet.

Someone once told me that you have to be broken if you are ever going to get better. I am ready for the next chapter of my ultra journey. I am sure there will be days when it won't go so well, but I will always remember that sunny day in May when I ran the near perfect race and it all went to plan, and for that I will be forever grateful.







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# My 72 Hours At 3 Days At The Fair

Heather Strowd



On Thursday May 9th twenty participants arrived at the Sussex County Fairgrounds in Augusta, New Jersey to begin running for 10 days at the fair. This year marked the 10th year of the '3 Days at the Fair' race. To commemorate the 10th year, Rick and Jennifer McNulty offered a 10 day option. Additional options available included a 6 day (first offered back in 2017), 3 day, 2 day, 1 day, 12 hour, 6 hour, 50K, marathon and quadzilla. Quadzilla is either four 50K's or four marathons. '3 Days at the Fair' is an event that offers something for everyone, from the beginner to the elite ultra runner.

In 2017 I participated in this race for the first time. I signed up for the 48 hour

race to run over 100 miles, a goal which I have yet to achieve in 24 hour races. That year I ran 102 miles, and I earned my first 101 mile belt buckle and 100 mile lifetime coin. Coins are earned as you accumulate miles when participating in this event. Increments include 100, 250, 500, 1000, 1500 and 2000 mile coins. Belt Buckles are earned at 101, 202, 303, 404 and 505 miles. This race is perfect for those wanting to finish their first 100 miler or anyone wanting to push past their current distance record.

I was eager to get back to NJ, to see what I could accomplish in 72 hours.

The course is a one mile loop around the fairgrounds which has subtle inclines

and declines and a hairpin turn. Most of the course is on pavement with a small section being on grass and crushed gravel. The fairgrounds offer the runners a lit course at night, heated bathrooms and showers, plus access to a full kitchen that operates around the clock for the duration of entire race. Volunteers prepare hot and cold meals in addition to all the usual aid station foods that we all crave during ultras.

There is plenty of space for tents and canopies along the course as well as inside the barns which provide great shelter from the extreme weather of a New Jersey spring. This year I elected to set up my camp in barn 2. Since there had been plenty of rain in the days before I

arrived, and more rain was still to come, I knew I could keep everything dry in the barn.

If camping in a tent is not your thing, there is a local RV company that you can rent an RV from, and they will even deliver it to the fairgrounds and set it up for you. \*During a 10 day race, extra comfort is a luxury that can make a big difference in your performance and overall experience.

At 9am Thursday morning, forty-four more runners started their race for the next 72 hours. I started off in second place and was hoping for a top 3 finish this year. There was a lot of strong competition in both the men's and women's fields, and I knew I had work to do. (I knew that my training since the Destin Beach Ultra in February was subpar.)

The first day I tried to run as much as possible, while adjusting my pace as needed in order to tolerate the temperature increase as the day went on. My goal was to get 50 miles done by 9pm. Unfortunately, that ended up not being the case. As the sun set the temperatures dropped, more shade appeared, and it became time to add layers of clothing. By 8pm I had finished 40 miles and I was starting to fade. I told myself that I wasn't stopping until I completed



at least 50 miles. Sometime after 11pm while reading the race monitor, Rick McNulty asked me what my goal was. I told him I was shooting for 150 miles. He felt confident that I could run 202 miles which would earn me a coveted 202 mile belt buckle. I was skeptical, as that would mean that I would need to finish another 17-18 miles in the next 10 hours, before the start of the 48-hour race. Rick is very encouraging to all the runners and wants them to succeed in the goals they set for themselves. He does a fantastic job of pushing us to see just how far we could go. I ran a few more miles while contemplating this new goal. At 12:20 am I had reached 53 miles and was done for the night. I had managed to move up to 5th place after dropping to 6th place earlier in the day. I crawled into my tent and set the alarm for 4:15am.

After what felt like a quick nap, it was Friday morning and I was up before the alarm went off. There was lots of noise around me from the aid station, the ringing of the bell (when you hit a goal the

runner rings the bell) and volunteers were cheering for runners in the wee hours of the morning.

I tossed on new socks, shoes and a hat and headed towards the aid station to get some food and start moving again. Mornings were chilly but welcomed, as we knew the afternoons would warm up quickly, and we would have no shade on the course. The chill of the early morning air perks you right up. As the sun rose around 5:30am, the sky was lit with the most gorgeous pink and orange hues.

I began walking the first few laps so I could get my legs warmed up and hopefully begin running. My body was not doing well, I hurt everywhere, my stomach was upset and all I could do was walk. Deep down I knew this was going to be a very difficult day for me. I could walk 3 miles an hour and by 7:40 am I had finished 100k.

A quick shower and clean clothes brought a feeling of rejuvenation back into my body and I got back on course. Since there was going to be a lot of



walking that day, I decided to enjoy the loops with my fellow runners and learn more about them and what their goals were. I was introduced to a man named Jimmie Barnes who was 80 years old and currently held the course record in the 48 hour race. He did it by walking all 161 miles! I was amazed that anyone could walk 161 miles in just 48 hours. (I hated walking... it hurt a lot.) Everyone I talked to said that the second day is always hard but assured me that day three would be better. I hoped that was true. I walked with Jimmie for a bit asking questions and soon enough I could see him pulling further away. I couldn't catch him and he was a good distance ahead of me. Unfortunately, Jimmie's record fell this year

to Camilo Martinez with 171 miles. Later in the day I shared laps with Bill Gentry and Gary Ferguson, these men had attended the race in all the 10 years. Both men would earn their 2,000 mile lifetime coins during this year's race. I also heard that Gina Slaby was here participating in the 48 hour race, and had run 100 miles in 15 hours 54 minutes. Her husband Steve Slaby would be starting his 24 hour race at 9am. Gina and Steve Slaby have just been named to the U.S. National 24 Hour Running Team.

By mid afternoon I had developed heat rash on both my feet. My feet looked like they had been attacked by fire ants and itched terribly. I prayed it didn't get worse. By 4:30pm, after a short break and a cold beer I



# Race Reports



finally started to feel better and my stomach felt much better. With new energy I pushed on and kept walking determined to get to 100 miles before stopping for the night. At 8pm a huge storm popped up and I was at the furthest part of the loop and soaked to the bone along with everyone else out on course. With temperatures dropping I quickly changed clothes to stay warm and get back on the course as soon as it stopped raining. At 11:30 pm I called it a night with 95 miles under my belt. I had 55 miles to go and 33 hours to finish. I sat down with a cold beer and my notebook to plan out how I would tackle the remaining miles.

Saturday morning at 4:30am I was awake with

a little more sleep than the previous night thanks to ear plugs to block out the noise. As my new friends had predicted, I felt good and was able to start running again today.

By 9 am I had finished 108 miles, six more miles than I had completed in 2017 during the 48 hour race. I am knocking off miles faster today and that has me feeling good about reaching my goal. I didn't get overly confident as the wheels could fall off again at any moment so I needed to push on while I still had it in me.

In years past we had the pleasure of being entertained by horse shows, chicken shows and even a rodeo. This year it was two New Jersey State Troopers that had stopped by to see what we were

doing running around the fairgrounds. They joined in our fun and both raced a lap in their full uniforms. Both had impressive times, a sub 8 and sub 9 minute mile.

Saturday afternoon was the hottest day by far, and I adjusted my plan to run/walk so I wouldn't burn out in the heat of the day. I had stopped worrying so much about my goal and realized that what was more important and rewarding was the people I'd met and the conversations we'd shared throughout the event. During a quick break I met Stanley Duobinis, he and his wife Margaret, who competed together in the Badwater 135 back in 2000. As an avid follower of that race each July, it was a great honor to meet and hear stories about running Badwater from someone who has run it twice.

My sister stopped by for a bit in the afternoon to check on me, bring supplies, and walk a few laps with me. By 6:20pm I had run 128 miles and I was planning to keep going until I hit 140 miles. If I could do that, I would have a minimum of 10

miles to finish and reach my goal when I started back up on Sunday morning at 5am.

I was still running that Saturday evening and somehow met up with Lisa Van Wolde who was the leader at the time and would be the first place winner in the 72 hour race finishing with 220 miles. Lisa also participated in the Barkley Fall Classic and I thoroughly enjoyed hearing about her experience in that event as well. During that time I met David Lettieri who also competed in the men's 72 hour race and makes the custom stained glass art awards for the race. We walked several laps together and I enjoyed getting to ask questions about how often they sleep during a 72 hour race etc. It was really cool to learn they had both participated in Vol State and did it screwed (solo, no crew).

Later that night I also heard that John Fegyveresi, a Barkley Marathon finisher in 2012 was also at the race. I ended the night with 141 miles and a huge blister on the bottom of my toe. I crawled into bed and put my feet up hoping the





blister would go away by morning.

After another brief sleep, it was Sunday morning and I was back on track to finish the final 9 miles that I needed to reach my goal. My blister was a bit better that morning and I was able to start off running. My sister arrived just as I was about to start my 150th mile. We walked that mile together, as well as my final lap of the race. My feet were finally done, I couldn't run or walk any more.

(Stopping about 30 minutes early caused me to drop to 6th place as the girl right behind me completed another loop to finish with 152 miles.)

The race ended at 9am on Sunday morning, and all the racers and family gathered near the food court for

the pancake breakfast and awards ceremony. I was thrilled to have earned my second 101 mile belt buckle and my 250 mile lifetime coin. Seeing what I could do on a very inconsistent training program showed me that with consistent training I would surely be able to hit the 202 miles needed for that belt buckle.

The 3 days spent at the fair are by far some of the best hours of the year for me. The wonderful people you meet here and their willingness to share their knowledge with anyone is amazing. My miles at the fair were made extra special by the people I spent time talking to. My gratitude and appreciation to Agatha, Crystal, Jake, Bill, Gary, David, Jimmie, Lisa, Linda, David, Ann, Stanley, Adrian, Ronald, Francis,



Darlene and all my new friends and fellow runners.

Life after the fair is training and waiting to get back to the Fair...



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# Montsec Ultra Trail (MUT) 2019 (ESP)

Cristina Tasselli



The MUT Ultra Trail with its 100 kilometers and 7000 meters of positive elevation gain is considered the most difficult Ultra Trail of the Catalonia region in Spain. It's a perfect race to test the preparation for your first long distance summer competitions, from 170 km up, like the Ultra Trails of Andorra, Ehunmilak, to name a few.

The terrain is technical, rocky and very challenging for your ankles and knees. The track presents long, sloping climbs, slippery and steep descents, but the climate remains mild and the altitude is moderate.

Furthermore, the village of Ager where the MUT starts, reminds me of my

Spanish origins, is easily accessible with less than 2 hours drive from Barcelona.

The race starts at 11.00 pm from inside the Castle of Ager, a place made even more atmospheric by the light of the candles. The athletes are assembled in a central hall for the start where the disco music and the warm voice of the speaker make the adrenaline rise. After giving the go, there is still a tour of the castle's caves, with a cheering public that is not lacking in enthusiasm, then you dive into the majestic and incredible nature of the area.

The race traces a circular ring crossing the little known Sierra del Montsec, passing by wild places of indescribable

beauty like the gorge of Mont-rebei where I ran along a single track, through the rocks that overhang the river. Here you find the famous Pont Penjant (suspension bridge) that during the night, swinging under the weight of the competitors, inspires a certain fear.

The night runs as fast as the race kilometers, the temperature drops from 14-15 degrees to -1 in the coldest parts, like the summit of Sant Alís (1675 m), the highest point of the race, and it becomes necessary to cover up and wear gloves.

Two other spectacular places made the MUT a unique Ultra Trail in my memories:





Cris Mont Blanc

- the path of the vertiginous Montfalco with wooden walkways built into the rocks, depending on the year you will have to run them uphill or downhill.

- the 100 curves road to San Salvador del Bosque, in the last 20 km.

- the Devil Bridge, another sign of Medieval history does not deny its legend, my hat flies away in the river when I start to cross it.

The last technical climb is quiet like the last few kilometers on a dirt road under a scorching sun and a high temperature. After that only 5 km downhill towards the finish line where the speaker announces my name emphasizing the 2nd place. I did it.

The welcome is festive, the embrace of my supporters Marco Mori and Artiom, my priceless son, is fantastic!

Proud to have honored my TRM Team and grateful to my trainers TRM Coaches ([www.trailrunningmovement.com](http://www.trailrunningmovement.com)) who always suggest the best training, race strategy and nutrition plan for all types of challenges.

The race organization is great and all the people are very friendly and helpful. Don't miss it!



Ruta de Vertigo



Podium



# My first 6-day race – a bit about friendship with pain

Joanna Biala

Photo's by Szilvia Őszi (except where indicated)



It was nine months ago when I signed up for the EMU 6 day race. So it was awaited like a child. It was just after my first 48 hour race in Kladno, Czech Republic, where I took the 1st place among women. Amazing experience, magic atmosphere there and unpredictable energy I got during the race pushed me to reach for more. For a long time I've been impressed by the runners of the incredible 3100 mile race in New York. I even travelled there to see them and check if it really happens. Yes it does, the runners circled around a half mile block despite the hot weather and high humidity. I observed them over two weeks with my open mouth and became inspired so much that I started dreaming about this kind of experience. There was something inexplicable in their daily efforts. I knew that the real power was in their minds. No matter how strong the pain was they seemed to be over that. Their calm was spreadable. I took a little bit from these amazing runners for myself.

The 48 hour race was a step towards the next level. Obviously, it was totally different than the 24 hour. I learned a lot from that race and now I had 6 days ahead of me. Many times I tried to imagine how it would look. I wondered how to prepare for this

kind of challenge. During a mountain run I got an injury and couldn't cure it for a long time. None of the modern methods of treatment helped. I tried a variety of rehabilitation sessions such as: ultrasound, phonophoresis, electrotherapy, therapulse, magnet therapy, laser therapy, cryochamber and so on. Even when I had a two

week break from running and started again, the pain still teased me. So I decided to accept this inconvenience and become its friend. I continued my daily running and learned how to deal with suffering. I became really good at it. At the same time I discovered David Goggins, an unusual athlete and personality, an expert of living in pain who developed the ability to push past suffering during his endurance events. I ordered his book (pain) "Can't hurt me" immediately and it helped me to take the greatest lesson from this period of time.

