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& ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS

// Issue 38

ULTRARUNNING WORLD

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This issue we welcome Adrian Tarit Stott as Guest Editor. Adrian is an accomplished ultra runner, race organiser, team manager and selector for Scottish and GB ultra distance teams.



I am delighted to be asked by my old friend Abichal to write the wee editorial for this edition of Ultrarunning World, it is a great issue. Along with the usual chatter about all your favourite recent races there are two standout interviews .

Camille Heron shouldn't need any introduction to ultra runners. Her numerous race victories together with American and World records in recent years has made her a real favourite on the ultra scene globally. Always with a smile on her face, she offers more advice on the art of "joyful running", along with discussing her issues in her recent Western States 100 where things didn't quite go to plan.

Many people would have bailed out but it didn't stop Camille just pausing, and in time honoured fashion, having a little moment with herself, to understand and realise, "Ok. I can see what is going on here," before finding a plan to deal with it and get to that finish line.

If not an international star like Camille yet, Jo Murphy's star

is definitely on the rise in the UK. The double British and Scottish 100km champion is now 6th on the GB All time 100km rankings with her winning time of 7:41:12 at Perth, in the April, in the Sri Chinmoy 100km race incorporating the Anglo Celtic Plate.

She is also at home on the trails and running 24 hours round a track. Find out more about her running journey to date and what makes Jo tick in this issue.

Jo does much to dispel the myth that you should find your best distance and find your best surface, as she seems to excel whether on the roads, the trails or running round a track in circles.

As experienced coaches know, there shouldn't be any clique's in the endurance world. From 800 metres to 100 miles and beyond, whatever surface, there are just boundaries to be broken down and surpassed, and every one finds their own challenges.

Jake Wightman will probably tell you that running sub 3.30 for 1500 metres is the hardest thing to do. Camille and Jo will have their own ideas of "what is hard". It is indeed all relative.

Like them all, I hope you just go find your challenge and move out of your comfort zone once in a while. You will surprise yourself what you could achieve.

Adrian Tarit Stott

You can find his fledgling blog at Runnersaresmilers.com

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Camille Herron 2022 Jackpot 100 Photo by Kevin Youngblood @Kevlvphotography

• **Back cover**

Takuya Wakaoka (JPN) winner of the 2022 Racing The Planet Lapland 6 Day Stage race. Photo by Racing The Planet.

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Ultrarunning World August 2022

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Send inquiries, original and previously unpublished race reports/articles to the email address below. Last dates for article submissions: September 14th and October 14th. Please include some accompanying photos (if you have any) with articles/race reports, a 40-50 word bio, and a headshot for the contributors page. More details for submissions on request. Thank you.

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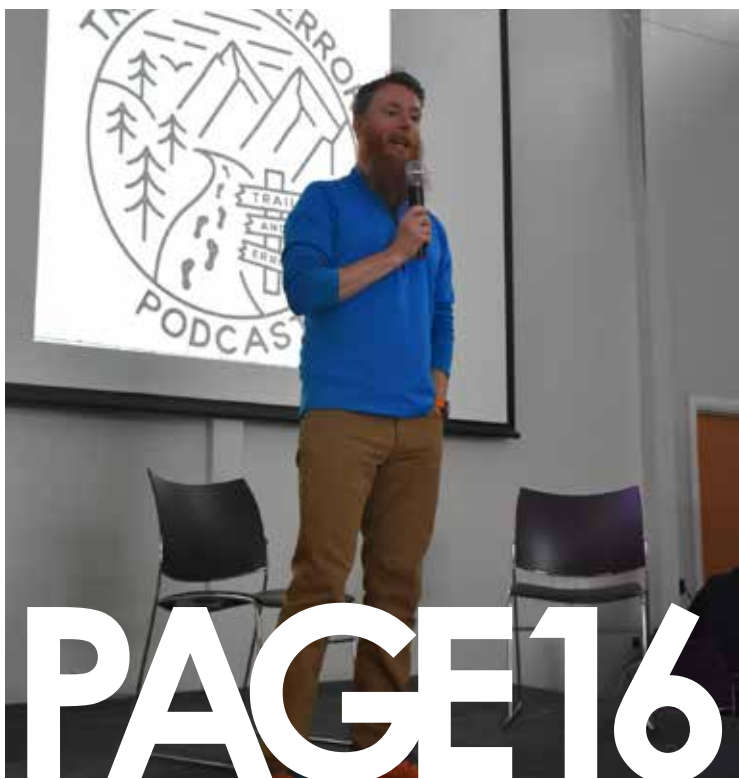
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News



The 2022 IAU 24 Hour Asia and Oceania Championships took place in Bengaluru starting on July 2nd and was won by Amar Singh Devanda (IND) with 257.618 km. First woman was Kuan Ju Lin (TPE) with 216.877 km. India won the men's team results and Australia took the women's team results. Full report on the IAU website [2022 IAU 24 Asia and Oceania Championships Results](#). Coming up soon is the [2022 IAU 100 km World Championships](#) which will take place in Berlin-Bernau, Germany on August 27th.

The IAU have announced the [2023 - 2025 IAU Championships bidding procedure](#) and Federations are invited to work with Race Organisers and potential LOCs to send in any expressions of interest (EOI) for any IAU Championships that are open for bids. Also coming up soon is the 2022 IAU 24 Hour European on 17th September 2022 in Verona, Italy. Check out the details on the [Lupa totissima race website](#).

The [GOMU 48 Hour World Championships](#) takes place at the [Hainesport 24 & 100 mile weekend](#) in New Jersey on September 3rd still time to sign up. Also coming up in the next few weeks is Comrades, UTMB® and Spartathlon and the [EMU 6 Day Race World Trophy](#) in Hungary.

The legendary Badwater 135 Mile which goes from Death Valley to the base of Mt. Whitney was won by course record holder Yoshihiko Ishikawa (JPN) with a time in 23:08. Ashley Paulson set a new course record, on her debut at this event, running 24:09 to beat Patrycja Berenowska's 2019 time by four minutes. Results on the [Badwater website](#).

At the Hardrock 100 Kilian Jornet set a new course record of 21:36, surpassing Francois D'Haene's record set last year. Courtney Dauwalter won the women's race in 26:44, also setting a new course record.

Dave Proctor set a new Trans-Canada Fastest Known Time crossing the 7,159k (4,448 miles) across Canada in 67 days averaging 100k a day.



Irishman Richard Donovan (photo right) also recently crossed the USA, some 5,150km from Boston to Santa Monica, CA bearing the ashes of his friend who unexpectedly passed away last year.

The [Last Annual Heart Of The South](#) saw John Clarke first home in 5d 05:39:13 and first woman was Nicole Weitzman finishing in 6d 01:27:06. A few weeks later saw Johan Steene win the [500k Last Annual Vol State Race](#) in 3d 20:22:00. Leonie Van Den Haak (SGP) 5d 13:00:48 was the women's winner.

In the UK the 5th Kennet & Avon Canal Race 145 mile (KACR) saw Ian Hammett take the win in 26:30:00 and first woman was Julie Bethune finishing in 36:10:00. [Results on the DUV](#). At the North Downs Way 100 Linn Davies Sahlström (SWE) was first woman in 21:35:31 and Mark Lynch (GBR) was first man in 16:52:59. [Full results](#).

CHORLEY 6 HOUR ROAD RACE



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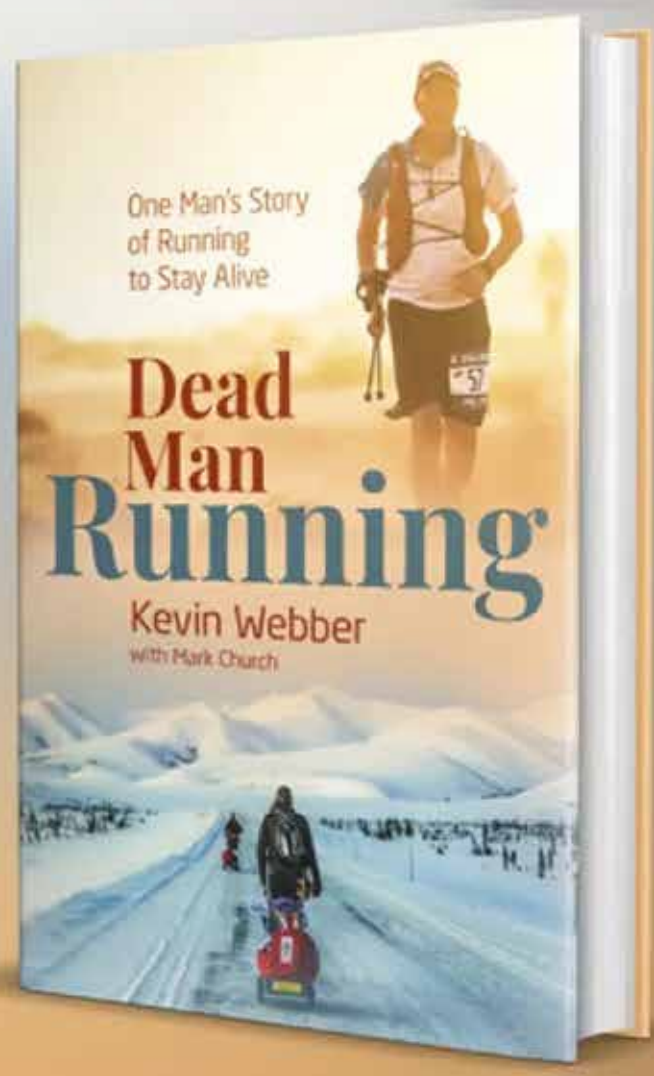




One Man's Story of Running to Stay Alive

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Podcast Corner



RUNNING OUT

Lucy Bartholomew running the 231km Larapinta Trail in Australia.



UNDERSTANDING ULTRA PODCAST

By Sam Hill a British podcast about the global sport of trail and ultra-running, has featured some interesting athletes recently on the usual podcast channels and Youtube.

TALK ULTRA EPISODE 225

Has an in-depth interview with Michael Wardian after his epic run across America and also chats with Ultra Trail Snowdia by UTMB race director, Michael Jones.

TRAIL RUNNING WOMEN

Features a great mix of chats including Angelo Poli an internationally recognized expert in fitness and nutrition. He's the Founder of MetPro, the world's first algorithm-based transformation engine.

SMM - SINGLE MALT MARATHONERS

Not an ultra podcast but an interesting weekly chat based in Bristol by Kelly Dicks.

THE WOMEN'S RUNNING PODCAST

Featuring Esther Newman and Holly Taylor. Ep 105. Training in heat, anxiety in running, heckling.

EXTRAMILEST SHOW #51

Kilian Jornet's Advice to Race Faster, for Non-Elites

SINGLETRACK

Interviews Jim Walmsley a professional trail runner for Hoka based in the French Alps and preparing for the 2022 UTMB.

AMERICAN TRAIL RUNNING ASSOCIATION

Give a recap of Western States 2022.

TRAIL RUNNING INSIDER Ep.2

Mont-Blanc Marathon.