I realized all of that was to prepare me for this higher level of ultra racing. Once I became a pal of pain someone recommended a very good physiotherapist and it was like winning the lottery. The man was a professional and wanted to hear about the injury from the very beginning in detail, how and when it happened, when the pain increased, etc. I repeated the story



Photo by Kincses Ferenc





Photo by Kincses Ferenc

many times to him and he managed to find the reason for my misery. Moreover, he found a way to fix it! I was so happy. Before I could come back to a normal state of affairs, I had to be brave and somehow stand the rough and painful manual therapy. Finally I could fly like a bird. How wonderful it is to take 100% happiness

from running. I can't believe it really happened. I almost felt butterflies in my stomach. Only two and a half months left to the 6-day EMU race, so I started running seriously. I believed I could really cross the limits there. I'm not a competitive runner. I have no training plan, I can't say that I train. I adore to be in movement and this special state of mind when I run,

with no thinking, no tasks, just being here, in the moment. I don't use any electronic gadgets, I don't know my pulse and my pace. I run like I need to and what is comfortable for me. The watch is inside my body and soul.

Once I decided to care more about my mind, stay in contact with myself and be conscious of what happens inside, I went to meditation lessons. It turned out during this time, that the point of meditation is to achieve a state of mind which I usually get when I run. I was so surprised that I meditate unconsciously. It explains why I love my state of mind during running. I know that meditation is very helpful in daily life and many famous scientists and artists have and continue to practice it, so it gave them a much higher potential to their activity, moreover they seemed to be very calm and happy. I decided to bring my awareness into my emotions and experiment with mindful breathing every day. After some time I'm sure it really helps me in every area of my life.

Going back to EMU, it was very hot in Hungary in May. I didn't realize that my fleece sweatshirt, windbreaker and plastic raincoat packed just in case would be the most important items during the race. There was only one and a half day's of sun. Apart from that there was mostly stormy weather: heavy rain, strong wind and bending trees. Sometimes I vainly waited in the camping house for the weather window. Eventually it was better to go to the track than to wait on and on. When it was so terrible outside I was sure the race would be suspended by the organizers.

I was afraid that the problem with my feet, during the rain, would develop. Especially since I usually had sensitive feet, blisters, chafes and squeezes. Fortunately I bought a special cream to prevent such problems. It was good and effective but I got rash on the upper parts of my feet. So I had to loosen the shoelaces to avoid the extra irritation.

We were running in one direction.



Photo by Kincses Ferenc

# Race Reports



The lap was almost 927 meters long. The path writhed like a snake as it had about 7 turns. There were two ascents and one downhill. There was also a very uncomfortable turn with around 360 degrees. After several hours I knew where it was better to walk rather than run. The greatest pleasure was going down the path, where I always ran, apart from the last 12 hours, when I was unable to run anywhere.

We were accommodated in the chalet's along the track. We could sleep there and take a rest there as long as we needed. The food had been delivered to the houses twice a day, there was always a lot of food, drinks and supplements at the buffet situated on the track. The vegetarian option was available too. Due to the weather, I drink hot tea. I accept that it's so sweet, because I need a huge amount of calories. Sometimes I prepare the chamomile for myself.

Imagining my daily routine during the race I planned to achieve 3 marathons, take the massage, do stretching, take a shower and sleep long enough. Of course I was aware that there could be changes to this scenario, I was curious about how much it would be modified in relation to my body condition. The first day went almost according to the plan, apart from the sleep. As I could not fall asleep, I started to gather kilometers into the bank of another day. Just after noon, I had to go to bed. I didn't wait for a

rain that was anticipated 2 hours later, I needed to close my eyes now. I don't remember if I slept or not, anyway my scenario started to change a little bit. In addition, my left ankle hurt me, decreasing my daily volume of kilometers. The next day I fix the cold pack to my leg to ease the pain for a few laps. I cut the tip toes in my shoes giving more air and space to my feet.

The 3rd day was the worst one. I cry in the morning going out into the rain. Probably everyone experiences some difficulties at this time, so my tears don't surprise anyone. There is no question about stretching, I have no energy for that. I feel I could break my muscles if I did it. I put on my earphones and cry to Santana and Clapton. Then I switch to the local radio station. Fortunately I don't understand the news, so it's easier to stand that. I check the messages on my mobile and I become stronger in a while. People support me so much and are convinced about my power, so I smile and feel that I've just got out of the hole. I decide to change my shoes to better cushioning ones. I'm surprised they are comfortable now, because I didn't like them before. I manage with my swollen ankle by cutting the welt in every left sock, so I don't feel the squeeze so much. My colleague Ryszard gives me the horse ointment and says that it should help for my ankle, if not, it will help my head, so I use it.

After 4 days I have achieved 446 km. It's wonderful running at night. I hear the birds singing, the wind and I meet the fox many times. First I was afraid it could be hallucinations, but other runners confirmed they also saw him. This is magic. I love when there are not so many runners on the track, normal people sleep, but not me. I love to languish. Even the pain tastes good. The salt also tastes good from now on. I put salt on every piece of little sandwich. I eat nuts and sunflower seeds, both salted too. The broth to warm myself and everything is good once again.

In the morning more and more runners are trying to complete their daily goals before noon. There are so many nice people here. We talk about our sufferings or how wonderful it is to do what we do. Kristina from Sweden is very supportive. It seems we have a similar approach to some things in life. In the worst moment I agree with Karla from the Czech Republic that this is our first and last 6 day race, but after some time I notice that next time... e.g. I'll take more warm clothes. I like to run with Lukasz from Poland. We are walking where it's better to walk and we're speeding very evenly on the other parts of the path. Ryszard brings me a lot of joy and laughter. He tells very interesting stories, talks about future challenges, he reaches for fresh linden leaves from the tree and we eat them. They are good for our digestion and immune system.

There are some runners whom I admire in particular the leader Dan from the UK is almost flying on his toes like he doesn't feel the tiredness. I can see him all the time on the track. Sumie from Japan seems to be fatigued from the very beginning. I couldn't be more wrong. Her short steps and slow but permanent pace are her advantages. She leaves most of the runners behind her. She is a multiple World Champion in ultra races. There is also a man in sandals with one stripe and the sole like in swimming pool flip







flops, he goes very fast sometimes, he is great. Wow, I learn a lot here.

After the 5th day I have 530 km. I'm swollen so much. My feet are like sausages, my whole leg is full of water under my skin, even my face is bigger. I get the signals that there's only 90 km left for me to break the Polish women's record. People believe in me, support me so eagerly, so I decided to do it. I put myself into trance and ran like as I did the first day. I think that the water will burst my leg soon and the pain in my left shin bone darkens any other feelings I have. I accept those feelings and go forward. I don't respond to any talk, questions and "oyra oyra" a typical Hungarian cheer. I need to be alone with myself. The pain doesn't matter now.

I rush this way for a few hours. Now I

have so many kilometers, that I'll get this record by walking from now on. I have swollen even more and the pain has increased significantly. Czeslaw gave me the ice in spray as a rescue. I go to sleep, set my alarm clock for the first time since being here. Unnecessarily, because I standby. I get up and feel flat. I've already known I'll be walking till the end of the race. My leg can't bend properly in the ankle.

The night is beautiful. There are lighted candles on the route. I can't believe it's almost the end, although still 12 hours left. How have I survived this incredible journey? It was wonderful. I'm moved walking slowly step by step. In the morning it's raining again, but I'm used to it. In the air I feel something special. I managed to do it! I run even more, because it's a 100 km

on the last day, so with the ultimate result 630,275 km I became the Polish women's 6 day record holder and I reach the podium. As the 3rd woman I'll stand next to the 2nd woman, Sumie from Japan. Wonderful. The 1st place goes to Tina from Denmark with a result of 705,162 km.

I check my weight and I'm completely shocked. An extra 8 kg gathered in my body makes me feel like a monster. I can't fit into my clothes, so I choose my large pyjamas, borrow the bigger shoes and roll on to the announcement of results.

Next day at the airport I can see some people walking in a very bizarre and grotesque but familiar way, just like they were running for 6 days. I recognize them, they are crazy guys who experienced the same as I did last week, we meet again. We suffer but we are happy. This is it.

I made many medical examinations of my body after I came back to Poland. There were some higher parameters in my blood and urine, but it's normal after this kind of effort. I needed to repair my left leg before I could run again. I suppose the swelling was caused by eating too much salt. I know it's needed during hard races but on the other hand it helps retain the water in our bodies. I know other runners also had similar problems with their feet and it could be a defence reaction of our bodies, because it's something new for us. Next time it could be recognized and not too disturbing. Well, I have to check.

After participating in this special race, I'm impressed by the 3100 mile race runners even more. They are like heroes for me now. The pain is an everyday companion for them, but the question is what makes the runners so strong? Fighting with it or setting a friendship relationship with the pain? Both options require a higher level of our consciousness.

From the other side of suffering is greatness. – David Goggins.





# The Mi Mil' Kil 2019

Sarah Cameron



Sarah Cameron: The inner struggle. Photo credit Eyes and Trails TV.

I thought that running 500 kilometres non-stop for the first time would be the interesting story here, but

I was wrong. The running was exactly as you might expect: things hurt, things hurt even more, I reached a

state of acceptance of things hurting and made the choice to keep going.



JB at the briefing

If I were doing a training run and I felt a niggle that was one hundredth of any of the pains I experienced during the race, I would immediately walk back home, declare myself injured and prescribe myself 3 days rest. If you want to run a really long distance and you want it badly enough then at some point you make the decision to ignore the physical discomfort and accept any future consequences.

It's the same for everybody and that is all you really need to know about running over 300 miles.

What makes the story of this race so unique is the other people involved. It is actually a human interest story. Who organises such an event and who takes part?

The Race Director, Jean-Benoît Jaouen (JB), is a seasoned ultra-runner and Spartathlete, with Western States and Trans-Europe finishes to name but a few. One day he decided to challenge himself to run from the north coast of France to the south in a relatively short period of time. He ran from Roscoff, a port on the English Channel, to Gruissan on the sunny Mediterranean coast, a distance of 1,190kms, in 19 days and based on this template, the legendary TransGaule race was born. He has been organising a series of relatively underground and rather





Stéphane Mathieu, 1st overall

bonkers road races ever since, including the Mil'Kil, these have attracted a loyal following. Runners come back year after year, JB has

created a family and he openly sheds a tear when each and every one of the family members safely crosses the finish line in one



Annie Paringaux, 1st female



Ludo

of his races. The convivial atmosphere and feeling of camaraderie is down to him; he announces every single runner and their crew members at the pre-race briefing, remembering the minutiae of their running palmares and recounting anecdotes from previous editions of his races. No matter how busy he is, his world stops when you ask him a question and he makes you feel as if you are the only person in the world. If I continue singing his praises, I will end up with a tear in my own eye, so onwards to the competitors.

As a fan of the sport, I thought I had heard of all the greatest runners in ultra-running, but not so. Turns out some of the best athletes are just quietly doing their own thing, very much under the radar. 35 of them turned out to run the 2019 edition of the MiMil'Kil, 500 kilometres on French tarmac, from Lignac to Lodève.

At the very pointy end we had Stéphane Mathieu, who smashed his own course record by several hours, finishing in a stellar 76h 36. He was crewed by his wife who managed to be as slick as any professional crew and didn't exactly get much sleep herself as Stéphane only rested for 6 hours in total. He didn't stop at all until he got to 360kms... His time affirms him as truly world class, but he chooses to compete in races that touch his heart rather than going for the glory of other higher profile events. Annie Paringaux, the first female, also destroyed the women's course record and recorded the fastest time for the last 15kms, 1 hour and 10 minutes, which is an average of over 14kph. Sure, it's a descent, but it is brutal on exhausted legs and that time would be a cracker for a stand-alone 15k race.

There were three runners in the top 16 who went solo and had no crew to cater to their every need.



## Race Reports



Then we have Crocsman, a.k.a. Jean-Louis



Markus with his 25kg trailer

They sourced their own food and water and bivvied by the side of the road. Swiss-born Markus Jörg, a wiry man in his 60s, pulled his kit in a custom-built trailer, attached to him by

a harness and weighing in at 25kgs. Oliver Loviny and Serge Girard carried bulky packs, wore the same kit throughout and had to resort to drinking from fountains in the extreme



Gérard, his knee brace and his scooter





heat we experienced.

Valderrama, who can best be described as a 'character'. He does no training and he finished in 7th place, in 107 hours, running the entire distance in a pair of rubber Crocs, a Hawaiian shirt and a fedora complete with feather poking out the top. His feet were possibly in the best condition of anybody's and I can't help but compare the state of mine having completed the distance in my expensive trainers and several changes of posh anti-blister socks.

Not forgetting Ludo Depoortere, another in the V3 category and a 1h13 half-marathon runner back in the day, who was a late entry to the race. He put out an appeal on social media for a crew and it was answered by Jean-Paul. They had never met before, they didn't speak the same language (Ludo is Belgian so speaks Flemish) and yet they made the perfect team. Ludo's tactics were to keep moving forward and to skimp on sleep, having less than 5 hours in the boot of Jean Paul's estate car during the entire race. Jean-Paul's biggest task was to keep Ludo's water spray

bottle topped up. We're not talking drinking water here; he used it to keep cool and it's estimated that he went through 50 litres!

Gérard Denis was actually the second person to finish the race but had to be non-classified because following a knee injury he now competes on a scooter. Yes, a push-along scooter, albeit a fairly fancy one. I have contemplated this for hours and I am still not sure how much of an advantage it would be to have a scooter. For the descents, of course, but if you've ever pushed a bicycle up a hill then you will know how hard it is to get the thing up there in order to enjoy the fun bit. There were a lot of hills: 7,700 metres of elevation gain.

At 45 I was one of the youngest runners in the race. There were two septuagenarians who finished, one male and one female. My husband cycled down the final descent and encountered Françoise as she neared the finish. She was running, properly running, and when asked if she was ok, she giggled and said, 'Oh, it's getting a bit hard now.' When she

- 2e Mi Mil'Kil 500 K (16-22/06)
- 1 Stéphane Mathieu!!!; @Σ 76h39'39 - record de l'épreuve
  - 2 Emmanuel Izquierdo; @ 82h59'
  - 3 Rémi Duboq; ~~~@ 85h05' - 1er V2
  - 4 Louis Fouquet!; 86h38' - 2e V2
  - 5 Annie Paringaux!; 94h35' - record féminin
  - 6 Ludo Depoortere; Σ (BEL) 105h52' - 1er V3
  - 7 Jean-Louis Valderrama\*\*!; &δ~~@ 107h53' - 3e V2
  - 8 Markus Jörg!; @ (SUI) 109h54' [SOLO] - 2e V3
  - 9 Sarah Cameron; (GBR) 110h11' - 2e F.
  - 9 Jean-Michel Dréan!; 110h11'
  - 11 Dominique Caillé\*; 116h08'
  - 12 Aníbal Lavandeira; (URU) 120h19'
  - 13 Oliver Loviny; 124h11' [SOLO]
  - 14 Philippe Pollesel; ~@Σ 124h25'
  - 15 Jacques Livenais; 124h27'
  - 16 Serge Girard\*!!; \$ 125h58' [SOLO] - 3e V3
  - 17 Greg Scotta; @ 126h53'
  - 18 Jacky Lesueur; 127h21'
  - 19 Jean-Michel Frémery\*\*\*\*\*!!; \$ 127h35' [SOLO]
  - 20 Bernard Chevillon!; @ 127h49'
  - 21 Patrick Kerzerho; @ 128h09'
  - 22 Daniel Mazeau!!!; 129h31'
  - 23 Bernard Deborde!; & 129h45' - 1er V4
  - 23 Jean-Noël Bergère; 129h45' [semi-SOLO]
  - 25 Chantal Tougne; (SUI) 130h09' - 3e F., 1ère V3F
  - 26 Françoise Perchoc\*\*!; 130h19' - 1ère V4F
  - 27 Sophie Dupuis; 131h52'
  - 28 Philippe Damoiseau; 138h46'
  - 29 André Caroff; 138h57' - 2e V4
  - 30 Hervé Friquet; 145h32'
  - nc Gérard Denis\*\*\*\*\*!!; 5€\$&3@ 79h20' - 1ère trottinette
  - DNF Patrick McCullough (IRL) 430 km
  - DNF Bruno Rouiller\*\*! 327 km
  - DNF Marie-Jeanne Simons\*\*\*\*\*!; &&~~ 310 km
  - DNF Sandra Héral 226 km

got to the finish I told her that she was the same age as my mother and she threw her head back and roared with laughter, a sound that we were to hear over and over until after the final celebrations.