BILLY YANG TALKS TO JEFF BROWNING

Keys to Longevity in

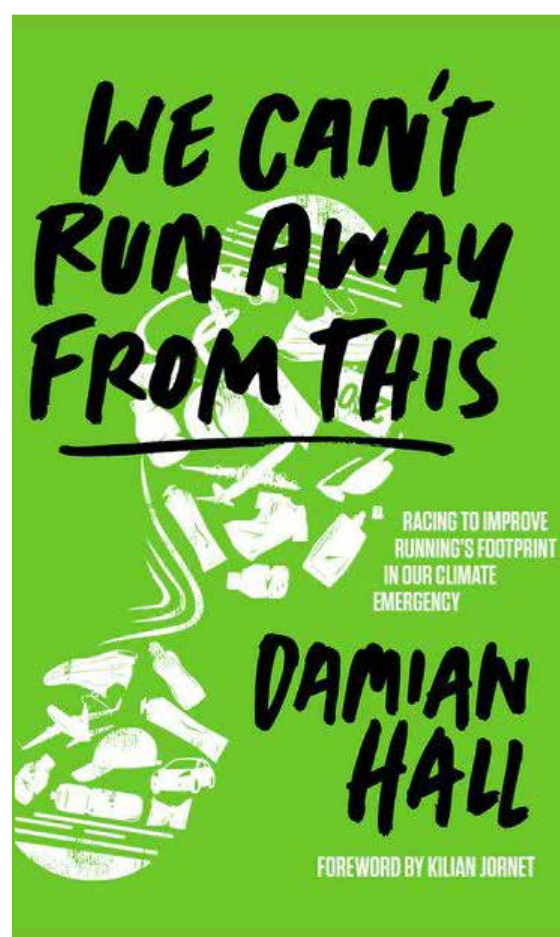
Ultrarunning, Hardrock 100, Optimized Fat Metabolism (OFM) Diet.

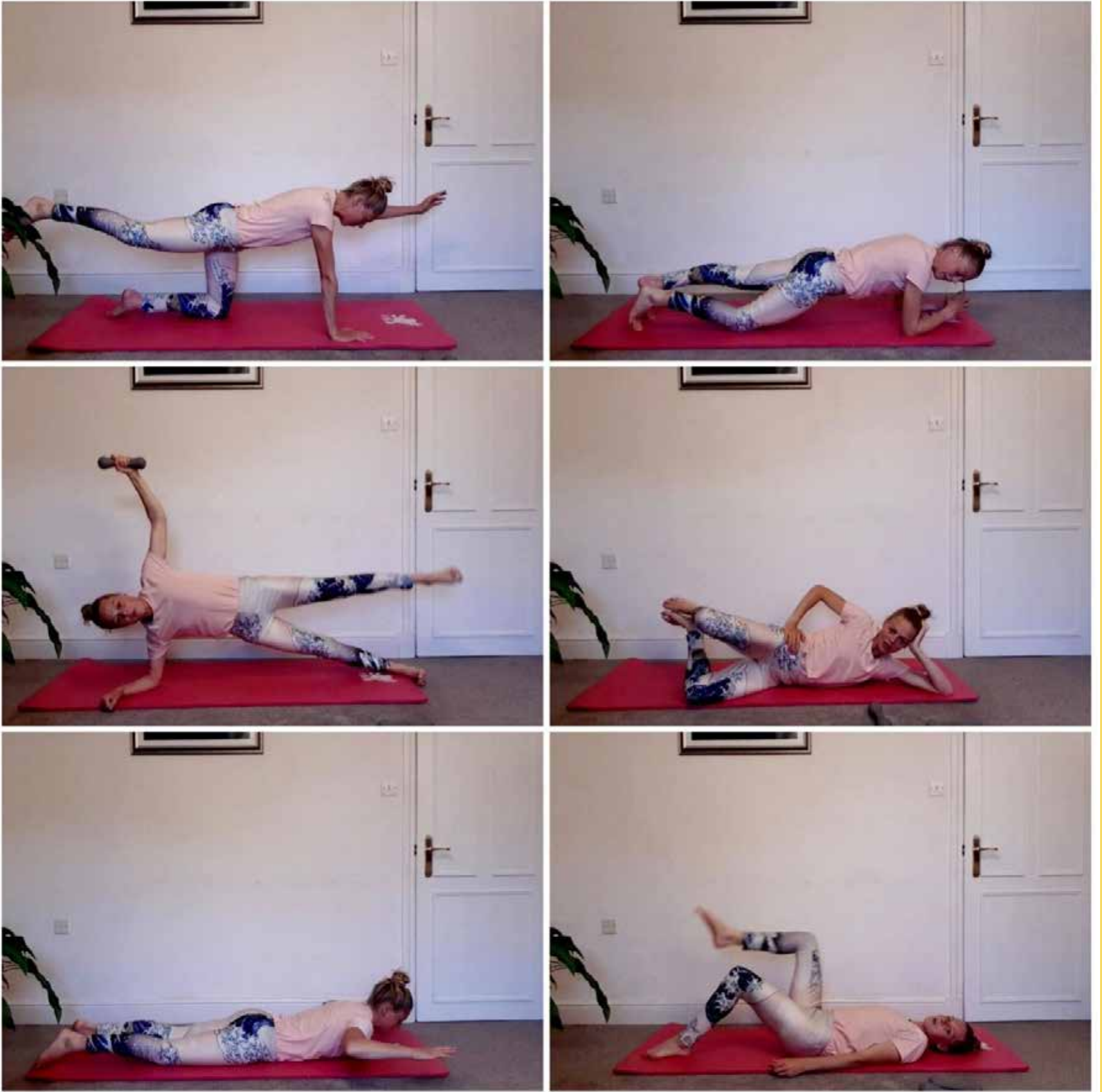
ULTRARUNNING BOOKS

The Road to Sparta: Reliving the Ancient Battle and Epic Run That Inspired the World's Greatest Footrace - Dean Karnazes.

Another shout for Where There's a Hill Sabrina Verjee . One woman, 214 Lake District fells, four attempts, one record-breaking Wainwrights run. Out 15th Sep 2022.

We Can't Run Away From This - Damian Hall





YOGA

By Kim Maltby

What I've learnt more than anything through my fitness teaching journey so far is that our mind and bodies are so interconnected and our beliefs, drives and thoughts are very much aligned into our physical bodies. My previous injuries were always linked to periods of unsettlement or over thinking/over training in my life, and it is with my recent PhD studies on addictive behavior and retiring elite athletes alongside qualifying as a Hatha Yoga teacher that I understand how I had used running throughout my life as my main coping strategy to deal with stress. Which wasn't a bad thing, I could have definitely done worse! But what I can see now is that having a few other strategies to hand such as doing a Yoga class when I am recovering from big run sessions is better for me and my training as a whole than trying to bash out another run session unconsciously just because that's just 'who I am' or 'what I do'. You might find the same peace and stillness that you find in or after a run through a Yoga class, you might not, you might need to try a few different styles and teachers. But having this plan B to surrender to, will help the mind make the right decisions at the right time in your training block. It will enable you to grow stronger and avoid overtraining whilst allowing you some space to develop your goals. You can take a run because you want to run, not because you need to. That motivation comes from a different place, not from fear, but rooted in an open heart.

My Yoga journey began with learning how to be still, and at times with being uncomfortably still, allowing thoughts to be acknowledged, at times accepted or reflected upon, instead of running (denying or ignoring) away from them. Through being still with Yoga I have learnt how to peel away the layers of society, culture and conditioning to tell me what is really going on, what is really being said. This has given me agency to make my own choices and then breathe through any difficulty faced within my choices, whether that be difficult conversations or physical and mental obstacles, and with all this has come a kind of peace, an acceptance of myself as I am and others as they be. Learning that as I am, I am enough. This hasn't changed the fact that I love running, in fact I think I love it more, because it doesn't control me. Standing on a start line as yourself is far more empowering than trying to be like someone else.

Yoga can mean many different things to different people. It is based on ancient Indian texts where there are infinite readings and teachings to follow and there is a whole world of Sanskrit to be discovered! The physical aspect of Yoga (the asanas) is only one part of what Yoga is. I recommend for runners asanas that stretch out and engage the legs whilst opening the chest; so any of the standing Warrior poses, and downward dog is brilliant for the tight legs. Supine twist is great for stretching out the chest and releasing the lower back and Yogic breath in child's pose is simply divine. To practice Yogic breath you inhale through the nose and fill the tummy with air, then you inhale in more to fill the sides of the rib cage with air and then a further inhalation to expand the chest towards the collar bones and then exhale normally. The breath (Pranayama) to me is one of the most important elements in Yoga. The breath (Prana) is the 'life force' and taking time to notice it really helps us to find the stillness, and notice the witness - the thing that's noticing. This is the 'soul', a consciousness that connects us to the 'one' whether that be God or universal 'oneness' and it requires the rational reasoning mind to stand aside. Often this is a feeling that can occur at the end of a Yoga class with Savasana (lying/sitting and simply being) and we as runners may experience this on a run. Trying a Yoga class once a week will help you to keep



your heart open and curious to explore the boundaries of who you are beyond your running. If you can't commit for any reason to a whole class, Yoga can be incorporated into a post run stretching routine, just by taking extra time to focus on the breath, holding a stretch/asana for 4-10 breaths and being consciously aware of where the breath sits, alignment of the body and how the mind feels. Yoga can also be incorporated into everyday thinking such as developing the witness perspective with mindful awareness of thoughts, emotions and feelings and pausing before you react to these, and the use of positive affirmations to keep the mind healthy and encouraging gratitude towards the small everyday things, achievements and miracles in nature.

Check out my YouTube channel – Stretch Mountain Pilates and Yoga – for over 100 free videos! Please select 'like' the video and subscribe to the channel to support me with my teaching journey.

Further reading:

Ram Dass - Becoming Nobody.

Michael Singer - The Untethered Soul, and The Surrender Experiment.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.





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THE INAUGURAL CORNWALL RUNNING SHOW

Bringing people together...

Let me introduce myself. I'm Tracy Waite, personal trainer and wellness coach, ultra-runner and happiness enthusiast.

While sat chatting with my buddy, fellow runner and race director of Bys Vyken Events, David Andrewartha, we came up with the idea of creating an event to showcase the Cornwall running community. The conversation soon escalated and the very next day I was emailing venues for availability.

Venue booked, ideas circulating in our excitable minds, we soon had a plan.

After a postponement of the date due to covid, we were finally setting up the stands early Sunday 17 April in the Chi an Bobel Hall of Heartlands, Pool and Unesco World Mining Heritage Site.

We invited some of the best small Cornish running businesses, and other great organisations from further afield.

The day schedule promised one of stand holders conversing with attendees about all things running, vendors selling their goods, race directors signing racers to events, plant-based food to fuel the day, live feed, live podcast, guided runs, outdoor yoga and a live DJ, to name a few.

Local running clubs planned their weekly runs from the venue, meeting for that very important coffee and cake post run, while joining in with the day's offerings.

Leah Atherton, aka Poet on the Run, and I led a guided run with Stephen Cousins, from Film My Run, who offered a tutorial on how to film while running. Offering more than just a run itself, this tutorial was both informative and engaging to those who joined us. Stephen stayed for the day interviewing vendors during a live feed. Several more guided runs took place throughout the day, taking people along the local mining trails and up to the Carn Brea Monument, running into the atmospheric mist that descended on the top of the great flat load, one of our most popular bridleways in this famous mining area.