Not everyone finished, although I think that the DNF rate of 4 runners out of 35 over this length of race is astounding. Patrick McCullough, a 2h 29 marathoner who had never run further than 100k before, made it to 430kms before blisters and shin splints got the better of him (perhaps he should have worn Crocs?). What made his story fascinating was that he was crewed by his teenage son, David, on a bicycle with panniers. The two tackled it as a shared

adventure and I hope that not quite making it to the finish didn't dull the experience for them.

I have done some of the most high profile events on the ultra-running scene and I have never been surrounded by such an incredible group of athletes. The best runners in the world are not who we think they are. It was a truly humbling experience for me and I am hooked, not so much in terms of taking on another big challenge but by remaining a part of this eclectic family. Even my husband, who once did a 50k and hated every second, can see the appeal and if he asks me to crew him for the MiMil'Kil in 2021 I will not hesitate!



### Runner Behind Pen Llŷn Ultra Marathon Reveals The Diet Secret Behind His Endurance Running Ability – Cheese Made By Wales's Oldest Dairy Co-operative



**H**uw Williams has run thousands of miles including the world's toughest ultramarathon, the gruelling 250km Marathon de Sables in the Sahara desert. He is the Race Director of the Pen Llŷn Ultras which pushes endurance athletes to their limit running up to 100km in a day.

Huw is sharing his diet tips which may help other runners prepare for this year's Pen Llŷn Ultras event, which will see up to 200 endurance athletes running distances of 50, 75 and 100 miles around the Llŷn Peninsula, on June 29th. The Pen Llŷn Ultra marathon is now in its fourth year having been launched in 2016. Up to 200 runners are expected to take part from all over the UK including international participants from Kansas, Morocco, France, Belgium, Israel and Ireland.

Huw first started eating a 'fat adapted' diet two years ago, when he was training for the 2017 Marathon de Sables, after running his first ultramarathon, the

2016 Snowdonia 50.

Huw said: "I hit an almighty wall at 30 miles on the Snowdonia 50, it made me realise how crucial diet was if I was going to run these great distances. I started training with a high fat, high protein keto diet, and the results were phenomenal."

His routine when preparing for an ultramarathon event involves eating large amounts of cheese from Wales's oldest dairy farming co-operative, South Caernarfon Creameries based at Chwillog near Pwllheli, "Without the cheese from SCC I wouldn't have finished in the top half of all the runners in the world in the Marathon de Sables. I'm no elite athlete but it shows if you have the right balance of nutrients then you can generate the power you need."

This nutritional plan removes the majority of carbohydrates and your body enters a 'keto' state where it becomes efficient at burning fats as a primary fuel. When you are running

long distances you want to avoid a spike of energy, you want to keep your heart rate below an aerobic level, so you are at a constant slow burn like a candle, and you can keep going for longer, avoiding the risk of having a carb or sugar crash, and not to be reaching for a packet of crisps. One of the best sources for good fats as well as things like coconut oil and avocados, is cheese. In particular Dragon cheese is beneficial because per 100g you have got high proportions of high-quality fats and proteins from natural sources and zero carbohydrates. It is very easy to digest because it has not been over processed.

Huw usually starts with the keto diet six months before an event. Breakfast would typically include sliced cheese, bacon, and boiled eggs, or some avocados with cheese. He uses Dragon butter in his bullet coffee, which is coffee in a blender with coconut oil and butter, which helps to boost his keto energy levels. For lunch and dinner Huw incorporates different types of





Dragon cheese with chicken salad, or with avocado salad, and lots of omelettes to keep the flavour varied. He also snacks with cheese, macadamia nuts, and avocados in between, which he can carry easily when out running.

Alan Wyn Jones, MD at South Caernarfon Creameries, said: "We are very proud to have supported Huw over the last two years with his athletic endeavours. He is a true inspiration. We pride ourselves on the high nutrient content of the milk that goes into our cheese, and Huw's success is testament to that quality. We are proud to sponsor the Pen Llŷn Ultras as an exciting and increasingly popular event showcasing the very best of our community and countryside to an international audience of sporting champions."

Huw will be holding a Dragon cheese and pasta party the night before the event to get participants fuelled up.

Other sponsors for the 2019 event include Jenics property management, Griffith Williams & Co accountants, Abererch Sands holiday centre, Likeys,

and Mentrau Bach, with more partners listed on the event website.

## About Huw Williams

Huw first started running on a whim, in 2013. He said: "There was nothing good on the telly and my wife commented, 'why don't you go for a run' and I did. And then I went back out again the next day, and every day after that. We set up the running club in Pwllheli, Llŷn Striders."

Huw has run several ultramarathons including official events and his own independent adventures such as running 135 miles once from his cowshed to Birmingham to attend a running show, and running 120 miles from Holywell to Nefyn along the ancient Pilgrim's Way path, for charity.

Huw is also UK organisational representative for the International Trail Running Association

"I have put over 200 people on the couch to 5k programme. We have people running everything from 5k to 200 miles. The Pen Llŷn Ultra is a

community event, we are really pleased to be able to put on local events because it's good for local people and good for the local economy too."

He said: "The Marathon des Sables is the toughest race on the planet, and I was inspired to keep that spirit of adventure going. It's physically a real high to complete a challenge like that, the euphoria you get is incredible. It's also about having a laugh and it's something everyone can do really, you just need to train."

"It's about perseverance and the adventure. It's putting yourself into an environment where the feeling and the memories you create last way, way after the event finishes."

More info.

To find out more about the Pen Llŷn Ultras visit: [penllynultra.co.uk](http://penllynultra.co.uk)

To find out more about South Caernarfon Creameries visit: [sccwales.co.uk](http://sccwales.co.uk)

To get an overview of what a keto diet is and how it works visit: [www.elsaswholesomelife.com](http://www.elsaswholesomelife.com)



# Dolomites Ultra Trail 2019 - Once Across The Dolomites

Martin Bacher



When I heard for the first time, towards the end of 2019, there would be a new ultra distance of 81 km for the 10th anniversary of the Brixen Dolomiten Marathon, it was immediately clear to me: "I have to do this race which is virtually on my doorstep." The idea of starting in the middle of the night on the dome square in Brixen, running through woods and forest paths into the low mountain range, on high alpine climbs across the Dolomites, and then arriving back in Brixen at some point, was immediately thrilling. Now it was about finding a running partner for the race because the DUT 81 km can only be done as a team of two. He was found quite soon, and we registered as, "79 vintage trip" for the race. The quite harmless team name was only camouflage because we were immediately clear after the first strategy discussion: We do not make the race a trip but a really cool trail run with a precise time conception.

At the end of May we started to prepare ourselves especially for this race. Since the race distance of more than 80 kilometres and a little less than 5,000 metres of altitude were new territory for me, I was already looking forward to this new and different training. As an enthusiastic trail runner I am always on the lookout for new tracks and love challenges out of my comfort zone. Thus the DUT 81 km was exactly right for me. During the first training sessions together we soon noticed that as team partners we fitted

together really well and the long training runs were still fun even after umpteen hours. We built everything into our running training: steep climbs, technical downhill, night training, heat training... and especially we profited from the expert knowledge of my team partner's sports studies. After the 6 training weeks we were in good form and really hot for the race.

On Friday at 06.07 it was finally time and my race highlight for 2019 had finally come. A few hours before the start there was a short briefing with the most important racing facts for the DUT 81 km. The last 2 hours before the start I was in the resting area for runners to prepare myself mentally for the race and to go through the race strategy again briefly.

At 00:01 o'clock it was time for the start of the Dolomites Ultra Trail. That was also a high time, because my team partner was hardly braking...:-) On the first 2 kilometres I was amazed how fast the field had started and just thought to myself, "Hey guys, this is not a half marathon!" The first part to Aferer went on moderately steep forest tracks up to the low mountain range, which we deliberately did not start too fast. We continued on steeper forest paths and on a longer forest path going to Russiskreuz. Running at night had its own special charm and on this section we slowly started to increase our speed. We went on a charming steep ascent up to the mountain range of the Aferer Geisler,





further over a beautiful trail to Zans in Villnöss and up to the Schlüter-hut. A short look at the nightly contours

of the Villnöss Geisler peaks impressed us and some other trail runners. At the Schlüter-hut we were looking forward to a hearty soup and the two relaxed volunteers at the refreshment point provided for a good mood. We continued in easy ups and downs on beautiful Dolomite paths to Medalges and then very steeply on boulders up to the Roascharte at about 2,600 meters. On this part of the route there was also a fascinating dawn to be seen and as the crowning glory on the way to the Roascharte, we were rewarded with a breathtaking sunrise.

After a short descent towards Val Gardena, we went steeply up again into the heart of the Puez Geisler Nature Park and also to the highest point of the DUT 81 km at 2,700 meters. On dream trail paths with views to Langkofel and Plattkofel, Sellastock and Cir peaks we continued to the Puez hut. On this section we made great progress and overtook team by team. After a short meal at the Puezhütte we were already looking forward to the long downhill to Campill. The demanding and steep descent in the upper part, which then led gradually and more moderately through the Antersasc valley, is a dream piece for every trail runner.

As we arrived in the mountaineering village Campill, our women were already waiting and pushed us with the message that we were currently in fifth place. This information pleased us very much, we were however careful with prognoses, particularly since only scarcely 50 km were mastered and from here one of the key places of the running began. In the very steep ascent towards PeitlerKofel we were exposed to the blazing sun and knew





## Race Reports



that we had to divide it up well, as a longer running phase began afterwards, which we wanted to run absolutely briskly. We mastered the section from Campill, Peitler Kofel and down to the Rodelalm extremely well and were able to secure fourth place here. Moreover, this section was really cool and the track was varied. From here we were inspired by the feeling that the last ascent had begun. Then we continued on the marathon route to Gabler Graben, Rossalm to Kreuztal, where we were accompanied by many marathon runners (as we have shared certain parts of the marathon route). After a short look back at the Geisler



Spitzen we entered Kreuztal where a mega mood prevailed due to the many spectators. Our women mobilized here, in lightning speed, a whole group of people who welcomed us with loud cheers. A really awesome feeling, which we remember especially well. With a sugar-caffeine mixture we prepared ourselves for the final long downhill to the finish in Brixen, 1,500 hm steep and demanding downhill was still to be mastered here. With the information that there was enough distance between our pursuers and third place was out of reach, we could slow down the speed a little to be safe on the way. In order to counteract the







heat, we used several methods for cooling: Water trough, wet rags at the supply points...something like that works wonders :-)

On the last 2 kilometers in the city, a broad grin spread across our faces, we had made it in a few minutes. The finish was awesome, the emotions were high and the feeling of happiness to have made the premiere of the Dolomites Ultra Trail with 81 km and 4.728 hm was and is indescribable. My team partner Sigi Innerebner and I are particularly proud of the final time of 12 hours and 49 minutes, the category victory and the overall fourth position.



With the Dolomites Ultra Trail, the organisers have succeeded in organising a special trail running event, which can hardly be surpassed in terms of scenery. The combination of technical ascents and descents, longer running passages and the varied course in all its variations is what makes the racetrack so special. Many thanks to the OK Team of the Brixen Dolomiten Marathon around Christian Jocher. Special thanks also go to our wives Petra and Maria for their great support. They accompanied us from the start, were present at various road crossings and supply points and cheered us and other runners on with music and a great atmosphere.





# Enduroman Run To The Max 48 Hours

Stephen West

17th – 20th May 2019.

I have no real recollection of why I decided to enter this race back at the end of 2018. I didn't know much about Enduroman events, they don't get a huge push on social media, unlike some of the other larger events across the UK Ultra running scene.

I had come off the back of a good (for me) SW100 in June 2018. I finished the 106 miles and 20,000ft in 32 hours, and I ran well, running strong until the end. I genuinely wanted to carry on. I think it was that feeling of wanting to carry on that made me look for an event that was longer. I figured that if 106 miles and 20,000ft took 32 hours then a relatively flat (lol) route with a longer time allowance should mean I could go further, but how far? Enduroman therefore fitted the bill. Up to 60 hours and no need to carry a huge amount of kit due to the 1.1 mile loop in the New Forest. I had expectations of 200 miles plus, although I acknowledged in my own mind that I have never woken up the next day after a 100 and felt I could just go and run again. It wouldn't be as simple as sleep, wake up and run again just because the race hadn't finished. I was definitely in unknown territory with this one.

Fast forward to February 2019 and the Arc of Attrition. It got the better of me in 2018 when I was under-prepared, mentally and in terms of kit. Not this time, I took my sweet revenge on that brutal race and in the process of doing so I spent the whole St Ives to Porthtowan section talking to Carl Howells, King of the run at Enduroman, though initially I didn't know this. We talked of races and the year ahead and it became clear he had the 202 miles record for the 60 hour Run to the Max event at Enduroman. Carl made the final section of the Arc look simple, even more amazing as just 5 days earlier he had finished the 150 mile Winter Viking Way (Cockbain events). This guy was a machine, and it dawned on me rather quickly that if Carl can only just manage 200 miles, then I had no chance. I reassessed my goals and focused on recovery from the Arc and some decent training going into Enduroman, hoping to just do what I could.

The looped format does have advantages; no need to carry the kit, no navigational issues, always a place to rest/sleep within easy reach. Of course they aren't for everyone and I didn't know if there were for me - yet. I was more worried about the mental aspect of the loops than the distance, so I found myself a little 0.8 mile loop around a lake close to my house and ran around it - lots! I got up to 20 repeats around the lake and over time I became less bothered by the monotony of it all. Still bothered, but a bit less bothered.