Vendors included

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<https://www.facebook.com/bekind.vegan.caravan>

Bys Vyken events

<https://bysvykenevents.vpweb.co.uk/>

Falmouth road runners

<https://www.falmouthroadrunners.co.uk/>

Film My Run, Stephen Cousins

<https://www.youtube.com/c/FilmMyRun>

Hayle runners

<https://www.haylerunners.com/>

Hot Sauce Contest DJ

<https://www.instagram.com/hotsaucecontest/>

Heather Venables Soft Tissue Therapy

<https://heathervenables.co.uk/>

Heartlands parkrun

<https://www.parkrun.org.uk/heartlands/>

Kernow Active

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063357031204>

Mad Hatter Sports

<https://www.madhattersportsevents.co.uk/>

Mud Crew Events

<https://mudcrew.co.uk/events/>

Poet on the Run, Leah Atherton

<https://www.facebook.com/athertonpoet>

Ruby Fury

<https://www.rubyfury.co.uk/>

Stiff Twigs Yoga

<https://www.stiff Twigsyoga.co.uk/>

The Swap Box

<https://www.facebook.com/TheSwapBox>

The Waite room CIC

<http://www.personaltrainerincornwall.co.uk/the-waite-room-cic/>

Trench Foot Cream

<https://trenchfootcream.co.uk/>

Trevor Lee Running 44@60 podcast

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/464209/10456897>

Ultrarunning World Magazine

<https://www.facebook.com/UltrarunningWorldMag/>

Whythra running tour guides

<https://runtourscornwall.co.uk/>

The day event came to a close, before the evening guest speaking event came into full flow.

We were super lucky to be graced with such inspirational speakers, offering such honesty, vulnerability and humanity, sharing their individual stories around running and how it in turn has changed the direction of lives.

Jay Grady from Trail and Error podcast hosted the evening event. Anyone who knows Jay or has listened to the podcast will identify with his relaxed, friendly and safe approach to hosting. Speakers listened to others, waiting with nerves and anticipation, but once on stage with Jay all worry dissipated and was replaced with joyful conversation, creating friendships and an ever-growing community.

Guest speakers and films included:

Claire Wallerstein, Cornwall Climate Care, 'Living on the Edge' [Cornwall's Climate Stories: Living on the Edge](#)

David Andrewartha, Bys Vyken Events

Leah Atherton, Poet on the Run

Sian Longthorpe ASICS Frontrunner <https://linktr.ee/sian.longthorpe>

Stephen Cousins, Film My Run <https://www.youtube.com/c/FilmMyRun>

Tracy Waite, UDR 25-hour run film <https://youtu.be/bOOzfbckGoo>

Drawing the event to a close, eating vegan lotus ginger cake and chatting to fellow runners who attended this show in one way or another, a sense of love, pride and community swept over me. The light was fading as the evening drew in, and we would soon all drive home to the day being only but a memory. This feeling reminds me of how I feel when closing in to the finish line of an ultra, or a solo adventure: one of pride and relief that it went well, but also a feeling of not wanting it to end.

Needless to say, I am currently organising the next show.





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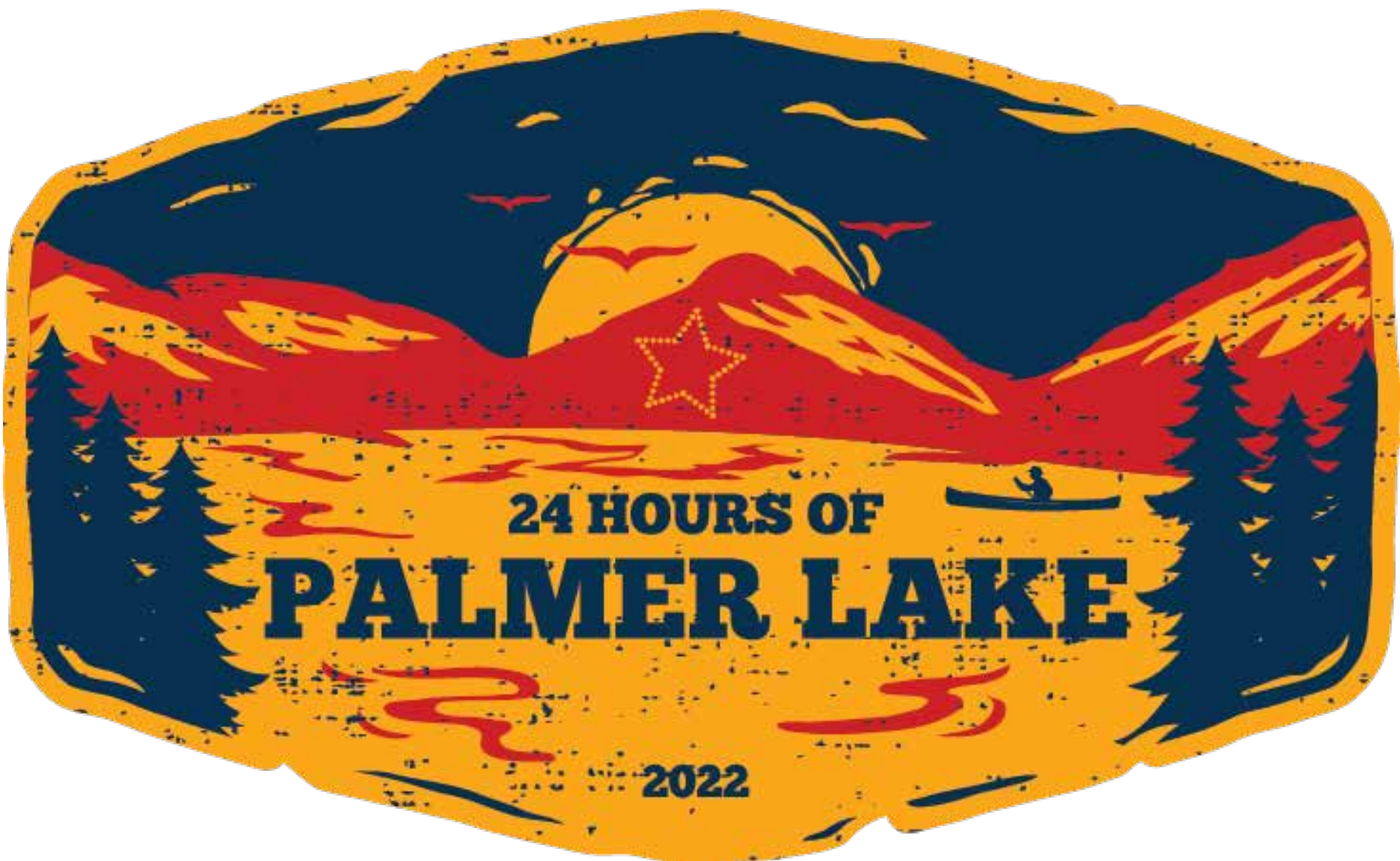
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for a gentle walk with joyful conversation and a chance to connect with others. I'd love to see you there.