I had also spent time reflecting on my poor performance at Arc of Attrition 2018. I still got to 80 miles inside 24 hours in Cornwall in February in horrible conditions but I did DNF; and my good performances at both SW100 and the Arc 2019. The main difference I could recognise was food. I ate a lot during SW100 and twice as much during Arc 2019 than Arc 2018. So how much food was I going to need for Enduroman?

I went to see a friend and Endurance Coach (Lawrence Cronk @ Endurprep in Cardiff) and he recommended for a variety of reasons having my VO2 max tested. I did, and the results were OK, although I still think I bailed a bit earlier (great mental strength Westy!), but I held out just long enough to find my VO2 max. One piece of information I did come by was how many calories an hour I burned in various HR zones, alongside where my anaerobic and aerobic thresholds are; i.e. stay in this zone and well out of this zone when racing. Without boring you of all the details, but I do recommend you consider getting it done, it's very interesting, under 120 bpm, I was burning approximately 800 calories an hour. In this zone I get 50% of these from food and 50% from stored body fat. Therefore I needed to consume 400 calories an hour. I was then able to figure out how many calories I needed to take with me. 55 hrs running @400 calories and hour = 22,000 calories! Sounds a lot but over 3 days not impossible to consume, you'd think anyway.

So my nutrition plan was sorted, eat every couple of laps and a big meal before any longer rest/sleep and eat again upon waking up. I also had a rough pacing strategy sorted, start slow and slow down. As well as this, I had a secret weapon, a support crew (person). A good friend, Leighton who I had convinced to run the marathon on the Saturday of the Enduroman weekend, as training for his attempted revenge on Ironman Austria in July this year. (I overlooked telling him the bit about the laps until after he had entered and paid) I've never had a crew before, but I knew it would save me a load of time not having to cook food for myself, which meant I would be more likely to actually take the breaks to eat.

My training had gone well, a couple of hundred loops around the 0.8 mile lake and some good mileage weeks, 60-84 for 6/7 weeks up to the end of April after a month's recovery from the Arc. No injuries and feeling strong. I even managed to twice break my 5k PB on my lunchtime treadmill runs, 19:43 then 19:25. Things were looking good.

I started to think about what the camp setup would look like. As a family we go camping a few times a year so I have



all the gear but I really didn't fancy taking the 6 berth tent down the following day, based on how I felt the following day on previous 100 mile races. I was lucky enough to have a friend in work who agreed to let me use his VW Crafter van for the weekend. It's no camper (yet) but it's big enough for the double airbed and all the gear, and with an event shelter tagged to the side of it, this would work a treat for our needs.

## Race Day

My plan was to run the whole 60 hours available of the race, bar a 5 hour sleep break around midnight on Saturday. I wanted to get started at 4 pm on Friday when the event began. I left Cardiff around 9am and picked up Leighton around 10.30, we headed to the supermarket to buy even more food (£60 of pure rubbish!) then headed down South. The journey was uneventful with a lunchtime McDonalds stop to ensure I wasn't starting the race hungry.

We arrived about 20 mins later than planned but quickly figured out where to go, and where I needed to be at 3.55pm. Leighton hasn't really done camping before so we put the shelter up, I taught him how to use the gas stove, water carrier and other odds and ends. I got changed and we headed to the startline by the turning circle which I would learn to love and hate in equal measure over the next 48 hours.

The triple Ironman had been underway since midday and they were nearing the end of their gruesome 7.8 mile swim



in a cold lake. The 200 miler was starting at the same time as us and they got away first, before Chris Ette (RD) came back and got us away too.

The startline of a small, low key, very long race, is a very uneventful thing. We basically walked over the timing matt and out onto the course proper for the first time. The first part of the course is a short uphill drag up the road to the trail. Naturally as time went on that short drag felt longer and steeper with every passing hour. Rui from Portugal disappeared off up the hill and was out of sight by the time I got to the top. I had planned on walking the whole of the first lap to assess it and figure out where to walk/run etc. but at the top of that short slope, was a lovely downhill trail past our van for a few hundred yards, cannot run that!

It wasn't long before I had caught and slowly passed the other few entrants, including an older couple who were walking the whole thing, with proper nights sleeps. I have rarely seen someone walk as fast as he did, he eventually got to 100 miles sometime late on Sunday evening, incredible really considering I was running and not getting lots of sleep.

From here the trail turns left and heads into the wooded area behind the lakes and you start dodging the tree roots which are prominent on the ground. It was easy and comfortable early on, but again I knew that as time passed and tiredness started to kick in, dodging those tree roots would become harder and harder.

As you leave the wooded area the lap takes a generally uphill turn after passing the toilet block which was helpfully placed for when needed later in the race. There was a couple of hundred yards drag up a gentle slope, easily runnable now, oh how that would change, with a sharp left turn and a nice flat 20 yard section before kicking up a steep hill past the tennis courts. A nice drop down before the nasty and slightly gnarly uphill stretch with roots for a few minutes before the drop back down into the turning circle.

I should mention a lovely Irish contingent now. About 10 yards before you enter the turning circle was a large tent, which was home to the support crew of Mark and Connor, in the 200 miler. Mark smashed the first 100 in a very fast time, whereas Connor was slower, but not that slow, going through the 100 in just under 30 hours. The family were a huge support to everyone on the route, giving smiles and encouragement. Mark dropped sometime time later with his knee in a bad way, but Connor was on a mission. He slept once for an hour, he did not slow down, competing his second 100 in just over 30 hours and coming in 59:45 overall for the 182 laps and 200 miles. The performance of the weekend in my book, and the only finisher of the 200. A guy called Steve was leading the 200 after Mark dropped with Connor a few miles behind, but Steve's ITB flared up badly and after not seeing him for a few hours, I figured he



# Race Reports

had dropped and gone for a sleep before heading off home the next day.

So, lap one done and I now knew what to expect. This is where the race report starts to get difficult as there were no new landmarks and no new events of particular significance. I forced myself to eat every few hours and it quickly became apparent that our camping pitch was far from ideal. When we first pitched up it felt like a good place, close to the route, but on that first lap I realised that those clever people who had done the event before, had camped within 5 feet of the route and a trip to their tent/van would cost them seconds. Every time I went to the van, even before accounting for time stationary, it cost me about 1 minute. I know, just 1 minute, but I was working hard on the runnable sections to take seconds out of other people each lap and to lose a minute every time I needed to eat and top up water/tailwind was eroding that effort and very frustrating.

Even so, it was too late to move the van and gazebo now, so I had to accept it and deal with it. I learnt at the arc if you don't accept things and move on mentally, that will ruin your race as fast, if not faster than the physical aspects will.

I don't really recall anything particular during the early evening, aside from meeting a late starter to the 48 hour race, Fiona Caldwell. At this point I still planned on going to 60 hours and believed the result was the furthest distance in the up to 60 hours. With Fiona starting 4 hours



behind me, I wasn't therefore worried about her being able to get close to me at the end. More on that later. We did need to put the headtorch on shortly after. Whilst most of the route was still light until gone 10pm, one part of the wooded section in particular was very covered and dark. Mistakes can happen all too easily so I wasn't going to take any chances for the sake of one extra lap without the torch on. Aside from seeing someone every now and again, my only companions were my own thoughts and the growing familiarity of the route. I went through 25 miles (on my Garmin) in 5:07 which was quicker than I wanted, but at the same time I knew I would slow overnight to stay safe around the tree roots and other obstacles so I knew this hadn't burnt me out too much.

As ever, head torch running at night gives you tunnel vision. Add to that mist starting to rise from the lake, and it created an almost blizzard like affect. The light was shining back from the moisture in the air and it was fairly disorientating most of the night. I was also feeling the mental impact of the laps by now and so I decided to put some music on through the night, planning to turn it off again with the sunrise.

Sunrise, as always, creates a new lift of energy and I picked up the pace a little again, being more confident about my footing with each lap. To be honest, by this point, I probably could have run the route with my eyes closed. I wasn't entirely sure I was in the lead, I knew that Rui who had started so strong, had problems. I had passed him a few times by morning and I hadn't seen him running since those first few yards. I so wanted to ask the marshals what position I was in and who was where and how many laps, but I didn't want to get ahead of myself and think that I could win, would win. We were only 14 hours into a 60 hour race, nothing in the scheme of things. I tried to tell myself to just keep plodding, keep it steady but not slow. The idea of running everything runnable, even the short 20 yard section was working, and I was lapping people every few laps in some cases and every few hours in others, but either way I was confident I was building a half decent lead.

I stopped in to see Leighton prior to his marathon which started at 10am on Saturday morning. For some reason I was feeling tired. I'd been up for 27 hours, running for 16hrs and I had covered 70 miles by this point, I've gone 45 hours awake before and not been tired. I didn't want to sleep but my mind was struggling. I've read a lot about people taking short naps for a mental reset. I decided to have a 30 min lie down as Leighton went to his start. I ate some food, tried to get comfy and slept maybe for 10 minutes. I felt groggy, but I forced myself up, laced up and went out. It worked within a minute or two I was flying again, some of my faster laps of the day.

I was lapping people again, making sure I was eating regularly, despite the frustration of losing a few minutes each time I did. I had also realised that Rui had dropped





out by now which cemented thoughts in my mind that I could and now I really wanted to win this race. It could well be my one and only ever chance of winning an event outright.

I was chatting to people every time I passed them and we always chatted about how they were doing. I had a large lead on Fiona due to the 4 hour delayed start on her part, but I was worried about Melissa Poultnery. It turned out Melissa took a fairly long sleep on Friday night and was planning the same on Saturday night. All of a sudden though my attention focused on Fiona. After I took a 2 hour kip early evening on Saturday, I woke up having around a 20 mile lead over Fiona, although Melissa was still closer at this time. Whilst chatting to Fiona it was very clear that she never sleeps! She hardly eats, but she definitely doesn't sleep, she just keeps on going. This worried me a little, I knew I wanted to sleep again on Saturday evening and that she had a 4 hour buffer so I figured I needed a big lead, but how big? I decided to push again until lap 91 and 100 miles were officially up, which I thought would be around 12.30am. I managed this almost on the stroke of midnight. I really wanted to stay out a bit longer as I felt so good, I knew I had a 23 mile lead and that should be enough to keep Fiona at bay for a few hours sleep and even the 4 hr buffer.

I went straight to bed, uncomfortable due to sore legs and stiff ankles, I managed to remember to set the alarm for

5am and got 4.5 hours sleep. I woke refreshed and moving OK. I had a large bowl of full fat yoghurt and granola, which I found worked really well during the day before, and was a nice breakfast type meal, so that made sense. Again, I was running smoothly within a minute or two and picked up a decent pace, passing Fiona within a lap or two. However, after having a brief chat with her I realised that she hadn't slept as I thought might be the case and she was now only about 10 miles behind. In other words a short enough distance to give her a sniff of victory in that 4 hour buffer if I didn't stretch it. My focus for the day ahead was clear, I had the music on, the mind sorted, and a commitment to myself to eat every 2 hours at the latest and push all day.

I was still running well but I had pains in my left shin and a swollen ankle from inflamed tendons, resulting from an injury first incurred back in October 2017 at Gower 50. It actually hurt less to run than it did to walk but it was with a very awkward gait and the injury was getting more painful by the hour.

Since first hearing about Enduroman and being fairly confident I could cover 200 miles in the 60 hours, to lowering that expectation after spending time with Car Howells at the Arc, I had hoped for 150+ in the 60 hours. During Saturday I had a chat with Chris the RD who explained the actual race result was determined by people's 48 hour distance so I had decided to stop my race at 48 hours, which gave me a decent chance of not being a zombie for work on Tuesday. Having lowered my time limit to 48 hours, I wasn't sure what I could do, 130 miles seemed more than achievable and should give me the victory as well. I was able to work out that I didn't need to push too hard to achieve this, and a nice steady pace with the odd walking lap to give the injury a rest, would get me over 130 by the 4pm deadline.

I had been listening to music since around 8pm on Friday evening, and had rotated between every Oasis, UB40 and Stereophonics track on Spotify (several times over), I was finally getting bored and in need of some new tunes. Being a clubber of the late 90's/early 2000's I opted for some Gatecrasher classics and was again reinvigorated to pick up the pace and get a few extra laps in the bag ahead of the others.

A guy called Peter, who had started off in the 200 miler, but was having horrific blister pains and had dropped down to the 100 miler, was really struggling. After a brief chat and realising that he didn't have any other trainers, but he was my size, I offered him my spare pair of Hoka Clifton 5's. He loved them and instantly picked up the pace and got his 100 finished. I was over the moon for him and only slightly jealous that he had run in my new Clifton 5's before I had.

Connor was still smashing out his laps with his poles. The guy was relentless and everyone could sense the growing



# Race Reports

anticipation that he might just get the 200 mile finish done inside the time limit, only ever achieved once previously. As stated earlier he did with 15 minutes to spare.

More and more people on my 48 hour race were commenting now that I had this in the bag and how far was I actually going to go? In truth I also believed I had already covered sufficient distance to win, I was not going to give anyone a sniff of victory in their buffer after I finished at 4pm so I decided to push as long as I could and maximise my distance.

I think around 3pm I finally succumbed to the fact that no one was going to catch me. It's a funny thing when your mind accepts it's done. It happened to me during Autumn 100 (my first 100) in October 2016; in the last 1.5 miles I was able to say to myself, 'I've done it', and instantly I slowed to a stupid pace as my body started to resist moving any quicker. The same thing happened here. I had time for 3 more laps from 3pm, I just couldn't bring myself to run anything now. The first lap after 3pm took me 25 mins, 5 minutes longer than anything else in the whole race and knowing I didn't need another 2 to win, I decided to run my final lap on the one after and finish before the 4pm deadline.

One of the brilliant yet simple things about this race is your final lap (of whatever race you are doing). Loops are a sociable experience as people overtake you, you overtake them, there are often people of a similar pace who you don't see at all. So, to celebrate your achievement you run the last lap in reverse and see everyone on the course, twice, high fiving as you go around. Crossing the timing mat and turning to start the final lap to Matt Brown's announcement of me currently leading the 48hr race with the applause from everyone supporting their runners, was a really great feeling. I had worked hard for this, and I was determined to enjoy it.

Several people joked, 'don't get lost' and strangely everything looked totally different in reverse. I was trying to work out which bits were next, it was really tricky at first. I think the route would be even harder in reverse, but then it was my 135th mile so perhaps it was more than anything.

I did have the common sense to know that I would be stopping and sitting down at the finish so I stopped in at the van to get my coat and a bite to eat first. Due to this and the slow pace, I actually saw some runners 3 times on this lap. I ran the final downhill into the finish, watching the video back I've walked for a bus quicker than this! Matt spotted me rounding the finishing straight and announced my arrival saying that it was the fastest I had moved all day.

I failed to spot the inflatable finish line and stopped short, before having to get moving again under direction from Chris Ette. It was finally done, 122 laps and 134.8 miles covered. Chris gave me my medal and then simply yanked



the timing chip off my swollen ankle, which as you can see in the photo, hurt a little!

I was expecting the final result to come in around 8pm when Fiona's 48 hours finished, although I know she had said to others that she was always planning to stop at 110 laps. I wasn't going to risk what would, in all likelihood, be my one and only race victory, so I pushed on to 122 laps, if I lost by 1 lap after 48 hours having had the ability to do a few more, I would never have forgiven myself! Given the size of my lead, 17 laps at 4pm, Chris also gave me the trophy there and then, which was a very welcome surprise and one I wasn't going to dispute.

I hobbled my way back to the van and contemplated going for a shower, to be honest as Leighton has had no sense of smell since birth, I decided against it. Instead we went for a drive to buy beer from the local supermarket. It rained most of the evening, so whilst I quite fancied sitting out and drinking next to a campfire, I was too cold so we





stayed in the van and listened to tunes (most definitely not any Oasis, UB40 or Stereophonics!) and drunk Stella. We had a good few beers and watched everyone continuing to plod on with their laps, including Connor looking as strong as ever on each and every lap. He was just tapping out the miles with his poles. He was metronomic and whilst he had 27 miles to go the last time I checked the live tracking results, he had 8 hours to do it and we were confident he could get the job done, which he did.

In summary, Enduroman is a great event, bringing together half IM, IM, back to back IM, with continuous double IM and continuous triple IM, marathon runners and 100/200 mile runners. The family feeling over the whole weekend is renowned and is now something I understand. The event is low key but despite this, brilliantly organised and supported. The run course sounds easy on paper, just 100ft per lap, but think about the 182 laps Connor did, that's 18,200ft! No easy task.

I wasn't sure if I would like the looped approach, it worried me more than the distance, having done it, I can finally relate to what everyone else says, 'it's brilliant, so sociable.' You meet so many people and make good friends, as you get to talk to them so much over the course of the event.

I'm already thinking what distance could I achieve over 24hrs on a track? I know my winning distance in this event is below what other 48 hour races would need to take victory, I'm fine with that. I know people who have run further than 135 miles in 24hrs, maybe not on that route with 12,000ft elevation to boot, again, I'm fine with that.

6 days on and my swollen ankle is almost back to normal with a slight pain but no swelling. I have 45 coastal miles next Saturday where a good friend is the RD so I'm going to do all I can to make sure I'm on the start line, including not going for a run until race day.

Next up for me after that is 'Bring Out Your Dead', an insanely difficult race from MudCrew over a horrendous 5 mile section of the SWCP in Cornwall with huge elevation and an insane amount of steps per repeat. If I thought the Enduroman course was hard, I think I'm in for another surprise in early August.

I would encourage everyone to give Enduroman a go at some point. It's a great event and one I will return to in the next few years to have a proper go at the 200 and see what happens. One thing I'm sure of, after watching Connor rip the course up, I'll be taking my poles with me!



# Brecon Beacons Ultra

Gemma Carter



Race day started at the delightful time of 3am on June 1st, staggering around putting on race kit half asleep (Lycra is so hard to put on when you're tired). In the car for the long journey from London to the Brecon Beacons, pretty much a straight line west on the M4 until you 'run out of English road'. Simple! Pass the coffee...

The Brecon Beacon Mountain Ultra is 34 miles long with a nice amount of elevation at 6200ft gain predominantly in the first half. There were two optional distances, the trail race at 22 miles and the ultra at 34 miles.

The Ultra race route starts in the small village of Trefil at the boundary of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The route heads out towards the Central Brecon Beacons on fast trails with the first summit of Pant-y-Creigiau followed by dropping down and a

climb past waterfalls to the top of Fan Y Big.

The route then drops down a road (to a checkpoint... great biscuits by the way) before looping round to Cribyn, then Pen Y Fan. From here the trail route joins the Ultra at the top of Pen Y Fan followed by Corn Du before continuing down past the Storey Arms Centre.

The second half follows the Beacons Way to the summit of Fan Llia, and then a fast, fun descent down to Ystradfellte before flatter miles to the finish.

After a quick breakfast en route in the car (cold pot of service station Greggs porridge...mmm classy). I arrived at the Trefil Rugby club for registration lining up for an 8am start.

The first few miles were nice and easy, flowing well with the lead pack of men as we scouted for the 'guide markers' and used our maps to find the way. The usual race chit chat ensued... I felt good and after the first checkpoint found myself ahead up the climb of Pen Y Fan (love a good hike I do).

The sun was out properly, heat rising and now ruefully regretting dismissing the RD's advice of suncream (I currently have a burnt nose... I never learn).

Up the climb towards the back side of Cribyn and I stretched ahead, looking forward to the next climbs which were becoming increasingly swarmed by tourists.

After a delightfully fun and fast descent to the road crossing I cracked on, Jaffa cakes in hand and I enjoyed pushing myself hard over more quiet and serene terrain.

The delight of the final miles was crossing under the Sgwd Yr Eira Waterfall, literally (anyone thirsty?!).

Last checkpoint down (and after



having to wake them up from their sunbathing slumber after being a tad early), the last three miles were a good opportunity to press on to the finish in Hirwaun and the finish gantry.

A great day out, in a glorious part of Wales, in great weather. Perfect day! A big thanks to [RunWalkCrawl](#) for a fantastically organised event.





# L'ÉTOILE VERTE D'ÉGUZON

*Val de Creuse - Berry - Limousin*

**300 km**  
**6 étapes**



**1-6  
SEPT.  
2019**

*Au pays de l'arbre et de l'eau...*

- ▶ Etape Val de Creuse Sud 45 km
- ▶ Etape Val de Creuse Nord 49 km
- ▶ Etape La Gauloise Verte 51 km
- ▶ Etape La Berrichonne 56 km
- ▶ Etape La Limousine 65 km
- ▶ Etape Le Tour du Lac 29 km (GR)



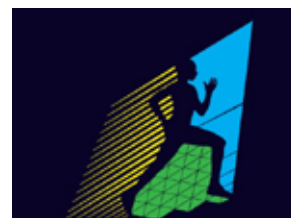
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# The Severn Challenge

Part 1

Sharon Gayter



### 23rd – 27th May 2019 - 220 miles

After injury in 2018 scuppered my plans to run from John O'Groats to Land's End, this was firmly put back on my calendar for 2019. The year started with a 6 day race in Athens to work out my running and sleeping strategy. The unseasonal stormy weather slowed me down but I still ended up with two British V55 records

for 48 hours and 6 days. The date was set for 21st July 2019, with the crew that had been put on hold since 2018. All that remained was for me to gather my fitness and boost my confidence that I was still capable of running this distance and attempting the record.

The Severn Challenge, organised by Ultra Running Ltd was the perfect daily distances for the training I

required. A stage race from the source to the mouth of the River Severn, daily distances approximately 26, 45, 60, 60, 26 miles.

### Day 1 - Thursday 23rd May - The Hafren ultra - 26 miles

Arrival at the organisation headquarters near Worcester was to be between 7 and 7.30am for a departure at 8am. I drove there knowing my van would be securely parked while away and I was immediately greeted by organiser Steve and the rest of the runners for that day. You could also run individual days as well as the whole lot, so runners would join and leave as their plans dictated. A cabin sized bag for my sleeping bag, mat and kit was specified and would be taken between overnight camps, so I only needed to run with a small day pack with a short list of essential things to carry. I carried a basic first aid kit, emergency food, waterproof jacket, hat and gloves, tissues, maps, route description and a hand-held GPS with downloaded GPX files for navigation (Garmin 64S).

We were driven to the start point, around 3.5 miles away from the source and the nearest point accessible by road. The drive took around 2 hours and we were on our way at 10.30am. The weather was mild, but a bit breezy, so I wore shorts and a long-sleeved top. The route was glorious, wonderful, easy to find tracks that meandered up to the source with fine views of the surrounding hills. While still on the way up Thomas Loe was already on his way down, a 2hr 38min marathon runner. I arrived at the stone circle that surrounded a bog with Dick immediately behind me. This was the source of the River Severn. There was a stone slab path that led to it so there was no need for wet feet and wading in bogs.

The route returned to where







we started, which was the first checkpoint. Paul and Greg arrived with a high five as I started the return leg. The checkpoint was at Rhyd picnic site at 7.6 miles and Steve was waiting with encouraging words and ready to refill bottles and he had a boot full of snacks. Steve was in a G4 orange Land Rover which was easy to spot. The back opened up like a table with a variety of snacks and supplies. I refilled a bottle with water and was soon on my way. After around 20 minutes of running, Tom appeared

from behind, he had done a little extra and had been on the wrong side of the river so he had to backtrack. The route was downhill on a very quiet road before crossing the river again and before much time had passed Steve appeared again (7.6 miles). A quick refill of my bottles and a couple of peanut butter sandwiches and it was onwards for the final leg of the day.

About 3 miles from the finish the route did a big semi-circle leading to the campsite. It was when I had just gone by a farm that I struggled to

find the route. Some fields had been dug up and the GPS line was pointing through a line of trees. There was a small pond and it looked like the route should go around the left hand side but all I could find was a barbed wire fence and so I went around the rough stuff on the right hand side and continued for some way until I could find a line that took me closer to the GPS route. There did not appear to be much of a track here but I was at least heading in the right direction. Soon a solid track appeared followed by a tarmac road to Caersws. The route went across fields to pick up a road. I was just 200m from the finish line but my GPS sent me right up a track to a set of houses. My GPS said I was finished but I continued up the track until I could go no further. No campsite, no finish. I sat down not knowing where to go. I got the map out, it said the same as my GPS, that I was in the right place, something was wrong. On the drive to the start Steve had pointed out the overnight venue and this certainly wasn't what he pointed out, where was that point in relation to where I was now? I took my phone out to ring Steve, a dog had come out of the nearby house closely followed by his owner wondering what this person was doing slumped on the ground at the end of his garden. He couldn't have been more accommodating, suggesting where the nearest campsite was, back down the long track I had just run up! He even kindly offered to give me a lift, which I politely declined before being resigned to run back down the road.

We were all wearing tracking devices so Steve was anticipating me finishing and realised where I had gone. He rang me but I could not answer the phone in time and he left a message with directions. I was running back down the road, as I had not answered the phone Steve had jumped in the Land Rover and was heading towards me. Problem solved, at the end of this track, turn right and 200m on the left was the finish. Steve arrived before I did and I could not believe





# Race Reports



I was in touching distance of the finish and could almost have seen the finish line had I not turned off, it was nice to finish, collect a medal for “The Hafren Challenge” and a buff. Steve was about to direct me to the facilities when Dick appeared so he could combine the tour. There were showers, toilets, an indoor kitchen with plug in points and a line of pop up tents, each with a competitor’s bag inside. There was a kettle with tea, coffee and milk to help ourselves. We all had a coloured reusable mug

allocated to be eco-friendly, mine was pink, easy to remember.

This was a luxurious site, no other tents here and a gorgeous barn conversion which had ensuite rooms. Maesmawr Art Centre was the venue with pieces of art all over and a gallery to look around. The afternoon had been pretty warm and the sun was strong now as we sat outside on picnic tables. Once we had all arrived and recovered Steve popped out for some fish and chips for dinner. As it was

Greg’s 50th Birthday, there was even an extra treat from Steve, a carrot cake with candles and we all sang Happy Birthday to Greg. A good way to spend a memorable Birthday.

We retreated later that evening to prepare for the next day. The owners were watering the vegetable patch next to us and although the peacock looked very pretty, it did make the loudest screeching noise ever at night. Along with the chickens in the morning and the sheep bleating it was a typical outdoor night, but I loved camping. My watch had a distance of 26.93 miles, 2,480 feet of climbing and the official time was 5 hrs 32 mins. I had lost around 20-25 minutes at the end of this event, not a problem as this was just training for me and not a race. According to my watch I slept for 6 hrs 20 mins from 11pm until 5:20am (3 hrs 46 mins of deep sleep which was impressive for me).

## Day 2 - Friday 24th May - The Severn Plod Ultra – 45 miles

We were allowed to start earlier than the planned 7:30am and it was agreed to start at 6:30am for myself, Dick, Paul and Greg. Tom was to start at 7:30 being a lot faster than the rest of us. Although I was up in plenty of time and had porridge for breakfast (there was also toast if we wanted it), I was still putting my shoes on at the start time and we started at 6:35am. I was just too relaxed and it was pretty embarrassing holding up the others, although they did not grumble. With my bag packed I left it in the tent. I never once lifted this bag, it was always placed in my tent upon arrival and taken away with the tent when we departed. I guess Steve must be doing a lot of exercise putting up/packing away tents and carrying kit bags all over.

It was another wonderful sunny start to the day although I kept a long sleeved shirt on as it was pretty cold first thing. We soon set off across fields of long grass. The heavy dew





soaked my feet and I struggled to find the way out of some of the fields. Usually by the time I found the exit gate or stile, the other lads caught me and so it continued. There was a fair bit of climbing to start with and although the first checkpoint was only 6 miles away, it took around 85 minutes to arrive with my slow navigation.

After another little bit of climbing the path followed a flat canal and riverside path that was very easy to navigate to the next two checkpoints at 10.8 and 9.3 miles away. The route then picked up Offas Dyke path as the heavens opened and a few heavy showers fell. Unfortunately the route along the dyke was heavily overgrown with grass and pretty uneven underfoot, it was back to wet feet again and I walked much of the overgrown stuff as it was difficult to maintain my balance as the grass wrapped around my ankles. As I hit the road Steve suddenly appeared in the Land Rover. Although the written description clearly described

the route in detail, I used the GPS as my eyesight is pretty poor for reading and so I was never sure where Steve would pop up. Apparently this was a little earlier than the planned 8.4 miles but Dick was sitting in the passenger seat and I was sad to see his departure. His pace had dropped and after a brief chat he was struggling with some stiff legs. I refilled with supplies, the last leg, instead of being 8.5 miles would now be a mile or two further.

There was also some more difficult navigation ahead, again I was never far from the route but actually finding the track and the appropriate gate or stile was the problem and a few more overgrown tracks followed, some with the odd stinging nettle. Eventually I emerged onto a road which continued to the campsite at Montford Bridge. After the finish the previous day I made sure to listen to the name of the campsite this time and I was glad I did. I arrived at Montford Bridge to find two campsites, one on the left and one on the right. I pondered the name of the first one on the left. No, that is not the name, I glanced to the right where I could see the other campsite, and there in the distance was Steve waving with the orange Land Rover and soon the day was done at Wingfield campsite.