Speak to your social prescriber to get booked in
or call Tracy Waite on 07967307389 for more details.

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TAMING THE DRAGON

By Antonio Codina

I have reached the summit of Yr Wyddfa, also known as Snowdon, and I can now relax and enjoy the moment. It has been a hard day. The heat has been relentless most of the time but now the sun is dipping down and the Moelwynion range is silhouetted in the distance against the most stunning sunset. I am about to finish the first day of the Montane's Dragon's Back Race, one of the hardest mountain races in the world. The days before the race I was so anxious that I could hardly sleep, but once I started moving the nerves disappeared. My training was paying off and I am moving well, and I have no doubt that this is the start of one of the most amazing weeks of my life.

After a rather vertical final descent I am over the moon to have completed the first day in good shape, but I am greeted by many sad faces of runners that did not make the cut-offs. This race is a dream for most of the participants and not making the first day must be devastating. I hardly have time to reflect on that, I have another hard day tomorrow and I am seriously dehydrated and hungry.

This is not a beginner's race, the numbers talk for themselves. 6 days, 380km and 17,400m of total elevation gain, from the north to the south of Wales along all its mountain ranges. Still, those figures don't tell the full story. The route will throw absolutely everything at you, rocky and very technical mountains and trackless tussocky grass linked together with runnable trails and even long sections of road. The random Welsh weather, a few tricky cut-off times and you have the perfect recipe for a DNF debacle.

In 2021 the first two days of the race were unusually hot and this probably caused a much higher DNF rate than usual. On the first day from 367 starters only 249 finished. It got worse, 125 people completed the second day with only 90 people completing the full 6 days. I completed the journey but I can tell you it was not easy, and I felt at times that the Dragon could have shaken me off its back at any time.

If you are considering running the race, watching the documentaries available on YouTube and reading some participants' race reports can be a great source of information to prepare for it. There are lots of good reports in blogs or on the Dragon's Back website. I have already written a race report, therefore in this article I thought I would compile top tips for future Dragons. To make it more fun and diverse I asked for help in the participants' Facebook group. This is the message I wrote:

I want to write an article with top tips from previous participants. Does anybody have one piece of advice for future Dragons that they would like added to the article? For example:

Is there anything in particular that helped you to complete the race?

What would you do differently if you came back?

Any tips about food or training?

Many people kindly answered and I have tried to compile their comments below in different sections: Training, Racing and Camp life.

TRAINING RACING

"If you don't recce or train in the terrain then your chances to finish are small." Dave Brown

"Train on rough terrain with long periods on your feet. Use your kit and make sure it works – learn where it rubs and prevent. Read Fix your Feet book." Elaine Bisson

"Train the body to handle multi-day running. Back-to-back 20-30 mile runs." Ian Hawley

"Strengthen your ankles as much as you can." Dan Horton

"Train with and take lots of different food types, the same stuff day after day gets boring." Tim Viner

"Lots of running, even in the mountains, is not enough. Next time I'll add targeted and bespoke strength and conditioning workouts. Get help with getting rid of tension build-up in your muscles during the training months by having regular sports massages." Thia Malan

"Train with poles, don't assume you'll be fine without them." Shaun Foxcroft

A lot of the advice is about training in the mountains and on the actual route. The first two days are especially hard and if you have not had a chance to see the route beforehand you could have a big surprise. To give you an example, I had used the same combination of socks and shoes for years without problems but training in Snowdonia I got terrible blisters and macerated feet. Since then I changed socks and pre-taped my feet. Check out Martyn Holman's blog "Taking stock of the Dragon" where he describes the nature of the challenge with some beautiful writing.

ACG
ON

RACING

"My advice would be to leave your ego at home. The Dragon is a great leveller, so it's a good way to avoid disappointment." Sophie Littlefair

"It is not a non-stop race (stating the obvious!)... its management is different. You need to run lots of it to make the cut-offs, it will be a tough race to bring home." Carmine de Grandis

"Set off early in the mornings, I nearly timed out on day two after setting off late (followed the guide times)." John Boothman

"I didn't get enough calories down in general. I finished but wasn't in great shape and recovery took an age. Will defo take more of my own food options for day and evening next time." Matthew Kiddle

"Don't mess around in the aid stations, get some food and drink and get out fast. Talk to your fellow competitors. We are all there for the same reason. Enjoy it because it's a hell of a journey." Tim Viner

"My best tip would be to go with a race plan and stick to it religiously. Many times throughout the week I would catch up with a runner or get passed by one but I never altered my pace to suit theirs. Be comfortable in your own personal race and don't waiver from it, it's often too easy to tag along with a quicker guy but at what cost to your success. The time to catch up is in the dining tent where the banter and race chat is immense." Dean Rees Thomas

"Save something in the tank for Day 5 - it's a beast!"
Colin Brearley

"Love every moment as for most of us it's a one off! Remember... you chose to do this... and it's awesome."
Bethan Chapman

"Drink plenty on day 6. You'll need a lot of fluid in your body for tears at the finish line." Anton Møller Christensen

On days 2 to 6 you have the option to leave camp any time between 6 and 9am. You will be advised a departure time depending on your finish time the previous day, but be very careful leaving the camp late as many people DNFed because they did not leave early enough. The cut-offs do not give you a lot or margin for error and weather conditions, tiredness or a navigation mistake could put you out of the race.