It seemed quite a while before Greg and Paul arrived. Apparently they had continued on Offas Dyke for a bit, observant Steve had noticed this on the trackers and rang them. They said they only lost about 10-15 mins. Similar to the first day, it was very reassuring that progress was being followed and the organiser knew where we were and helped out where possible. Wingfield Campsite had a couple of large tents at the far end and our little line of tents on the left as we arrived. The showers and toilets were at the entrance along with a pub where we were to have our meal that evening. Another couple of runners joined us that evening who were running the next day. Another Tom who had recently run the Marathon des Sables and Ian who

would complete the set of medals by completing the next day.

After a shower and food it was back to the tents to prepare for the next day, again we were allowed to start early. The 60 miles was to be a challenge to complete in daylight and I was happy to start early. Another two couples had set up in large tents next to us and were enjoying the odd glass or two of wine, a couple of families with young children were in the middle. The talking of the wine drinking couples went on until the early hours until around 1am a shout from Greg to ask them to politely be quiet. Not the fault of the organisation, more these campers not adhering to campsite rules. Usually campsites are very quiet after dark. My watch had 43.6 miles, 1,450 feet of climbing with the official time of 9 hrs 54 mins. I slept from for 6 hrs 15 mins until 4am (1 hr 46 mins of deep sleep).

## Day 3 – Saturday 25th May - The Severn Path Ultra – 60 miles

It was to be a warm and sunny day and so I dressed in clean shorts and t-shirt. I had toast for breakfast instead of porridge today and made sure I was ready in time for the 5:30am start. It was reasonably mild even at that time in the morning and was pleased there were not too many long grass fields to start with to keep my feet dry. Instead of taking the tracker device from the start, as these only had a battery life of around 15-16 hrs it was best to give them out at the first checkpoint so that we could be tracked to the finish. It was more crucial to know our whereabouts later in the event rather than earlier in case of mishap and so Steve could guide us in. I never gave this a second thought as we set on our way. Me leading and the lads following closely behind as I did my usual of not quite finding the way across the few fields to start with. I didn't have the best of starts, while trying to balance between stinging nettles and an electric fence I felt the shock from the fence, that jolted



# Race Reports



me into the nettles to start the day painfully. I proceeded then to squash a finger on my left hand in a gate and then nip a finger on my right hand in another gate. It was going to be a long day.

After about 3 miles or so we hit a road where I turned left back onto the riverside path and that was the last I saw of the lads behind me. The route was overgrown in places around the stiles and gates, we had been warned that this may be the case. The route did a big sweep around Shrewsbury and came out on a road to the first checkpoint at 14 miles. The checkpoints were a little further apart today, but again, all this information was available well in advance so you could plan appropriately. Given that Steve has organised many races and had previous information on how long it takes between checkpoints he commented I was exactly on the time I expected. I then got a shock, that the lads were now about 20 minutes ahead of me! Really? I thought he was joking, but no, it was apparent from the maps that you could easily shortcut the route through the centre of Shrewsbury.

I was given my tracker and realised that their route taken was not tracked.

I had my own goals to achieve and I wanted to run the 60 miles as stated. Apparently they had been pretty slow the previous day and were over the allocated time allowance, Steve had been generous to allow them to continue, I was aware that if they continued at the same pace they could be timed out. I had wondered if I was organiser what would I do under these circumstances? Often there are time penalties for infringements, as these entrants had already been over the time allocation that would serve no purpose.

The next 12.3 miles to the checkpoint were a mixture of roads, fields and riverside paths. I overshot the path on the way into Ironbridge and had to make a detour back to the path. There was a lot going on here and I saw the signs for a World War II re-enactment. The route went right through the middle of this festival. It was heaving with people all dressed up in old uniforms or families out for the day. It was hard to make progress, so rather than stress I walked and soaked up the surroundings. I thought I would love to come back here as a tourist one of these days and take my time looking around. On hitting the road again the pavements were blocked with people

and the road congested with traffic making that impassable too. At the iron bridge where I had to cross there was a singing event going on and crowds stood listening. My battle was to weave through the standing bodies to make progress.

Once through the crowds a lovely cycle path opened up that was to lead to the next checkpoint where I heard that Steve had spoken with Greg and Paul. They had needed to visit Shrewsbury for a toilet stop and took a shortened route, unfortunately they were disqualified. Steve was probably more than aware from the timings that these lads were unlikely to make it to the finish line. I have every respect for an organiser that has to enforce penalties.

The next part of the route sent me in circles around fields becoming more and more overgrown. At one point I hit such a wall of crops and weeds that I could not physically fight my way forwards and crawled sideways through branches, nettles and brambles to pop out in the next field that was a nice path. The route now varied between overgrown paths and half decent riverside tracks to arrive at Bridgnorth. Here I saw Paul and Greg arrive from a different direction as I continued on the path forwards. The next section was very uneven underfoot with grass around shin height that had been recently cut but kept getting tangled around your feet and so I ended up walking yet again.

The distance to checkpoint 3 was 13.3 miles, now some 40 miles done for the day and another 20 still to do. It was warm as I wandered through the middle of a campsite curious as to where the route went, when all of a sudden I could see Steve waving in the distance and I had arrived. I was well in need of water now and a few more peanut butter sandwiches. Yet again on leaving I struggled to find the path and wasted time going backwards and forwards trying to find a track. The next checkpoint was 12.5 miles



away and a mixture of riverside paths, frequently overgrown in places and minor roads.

It was a nice setting for the last checkpoint by the canal locks and Steve was waiting with two of his daughters to cheer me on for the remaining 6.6 miles. All I wished for was a nice path to run, which initially I was granted for a couple of miles before the overgrown paths returned and found myself in nettles, long grass and slightly off-route again. Over a gate and I go back to the river to find the path did exist, I tripped and stumbled my way along. Up to the road, over the bridge and the campsite was on the left as described by Steve

from the last checkpoint. I knew from the description this was the right route but it seemed to go on for some way and I saw no signs for a campsite.

Finally that wonderful sight of Steve waving in the distance and reassurance again. He did warn me that the Land Rover was not the finish line and he jumped in it to drive to the finish, I am pleased to say I finished in daylight. Hot pizza was waiting, it was nice to have a shower to wash off all the grass and leaves that found their way down my shirt.

It had been a wonderful sunny day, a real mixture of terrain, pretty flat for the most of this but the uneven paths that were overgrown in places

had made the going very slow. The campsite was again an absolute gem near Holt Castle. A quiet place with picnic tables to sit at and undercover area for breakfast should it be cold or raining in the morning. I was late to bed by the time I organised myself, rehydrated, showered and prepared my bag for the morning. My watch had 61.6 miles, 1,590 feet of elevation with the official time of 15 hrs 36 mins. I had 3hrs 53 mins of sleep (52 mins of this was deep sleep).

Photos of runners were courtesy of Ultra Running Ltd, the source and mouth were from winner Thomas Loe, the other two were mine.

U.W.

## Saint-Malo – Sète . 1000 km non-stop

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2008 - MiL'KiL 1



2009 - MiL'KiL 2



2012 - MiL'KiL 3



2014 - MiL'KiL 4



2015 - MiL'KiL 5



2018 - MiL'KiL 6



# Vale of Glamorgan Ultra Marathon

Megan Davies



Photo by Mike Erskine

It's not often you get a tan in South Wales, but it was a roaster on the Vale of Glamorgan coastline for VOGUM 2019, still, it's better to have the weather on your side than against you! Even though it was June it could have still gone either way and I had waterproofs in my running pack to prove it.

I've run in many places but to be back

on home turf in 'the motherland' was something special for me, running along a coastline that I know from my childhood and haven't seen in many years had me excited at the start line.

We met at Griffin Park Community Centre for the registration with the rest of the relatively small field of runners (Approx. 140 this year). I love the ultra-running community in general,

in my experience they are a friendly bunch, competitive but humble, but there is something even nicer about these small field events, a real sense of 'we're in this together'. Pegasus Ultrarunning, the organiser say they are all about 'The athlete's experience' and it showed, this was an event clearly organised by those who love running.

I'd packed the mandatory kit, though at this stage I was feeling that if I did require the headtorch in my bag it would mean the day had taken quite a bad turn, afterall compared to some Ultras out there VOGUM is relatively short and manageable. Across VOGUM you cover 40 miles, with a fair bit of elevation (Wales isn't renowned for being flat after all) this is far removed from Snowdon for example, this is a very accessible Ultra in my opinion.

My bag was full of the usual snacks to keep the energy up, soren mini loaves, peanut butter snacks, glucose tablets (which I had discovered work better for me than gels at a recent marathon in Austria) and electrolyte hydration tablets. However, with well stocked checkpoints every 8 miles or so I really didn't need to touch anything more than my glucose and electrolyte tabs. I was pretty obsessively adding these to my water from early on in the race as it was a hot day, but this didn't stop my urge for a cold fizzy coke when I saw it bubbling away at the second checkpoint. I must add that I NEVER drink coke or anything fizzy normally when I run. It was so hot and at the time it seemed like exactly what my body wanted, so I said a little prayer that my stomach would handle it and with that chugged back 2 glasses whilst the friendly marshals topped up my bottles for me.

The first 10 miles are incredible, the



race kicks off on Porthcawl beach and you run a leg sapping few miles across the beach, followed by some sandy dunes and then reach the stepping stones at Ogmore. It has to be said that this is one of the most beautiful routes I have run in the UK, it's not often that you get to trek across sand, stepping stones, hills and pebbly beaches all in one race so the first 20 miles seemed to fly by while I shared the rolling Welsh hills with sheep who were making the hilly climbs seem easy. Mocking me I swear. We ran past Nash Point lighthouse and I was feeling great, surprisingly so I thought.

I pushed pretty hard on the first 20 miles or so and came into the halfway point in second female position, worth mentioning that the 1st female passed me miles back and I had no intention of being able to keep up when I saw her pace. I had gone out quite hard on the beach so at 20 miles in I was seriously hoping this wasn't going to come back to bite me.

I took it slow coming out of the midway point, with 19 miles still to go and plenty of fuel added to my engine I was planning to take my time for the next mile or so then pick up my speed again once the coke and various other sugary snacks had digested.

It was somewhere around the 22 miles point where I lost sight of the trail markers, in VOGUM you mainly follow the public coastal path arrows, there were a few different markers and my tired brain couldn't work out the best route. I consulted the GPX file on my phone, I took a left and after 1-2 miles in that direction (up a steep hill no less) realised that I hadn't seen another runner in quite some time, the horrible realisation that you've gone wrong and run out of your way I'm sure is something that we all have at some point so I took it on the chin, turned around and headed full speed back down the hill in the direction I came from. At the bottom of the hill, I could now see that there was a trail heading off that was hidden behind a beautiful lake and castle ruins in front,

it seems the GPX had meant 'veer' left not turn left as I had read it and so now I knew I was back on track. That being said, I was definitely not coming anywhere close to second and knowing I could potentially get a good position in this race and had only gone a few miles off track I decided to pick up the pace and try and make back some time.

It felt like forever that I was pushing my pace to get back towards the front, when finally, I started to see some of the runners who were with me at the last checkpoint, what a relief to have not lost too much time.

I'm not sure if it was tiredness, lack of signage or just generally not being great with directions, I seemed to rely more and more on the GPX towards the end of the race, and a friendly soul running at near enough my pace who seemed to know the route better than me.

Roughly 32 miles into the race leads off towards Barry and into what seems to be a never ending run through the town and along main roads. Not as scenic as the earlier parts of the race and this had me noticing little niggles in my hips, I had to focus on my form to get to that finish line. Bar a few little turns, this part was at least easy to navigate and there were a few arrows from the organisers dotted around to help those of us who are navigationally challenged. Running through the town and up to the last checkpoint produced that thrilling feeling that you were almost there. It's at this point in an ultra when you start to see this community, some of us were starting to struggle a little, I for one only recently having run the Vienna marathon and another fellow runner still recovering from the London marathon only a few weeks earlier (who had also got lost at a different point to me and therefore like myself was about to run a 44 mile ultra instead of a 40 miler). I was seriously regretting the sprint I'd set myself on playing catch up earlier, my strategy seemed spot on until



that point and I was so annoyed with myself. My new found running friend and I decided to run together through the last few miles, we actually pulled each other through to the finish, which we crossed at exactly the same time.

I felt absolutely exhilarated at the finish line, which, in-keeping with the overall race, was understated but welcoming. We were all baked from the sun, most of us had got lost somewhere along the line but all agreed on the fact that VOGUM was one of the most beautiful runs we had taken part in. The South Wales coast is just spectacular, challenging with its sand, pebbles, steep coastal path steps, sheep and everything else, I would run this race again in a heartbeat. Rather high on post-race endorphins I declared to the organisers who were at the finish line that I would be back to run one of their other events later this summer, then I hobbled along to the shower. Upon inspection I had all of my toenails intact which is always a bit of a gold medal in itself after finishing an ultra. I was pretty happy with my new Speedgoat 3's which had only seen a handful of outings previously to Epping Forest.

My verdict, I would absolutely run this race again and I'd love to run the HOWUM or EDDUM also by these organisers, all of which take place in Wales and showcase the stunning scenery but lesson learned I'll recce the route first in future!



# Brutality, Beauty and Belonging: The West Highland Way Race

Jack Miles



**T**he West Highland Way Race is a 95 mile ultramarathon in Scotland. It follows the route of the well-trodden trail path from Milngavie to Fort William. Runners have 35 hours to complete the 95 miles and 14,000ft of elevation gain. On 22nd June 2019 I partook in this race for the first time.

There's little point explaining to you the personal experience I went through between 01:00 and 23:44 on 22nd June 2019. That's because each participant's experience is unique. Right from the first finisher in 15hrs 14mins to the last finisher in 34hrs 27mins. However, I believe there are three universal truths every participant experienced throughout the race: brutality, beauty and belonging.

**Brutality** – The West Highland Way Race pushes you to the edge in every way you know. And more

**Beauty** – during this brutality-induced suffering you'll witness some of the most beautiful sights Scotland has to offer

**Belonging** – from receiving your entry confirmation to being handed your goblet at the end of the race, you'll feel part of a special event, surrounded by exceptional people

Looking at the West Highland Way Race through these truths offers, in my opinion, a more well-rounded insight into what's billed as 'one incredible experience' compared to my split times, jam sandwich consumption and the notes slipped into my running vest by my girlfriend which kept my spirits up when my body was feeling low.

Prologue: The Start Line

Brutality

A race as brutal as The West Highland Way Race requires a befittingly hard start. The 1am start at Milngavie train station provides this. The early morning start lends itself to a daytime nerve-building tension, kit worries, self-doubt and scenario planning. During which you also need to make your final preparations and attempt to sleep.