As Carmine says, unless you are very fast you will feel that you have to run every day to meet the cut-offs.

CAMP LIFE

"Be super organised and strict on camp routine! Have EVERYTHING ready the night before." Beth Chapman

"Write down your campcraft and practise prior. Be disciplined in its daily execution. DO NOT FAFF!!! Ensure great bunk mates and have a laugh at dinner."
Alexander Papadopoulos

"Be focused in camp and get as much sleep as possible, don't get distracted with anything, you need to be efficient." John Boothman

"Sleeping. I could only sleep a couple of hours between day 1 and day 2, and wasn't prepared for that. I would strongly recommend ear plugs (and getting used to it)."
Guillaume Michotte

"Cheesy chips with soup are delicious!" Elaine Bisson

"After the race, care, plenty of food as well as good humour are essential to succeed and enjoy the experience." Carmine de Grandis

You will share a tent room with somebody, therefore you may struggle to sleep and you may not have lots of space to prepare your kit in the morning. Also, unless you are a fast runner you will not have lots of time to relax at camp, that is why a lot of the advice is about being organised and do not faff as Alexander, my 2021 tent mate says.

All the food at the camp is vegan or vegetarian. I am not a strict vegetarian myself but I found it delicious and it really worked well to recover and be ready for another day, but bear that in mind if that is not your preferred type of diet.

Something nobody mentioned, but I found useful, was to have a very good stretch routine to help your muscles before going to bed. I packed a lacrosse ball and tiger balm to treat my sore muscles.

As a quick summary, I loved the one-line advice from Dean Rees Thomas: *"Eat like a horse, move like a goat, sleep like a lamb."*

With that I will bring it to a close. If you read this far you probably understand now that The Dragon's Back race is an amazing journey across a beautiful country, but it will test to the limit your ability as a mountain runner. You will need to know your gear, your fueling and hydration strategy and have great organisation skills. It's an amazing event and the camaraderie and friends you will make while running or at the camp will make it extra special. The finish in Cardiff castle and the award ceremony are just fantastic and if you make it there you may find it hard to stop the emotions. Every finisher gets a small Dragon trophy and mine is one of my most treasured prizes of my running career.





COMRADES ULTRA MARATHON TRAINING

By Dawn Nunes



The Comrades Marathon is an ultramarathon which is run annually in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, between the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban. It is the world's largest and oldest ultramarathon race. The starting point alternates between the two cities each year which means there is an "up" and a "down" Comrades, approximately 89 km in distance. There is a 12-hour cut-off and you need to qualify with a standard marathon in under 4 hours 50 minutes.

This year will be my third Comrades. I ran a back-to-back in 2017 and 2018. You receive a special back-to-back medal which can only be earned with your first two consecutive Comrades completed. In 2017 it was an "up" Comrades and 2018 a "down". I still haven't decided which one I prefer and both were so unique. My best time was 8 hrs 39 min in 2018... in which I ended up walking for 15 km from Westville to the finish as my thigh muscles were in agony, still achieving a Bill Rowan medal which is a sub 9 hours.

The Comrades have a number of different medals earned depending on your finishing time. In 2018 I was being extremely optimistic and tried to go for a silver, which is a sub 7 hours 30, and my legs gave in from Botha's Hill, but I continued to complete the race – that was never an option!

This year has been different. The world has experienced Covid with all its restrictions for over two years and South Africa shared harsh restrictions in this time too. This year's Comrades will be an epic celebration of "The Return" and I cannot wait to get to the start line!

In 2019 I had my hamstring surgically reattached to the pelvis bone from a hockey injury. 2020 was Covid and



allowed me time to recover, strengthen and dream bigger. My body is stronger than it has ever been and the speed is slowly improving too.

I have loved my Comrades Journey. As with all ultra running in particular, one has to embrace the training and submerge yourself in it – as this is where most of your time is spent. I've been blessed with a great training partner and friend, Roxanne Vale. This will be her first Comrades and it has been so special sharing this journey of training the route and looking forward to the big day where we celebrate with the Comrades race.

I have had some unconventional training for Comrades, and I've loved it. I've really mixed my trail with road running and it has made it enjoyable, challenging and fun. I have a dual dream at the moment; in a few weeks I line up for my third Comrades, then three months later I take on the inaugural Ultra-Trail Cape Town's 100-miler at the end of November, my first 100-miler with almost 8,000m of elevation.

We are in taper mode at the moment. Just over three weeks to go and I am ready. The last two

months have been the pinnacle of our training. I have been consistent with weekly runs including a 20 km long run on a Wednesday morning and the weekends have been varied. My peak training included a back-to-back marathon (45 km road followed by a very tough 1,000 hills 40 km trail marathon) and the following weekend, our Comrades Route Tester of 56 km. I've peaked at 116 km in a week but this included trail, road, strength, yoga and a variety of paces.

Comrades have a wall of honour where you can put a plaque up with your name once you have completed the ultra marathon. I surprised my dad by getting him one, and then mine is above his. He completed 11 Comrades which means he got his permanent green number. This happens after 10 completed Comrades Marathons. I have had the privilege of running in my dad's number, 964, and will do so again this year. Carrying on the legacy.