Beauty

Milngavie isn't the most aesthetically spectacular on the West Highland Way. 260 head torches and 500-1,000 cheering supporters changes that. As you run through the wall of noise in Milngavie high street you immediately realise how special this race is.

Belonging

The West Highland Way Race sense of belonging spans three groups: 1) your immediate support crew 2) fellow participants 3) the race organisers. The temporary goodbyes to your support crew involve motivational comments and words of caution. The hellos with your fellow participants generate a sense of immediate inclusion. It was the après race quoting of Neil MacRitchie by Race Director Ian Beattie that was the most potent starting line memory, the most pertinent words of which were,

"Believe in yourself but don't be too over confident either, 95 miles is a fair distance in anyone's book, respect it, but don't fear it. Think of the finish; even if you're last it's still a momentous achievement. Don't let dreams of a certain time which might not work out on the day cause you despondency if all is not going to plan, change the plan, adapt, be flexible. Things may get easier again in a few hours time, the important thing is still to be in the race to find out. And if you're having the perfect race then bask in it, enjoy it, glory in it ... as it may not happen again for many, many years."





## Milngavie – Balmaha

### Brutality

The opening 14 miles is as easy as you'll get on the route. However, the mental torture in this opening 14 miles makes up for it.

What does the day have in store? Am I starting off too fast? Have I trained enough? Why has that person got a different kit to me? These are questions you'll ask yourself tens, if not hundreds of times before Drymen 12 miles in. After 16 miles you'll get your first real physical test of the day, Conic Hill. A 2 mile climb with 1,184ft of elevation, it's the first time you'll seriously engage with gravity during The West Highland Way Race.

### Beauty

Conic Hill hurts the legs, the views of Loch Lomond atop of it are worthwhile. From here you'll see your playground/battlefield for the immediate future. At that point, fear not what awaits. Just let your eyes enjoy the view of the present.

### Belonging

Upon arrival at Balmaha, you immediately realise the scale of The West Highland Way Race's support crew army. Once you find your support crew, you also realise how important familiar faces, the willingness of others and laughter will be in getting you through the day.

## Balmaha – Beinglas Farm

### Brutality

The saying, "don't judge a book by its cover" couldn't be truer if you were to judge this section of the race by the elevation profile that runs adjacent to Loch Lomond. On paper, it looks like a stroll in the Dutch countryside. In reality, it looks like the asteroid tackled by Bruce Willis and Ben Affleck in Armageddon. The term 'technical' doesn't do it justice. Clambering over boulders. Ducking under branches. Scrambling up ladders. Jumping over waterfalls. Fun for the whole family.

### Beauty

There's one simple way to mentally survive the physical punishment of this sector: look left. Every time you do so you'll see the beauty of Loch Lomond in full. The still water in the shadows of the steep sides of Ben Lomond make you feel grateful to be taking what's known as the 'low road'.

### Belonging

This is the longest time you'll go without seeing your support crew. Fear not, the checkpoints at Rowardenan, Inversnaid and Beinglas Farm are staffed by midge-beating, light-hearted volunteers who will fill you up with water and cheer, patch you up with ice and plasters and send you off for the next session of torture with a smile on your face.

## Beinglas Farm – Auchtertyre

### Brutality

Once you've escaped the clutches of Loch Lomond, ultrarunning 'normality' is restored. This 'normality' involves a calf-sapping climb to Crianlarich and a quad-busting rollercoaster of a descent into Auchtertyre.

### Beauty

The climb to Crianlarich provides the first panoramic glimpse of the high mountains which will surround you from here on. A farewell glimpse of Loch Lomond with a 'box checked' figuratively placed next to it provides a motivational boost. Motivation is now a precious commodity. Afterall, at Crianlarich you're only half-way.

### Belonging

Auchtertyre provides the first real interaction with your support crew for several hours. The familiar faces and voices remind you that you're not on the West Highland Way in isolation. You're here with a group of people with who you share a common goal: to get your already weary and battered body to Fort William. This replenishes motivation stocks further. Time for the real work to begin.

## Auchtertyre – Bridge of Orchy

### Brutality

The relative flatness of this part of the West Highland Way allows for that rarest of beasts on an ultramarathon, a period of sustained speed. Good for progress. Bad for any part of your body that isn't throbbing with pain yet.

### Beauty

The Roman roads between Tyndrum and Bridge of Orchy are set among a stunning backdrop of green hills. This view is made even better by knowing you don't have to torture yourself going up them. That's not to say you're safe. The imminently threatening, yet aesthetically pleasing, climb to





Rannoch Moor can be seen long before you arrive at 'The Bridge'.

## Belonging

This open and flatish section of The West Highland Way Race lends itself to dialogue on the move with fellow participants. There's only one certain topic of conversation, how your day has been so far. Equally, there's an off-topic to avoid discussing, finishing time aspirations.

## Bridge of Orchy – Glencoe

### Brutality

The flats en route to the Bridge of Orchy are soon forgotten upon departure. The steep climb to the top of Rannoch Moor reminds you where you are. The descents are arguably more painful and the ground is unforgiving until you reach Inveroran.

### Beauty

Rannoch Moor provides fantastic panoramic views of The Highland's peaks and they're needed. It's hard to explain to the uninitiated what it feels like being 65 miles deep into a race with over a marathon remaining. It's even harder to explain how being surrounded by such great views can power your weary legs onwards and upwards. But Rannoch Moor is just an aesthetic hors d'oeuvre, for it's Glencoe where the best scenery of The West Highland Way Race is displayed. At the heart of which is the Herdsman of Etive Moor looking over his flock of Munros.

## Belonging

You experience many micro interactions on the West Highland Way Race. Meeting Murdo on the notorious 'Jelly Baby Hill' is the most memorable. One individual encouraging participants on top of a hill giving out jelly babies for hours on end symbolises the mutual feeling held by hundreds to assist as many people as possible to make it to Ford William.

## Glencoe – Kinlochleven

### Brutality

In terms of pure climbing alone, this is the section where you suffer most. Ascending 1,804ft of the Devil's Staircase is one of The Highland's final attempts to bring you crawling to your knees. The bad news is once you summit the Devil's Staircase, you face another attempt on your ability to move beyond walking pace. A 5 mile, technical descent into Kinlochleven will try to suck whatever athletic ability you have left post ascent out of your legs.

### Beauty

On the approach to the Devil's Staircase, the Herdsman of Etive Moor offers you emotional protection. It's hard to worry about the impending assault on your legs by the Herdsman's satanic neighbour when you cannot help but marvel the 3,350ft high rock face looking over Etive Moor. Whether you wish to envisage the Herdsman looking over the massacre of the MacDonald Clan in 1692 or Daniel Craig destroying his Aston Martin DB5 in 2012, it's enough to take your mind away from what the Devil has in store. Before you start to descend the Devil's Staircase, allow yourself a glance back at the immense spectacle that is Glencoe. Admire your handiwork. Another big proverbial box has been ticked.

## Belonging

The Devil's Staircase is littered with West Highland Way Race hopefuls. No matter if you're passing or being passed, encouragement is shared. The end of the race is nearly in sight at this stage. Nobody wants to see anyone not make it so close to the end. At this point you realise that the West Highland Way Race isn't about individuals competing against one another. It's about individuals competing together against mother nature and themselves.

## Kinlochleven – Ford William

### Brutality

The climb from Kinlochleven is The Highland's final throw of the dice at ending your running ability. Hard under foot, seemingly never-ending and a sheer gradient, it's a worthy opponent for legs with 90 miles of wear and tear in them. The back end of this section offers a different kind of challenge. The gentle descent to Fort William may be soft underfoot, but it drags on. And on. And on. To the point you wonder, "is this ever going to end?". Once you step foot into the Braveheart Car Park after staring at Fort William for what feels like hours on the descent you can allow yourself a fist pump as you stroll to the Nevis Centre. You've made it.

### Beauty

For much of the way to Fort William you can see the old

military roads beneath you. Fitting as you've been to war and back both mentally and physically at this point. Stare up and you can begin to see the outline of the Mamore Mountains, a task for another day. As you approach Fort William, Ben Nevis begins to bear down on you. Although the etymology of Nevis can be traced back to 'malicious' or 'venomous', you can't help but think 'The Ben' is providing a 4,409ft smile at what you've achieved.

## Belonging

Lundavra plays host to one of the West Highland Way Race's less conspicuous checkpoints. Seeing your support crew and the race staff cheering you on despite being swarmed by midges, awake for as long, or longer than you reminds you of what's needed to bring this event together.

The West Highland Way Race doesn't end when you cross the finish line. The prize giving at 1pm the Sunday after the race, 1 hour after final the cut-off time at Fort William is what takes The West Highland Way Race from an event to one incredible experience.

## Epilogue: The Prize Giving

### Brutality

Everyone in the Nevis Centre is tired. Support crews are tired from chasing their runners through the spine of The Highlands. Runners hurt from tip to toe and the majority

are walking in bizarre ways. Everyone soaks up the fatigue one last time.

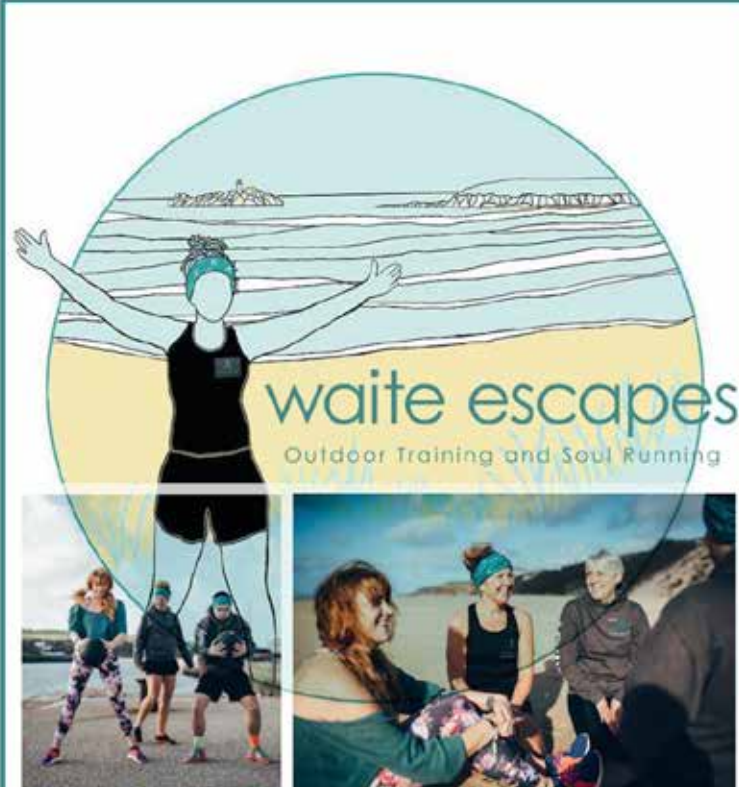
### Beauty

Conic Hill, Loch Lomond, Glencoe et al offer beauty in one form. The West Highland Way Race prize giving offers it in others. This beauty ranges from the magnificent glass goblets finishers receive to the tanquards given to those completing the race for the 10th time to the 1st place finisher giving the last place finisher their goblet.

### Belonging

99.9% of endurance sports events culminate with a finishers receiving a plastic bag with unwanted energy products, a mass produced medal and a pat on the back from a stranger. The West Highland Way Race's prize giving and the way it honours the achievements of all finishers regardless of finishing time is what exemplifies the sense of belonging it provides to those involved.

It's the three universal truths of The West Highland Way Race that are making me count down the days until I can enter next year's ballot. I can wait to test myself on the brutality of the route again. I can't wait to bask in the beauty of The Highlands once more. I can't wait to belong to The West Highland Way Race spectacle for a second time. If you've done the race in 2019, I'm sure you feel the same. If you've not partaken in the West Highland Way Race before, mark 22nd June in your diary.



Let me introduce myself, I'm Tracy Waite, a personal trainer based in Cornwall. I specialise in fitness and wellness, feeling well through movement. I believe that by using our bodies well, we can truly feel happier.

During the waite escapes I will be focusing a lot on self-care and wellness. Life gets so busy, stress often takes over. We become so absorbed with what life throws at us that we often forget who we are. Let's use this time together to explore who we are again, to practice scheduled 'us times'. At the end of the day, if we cannot recharge and find strength in what's around and inside us, then how can we possibly pass this on to those close to us?

<http://www.personaltrainerincornwall.co.uk>



# West Highland Way Challenge Race

## Race Report

Text and Photos by Marijn Sinkeldam



On May the 25th 2019, I had the privilege to participate in and finish the West Highland Challenge race (WHWCR) in Scotland. An ultra event along the equally named route from Milngavie to Fort William, covering a total distance of 96 miles (155km). It was the farthest I had ever run. The following race report is my account and personal story of the WHWCR and all it required and taught me along the way.

For quite some time, after extending the total distance of my runs, I was looking for a real adventure in the form of a UTMB 5 point race. I had hiked the last part of the West Highland Way, hence, I thought this route would be a proper race to address. The previous year, when I was not yet physically adapted enough to running such a distance, I had some mailing correspondence with the race director Jim Drummond. He helped me a lot with his advice and persuaded me to join this race. It turned out to be

a great decision.

My training consisted of three to four runs a week (interval, sprint interval, easy run, long run: sometimes combinations), with long runs never over 40 km (25 miles), combined with

two times a week CrossFit/going to the gym (mainly focussed on core stability). A friend of mine, Koen Levels, who is an exercise physiologist, helped me with planning my training.

As I did the last part of my medical studies in Ghana until mid March, I could not train in the same conditions which WHWCR would be presenting. I had two main events, test-cases, leading up to the WHWCR, the Trail du gran Ballon (44 miles, 70 km the first day and 20 miles, 32 km the following day with a combined 5000m+ of altitude difference) and I ran a 56 mile, 90 km long run around my hometown, Nijmegen (a part of the so-called "Walk of Wisdom" route). As the Netherlands is flat as a pancake, I did an impressive 478m+ in this 90 km run.

The town hall in Milngavie functioned as a gathering place and information centre before the actual race started. All the participants were relaxing, stretching, getting some calories

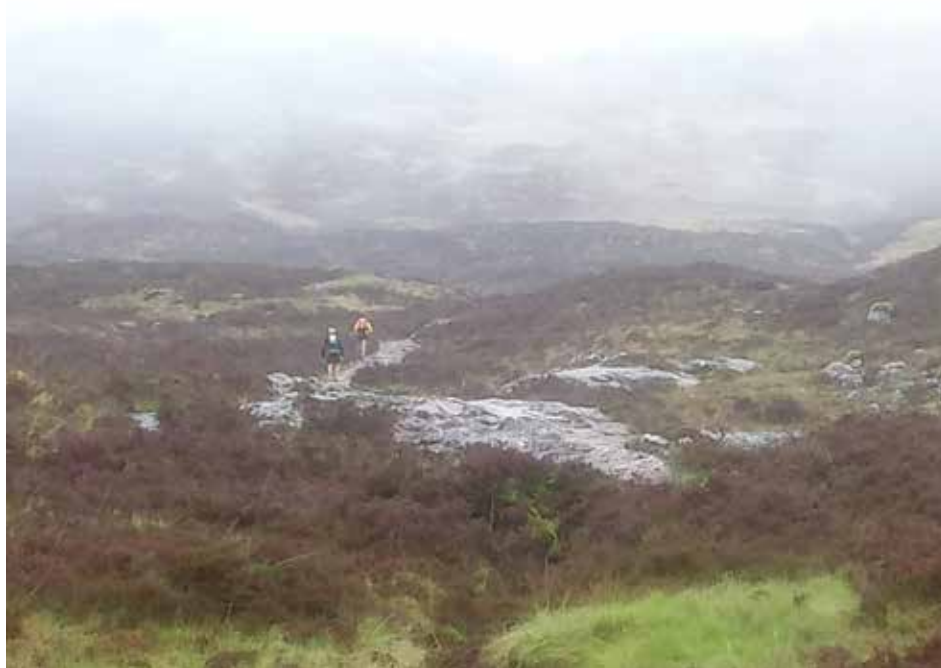


in or, as I was, only being nervous. A board stated, "Weather forecast, expect steady rain from tomorrow afternoon". In my opinion, typical Scottish humour is integrated in this race. Another example, an additional challenge to the WHWCR, upon completion, is to also go up the Ben Nevis (1345m, highest mountain in the United Kingdom). The inventor of this additional challenge, John Vernon (WHWCR-veteran, with 16 competitions) never actually started the extra ascent. Spoiler alert, neither did I (this year).

Jim Drummond gave an informative speech about an hour before the race started, which somewhat eased everyone's mind. I noticed him saying, "It is not a real ultra when you stay on the course the entire race, we expect at least a two to three mile detour from every participant." He also mentioned something about pints along the way, which, unfortunately, I can't recall. Ten minutes before 0:00 we walked to the start of the race in the centre of Milngavie.

The race started at precisely 0:00:01 o'clock. As part of my race strategy I decided I did not want to run alone in the night. Combining this with the knowledge that the winner of the previous edition had finished in 20:39 hours (which is more or less my pace), I decided to start with the front of the race, so I'd always be able to back down during the night and wait for the second group. While we ran into the night we passed by a lot of camping places. I wondered what those people would think, opening their tent in the middle of the night and looking upon some silent torches dancing through the darkness.

The field of participants quickly spread out as many of the participants were steady walkers (the cut-off time for the race is 35 hours). After one hour of running, we had formed a leading group of four runners. In the beginning, a lot of chit-chat took place but when the night continued everybody somehow silenced. Out



of the silence, someone joked, "You know guys, by car, this is just an hour and a half drive". We laughed, nevertheless the pace was quite high. After three hours of running, I was already an hour ahead of my quickest race schedule.

Three out of the four racers, Douglas Clark (who would end up winning, congrats Doug), Mike Walton and I reached control point 2 (Rowardennan, at 27 miles, 43 km) together at 04:20. I was feeling excellent, mainly because the sun was coming up, and my legs and mind were doing perfectly fine. I was enjoying my time out on the trails. After the control point, the route ran alongside Loch Lomond. A beautiful sight, especially with the sun reflecting on the lake. Running, however, was not possible on this part of the route, as it involved a lot of climbing on a rocky, slippery road.

The sunrise also awoke the first midges, the running competitors did not have that much trouble with these little bastards. I felt sorry for the walking competitors, all the volunteers at the different aid stations and my brother, who was supporting me in my first ultra event.

In between control point 2 and control point 5 Douglas took his own pace

and ran away from Mike and me. I was having some intestinal problems, which resulted in finding a loo in all sorts of places. This would continue for the better part of the race. In retrospect, I relied too much on energy bars (high caloric, fast sugars) and did not get enough real food in. A lesson learned for my next race.

Mike Walton and I teamed up for the vast majority of the race. We ran together for many miles, his positivism had a good effect on me and I am willing to believe he also enjoyed my company. Remember the 1,5 hour by car joke? One of Mike's. During the race he evolved to be a big help, even lending me his racing poles. After this race, I firmly believe that every newbie needs a mentor in their first ultra event. Mike was my mentor. I am sure that if he wanted to, he would have been able to win the race had he not decided to stay with me.

We reached control point 5 (Bridge of Orchy at 62 miles, 100 km) at 11:43 hours. Here I found some new energy (it was a mental aspect for me, as I had never run further than 100km on a single day). Furthermore, I ate some real food, cheese sandwiches did the deal for me. After this short stop, I ran consistently for the next two hours, with a couple of sanitary stops,



## Race Reports



because my intestinal symptoms were not yet gone.

Mike and I continued our route together, with running and walking alternatively. The Devil's staircase in between King's house and Kinlochleven was not that big of a deal as I thought it would be. My intestinal symptoms were so-so. All part of participating in an ultra, I guess. Just before Kinlochleven Mike decided to run ahead to the control point because I had intestinal problems again, hence I missed the control point. I called the organisation to inform them that I was doing fine and I had just walked by the 7th control point. I reached Kinlochleven (81 miles, 130 km) at 17:05. So far, so good.

The weather forecast turned out to be correct. During the afternoon it started to rain. Between Kinlochleven and Fort William, steady drops of rain struck me as I found out that my rain jacket was not as waterproof as I thought it would be. I never had problems with it while training in the Netherlands and even tried it in the shower. The steady rain resulted in me getting colder and colder.

From my medical training, I knew that hypothermia gets dangerous when the shivering stops. Luckily I was still shivering. At one point, I seriously considered dropping out of the race as I discussed this with Mike. He decided to run up front to the water point and

inform them that I was out on the trail walking towards them.

The last water point was a lot further than I expected it to be, I arrived (Lundavra, at 88 miles, 141 km) at 19:25, 25 minutes behind Mike. The volunteers at this stop, Davy and Albert Ramsay, did everything they possibly could to help me re-warm. Yes, I am aware the last sentence might sound a bit strange. What I mean is, they made warm pasta, let me re-warm in their hot van and they lent me some spare clothes because my running clothes were soaked. This explains the oversized clothing I am wearing in the photo after the finish.

The re-warming and the last 7,5 miles (12 km) of the race, took me almost four hours, and other participants were starting to overtake my place in the race. After sitting still for one and a half hours or so while re-warming, my muscles had become stiff, and I decided running was too high a risk of getting an injury. Besides, when walking steadily, I would still manage a sub-24 hour finish. So, I started walking.

My brother walked towards me from the finish line in Fort William, and together we walked the last couple of miles. I was happy to see him, walking out of the woods towards me. This

will be one of the main pictures I will have in mind when overthinking this adventure in the future. In the end, I did manage to finish in 7th place, with a sub-24-hour race, at 23 hours and 36 minutes after leaving Milngavie.

The WHWCR website states it has three purposes: getting as many of the competitors to the finish as possible, being a competitor friendly race and saving costs. I can fully agree that the WHWCR provides all three of these. In the end, 43 out of the 94 participants managed to finish, with nine people finishing sub-24 hours and becoming a member of the West-Highland-Way-in-a-day-club. After the race, I had some email contact with Jim, and I especially loved one of the quotes he wrote because it shows his thoughts about the event.

"It's just unfortunate you were not a 35 hour finisher so you could get the full ambience of the race in seeing what it is like to walk the Devils Staircase at 2,000ft (600m) in the middle of the second night without sleep and being cold, soaking wet, sore feet and muscles and being totally dejected and knowing you have another 20 miles (32km) to go. You sub 24-hour runners don't know what you're missing when you're lying in a nice comfy bed on the second







night. Clearly, you're not getting your monies worth." - Jim Drummond, race

director West Highland Way Challenge Race

I want to thank all the volunteers (especially the Ramsay brothers), Jim Drummond, Koen Levels, Mike Walton (next year including the Ben Nevis?) and my brother, Jop Sinkeldam, for all the

help you gave me in anticipation

during and after the event.

I am currently in training for the Gran trail Peñalara (115km, 71miles, 5000 m+) in Spain taking place 28th/29th of June 2019. After this race, I have not planned the next adventure as I will start working in an Emergency and Accident department in the Netherlands and I have to see how well I can combine working shifts with ultra-running. The commute is 32 km single way, which might provide me with some options. I do hope to be able to do another big race in mid September.

Links

West Highland Way Challenge Race website: <http://whwracechallenge.co.uk/>

Marijn Sinkeldam on Strava: <https://www.strava.com/athletes/22109542>

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# Contributors



A self-confessed couch potato until 2014, when he ran his first ultra, the Thames Trot, **Alex Whearity** has come a long way winning each of the Canal races for the ultimate Canal Grand Slam in 2019. Married to Ultrarunning World correspondent Wendy Whearity. Read his race report of his finish at the [2019 Spartathlon](#).



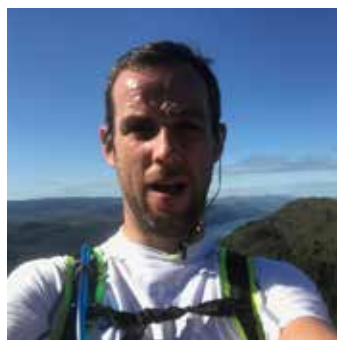
**Gemma Carter**. A competitive ultra and mountain runner fuelled by haribo and biscuits. Trying to escape London life for great running adventures. For the last decade I have also enjoyed coaching other runners to their own goals ([www.cartercoaching.co.uk](http://www.cartercoaching.co.uk)).



**Heather Strowd** Lives in Charlotte, North Carolina and is a Realtor in both North and South Carolina. She only started running back in 2011 and has run everything from 5K's to multi day races. She has placed 3rd in her age group at the Tallahassee Marathon and continues to participate in more ultras and build her racing resume.



**Ali Young** is a Mum, PT and UKA run coach who loves keeping strong as much as running. Enjoy every distance from 800m up to 100+ mile Ultra's and a big fan of parkrun. Originally from the Wirral, now in Buckinghamshire. Began seriously running after having our 2 daughters. Qualified for GB 24hr Ultra team in 2015 and have since competed in 2 European Champs & 1 World Champs with the next World Champs in October. <https://www.instagram.com/aliyoungrun/?hl=en>



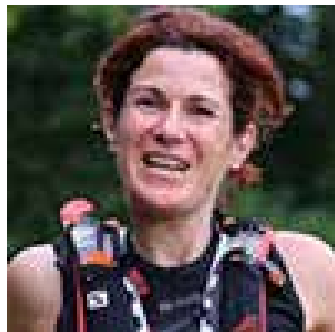
**Jack Miles** has been running marathons and ultramarathons for 11 years. For 10 of those years he's wondered why they get harder not easier.



**Megan Davies** is an ultrarunner originally from Wales now residing in London, and often found in France. Started running 4 years ago and hooked on trail and ultra. Hoka One One Ambassador, lover of long distances, mountains and major foodie. Megan can be found on Instagram: @megrunsfar and at her blog: [Megrunsfar](http://Megrunsfar).



**Cristina Tasselli** is a Certified Athletic Coach specializing in Trail Running, Endurance Road Running and Sports Nutrition / Supplementation. She is the only trail running female coach to have raced 900km, in the Transpyreneas 2016, one of more than 70 international ultra trail races. Cristina is a Founder of Trail Running Movement, the leading online sports training company; CEO of Digital Sport 360, an innovative sports digital startup; and Vice President of TRM Team one of the most famous trail running clubs in Italy. Read more <https://www.trailrunningmovement.com/blog-en/>



**Sarah Cameron** is an ultra-running vegan who lives on a vineyard in the south of France with her husband, two children and far too many pets. She juggles family life with looking after said pets, making wine and indulging in her many hobbies, most of which involve either consuming things or attempting to burn them off. Sarah is also an ambassador for Tailwind Nutrition France. [www.cakewinerunning.blogspot.fr](http://www.cakewinerunning.blogspot.fr)



**Gary Dudney** is a longtime columnist for Ultrarunning magazine in the USA. He's published two books on the subject of the mental side of running, *The Tao of Running* and *The Mindful Runner* as well as numerous articles in all the major running magazines. He's completed over 200 marathons and ultramarathons, including seventy 100-mile races. His home base is Monterey, California.



**Joanna Biala** lives in Poland, has been running since 2009, completed several variety ultras in mountains, typical trails, 5 x 24h, 1 x 48h as a 1st female, 1 x 6 day as a 3rd female. Inspired by 3100 mile race runners. She is vegan, animal lover and prefers healthy life style. In her "free time" she plays the piano and guitar or paints the oils on canvas. She used to see the bright sides only, constantly develops her mindful awareness. She is curious of her possibilities, as "only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go". T. S. Eliot



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# Contributors



**Sharon Gayter** is a member of North York Moors AC and in 1994 completed her first 100km and 24 hour race, winning gold in the National Championships at both events. Between 1994 and 2011, Sharon represented her country on 27 occasions. In 2011 she set the 7 day treadmill record. In August 2019 Sharon set a new JOGLE record of 12:11:06:07. Sharon wrote a book, *The Clock Keeps ticking*. Visit her website [www.sharongayter.com/](http://www.sharongayter.com/)



**Steve West** is a mid-pack ultra-runner who lives in Cardiff, who has been running ultras since 2010. Steve has pushed up the distance and difficulty of his races recently with finishes of the Arc of Attrition and SW100 to his name. Steve advocates the benefits of running for mental and physical health via his FB page and website ('theparttimeultrarunner' and '[theparttimeultrarunner.com](http://theparttimeultrarunner.com)') where he has started to write a few articles as well publish his race reports.



I have always run but I really found my love when I discovered off road ultras. I have just celebrated 100 ultras in a decade and have now started on the next 100; I am not giving up yet. In 2013 I set myself a challenge of 52in52@52 (52 ultras in 52 weeks age 52). I actually did 62 although not all were races. My longest race so far is 200 miles. I help organise an ultra race series called Runfurther. **Karen Nash.**



**Marijn Sinkeldam**, the Netherlands  
As a former handball player, Marijn recently discovered the sport of ultra-running. He especially likes the mental game the sport offers. He works as a doctor in an Emergency Room in the Netherlands. His ambition is to combine ultra-running with a career in sport's and expedition medicine.  
Strava profile: Marijn Sinkeldam

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Julia Fatton at the 2019 Ultr'Ardèche. Photo by Laurent Brueyre