28th August at 5:30am the gun will go off and the Comrades Marathon will start. We are running from Pietermaritzburg to Durban this year, finishing in the iconic Moses Mabhida stadium. My main

aim for this year is to have fun, run conservatively at the beginning and if the body is feeling good I would love to finish strong. I'm also keeping in mind that I have a very short period of recovery, before I need to take up my trail shoes and continue my training and goal chasing for my 100-miler. This year will be with a different purpose and I cannot wait! Bring it on!

You can follow any Comrades entrant on the Comrades app on the day too.

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THE JOY OF RUNNING

Interview with Camille Herron

By Tracy Waite

Connecting the video call at 9pm GMT, 3pm Oklahoma, I meet Camille after a few days of exchanging messages. We begin by talking about the UK and some exciting possibilities meaning Camille will be back journeying on foot in the future on UK soil. She has just had a 'breakthrough', she has recently had some blood work done, resulting in finding out she has high iron, which has contributed to some pretty severe gland energy issues. "I have a background in exercise Sports Science and this totally makes sense to me, that if you have too much iron in your body it causes oxidative stress, and so it was stressing me. I have had this transformation this past year working with a dietician to get my iron down and my magnesium back up, my magnesium was low, which was contributing to the PMS that I was experiencing. Working with my dietician has transformed me!"

So how did you deal with the menstrual cramps mentally during Western states?

“Well, I am such a joyful person, so people wouldn't have even known what I was going through, I was just trying to have a positive mindset, because that is how I am, but at the same time, I'm like 'man, there is this war going on in my body'. Everyone was expecting me to win, or be on the podium and they thought I was going to be disappointed, but I was so happy. I was so happy that I was able to work through it, even if it took me some down time at the aid station. I was so thrilled to finally get to the top 10 at Western States. I am someone who always looks on the sunny side of things. Being able to finish top 10 was still a huge achievement and I am happy with it.”

Also, we know when you are running through these issues, it's not just an ultra, this is an ultra on a different scale with its own set of hurdles to climb.

“Oh, for sure, when I go and run World records and do amazing things, of course I have gut problems, of course I have foot problems, I have all these normal problems that every ultra-runner goes through, I am able to work through those things pretty efficiently, but you add



in getting your period on top of what we normally go through, it's a whole other set of challenges”

This is where we get onto the subject of 'The art of joyful running'.

“I can talk all about this. When I was a kid, we lived out in the country and we had all these wheat fields around our house. I would go run in the fields and see all this wildlife, like rabbits, birds, insects, cool rocks, snakes, I love being outside. So, when I went out for cross country in the 8th grade it felt like that, it felt like being a kid, running in the wheat fields looking for wildlife and all the other girls looked like me. I had always been a string bean, I was a really good basketball player, really skilled with the basketball, but when I went out for cross country, it was like, wow, this is my tribe. I found joy in running because it made me feel like that same kid again that grew up around the wheat fields, and I still feel that. When I go out there, I always enjoy the wildlife and the things that I see out there. I started running with my phone more, so I could start capturing videos or pics and then share it, then I started a YouTube channel, so I could have a place to put my videos. Maybe there are other people out there that have that same feeling as I do, they enjoy running, not just running to train or perform, they are running because they actually enjoy being outside.”

What are your secrets for running for life?

“Run for stress release and slow the pace down. Let running feel good, running should feel good,

you should enjoy being out there. Me getting more into ultra-trail running, getting out on the trails and being out in nature and wilderness, reconnecting with that kid again, being out there exploring and looking for wildlife and cool rocks.

An important thing that flipped the switch with me, was when I was in college, I met Frank Shorter, he is an American 10km and marathon runner back in the 70's. He won Olympic Gold in 72 and 76, I met him in a marathon expo back in 2003. We were chatting and I told him I was a pre-med student wanting to go to medical school, and I was taking all my biology courses, under a lot of stress and at that point I was running recreationally, I was just running for fun, and he signed a coaster for me that said 'run for stress release'. I am a very cerebral person, so I started thinking about that when I ran, thinking, ok, I need to just run really relaxed, and slow down the pace, and enjoy running. Reconnecting with running feels good, running is good for my health, running releases stress, and so it flipped a switch for me. I learned to let running feel good and to be this stress reliever from all the courses I was taking in college. I started realising that 'this feels so good, I feel so good, then I found myself running more, and doing trail runs and it reconnected me with the joy of running. I had been a high school competitive runner, and I always thought of running as getting out and push and strain every day to get better, and all it took was this meeting, this signed coaster that flipped the switch for me.”

Is running your meditation?

“For sure. I feel like I space out in this zen like state when I am out there. I really tune into what I am hearing, what I am smelling, what I am seeing. Everybody sees me when i'm racing and I have this big smile on my face, and you wouldn't know that I am running so fast. I am in this state where I am enjoying the experience but also pushing my human limits and running really fast, but I really am propelled by joy. I find joy in being able to push my own human limits and to push through every challenge that is thrown at me. It feels like success, I go into a race knowing that I will have so many challenges, and I have to jump over those hurdles and keep moving forward, keep troubleshooting and working through problems, and I am so happy when I get to do that.

I often find that when I do these races that sometimes you struggle early, I have struggled the first 30 miles of a 24-hour race. When I ran my World record, my legs got tangled with somebody else in the race early on, and then I hobbled about 30 miles with this bugged knee, I was trying to tell myself, shake it off, it will be ok. I have had lots of experiences like that, early in the race, and that's hard, how do you wrap your head around that, it can be mentally hard to have the will to persevere through it, that's another thing I have had to learn to deal with.”

So how do you deal with the struggles? Do you talk to yourself? Have a mantra?

"I have a cheerleader in my head, how can I work through a problem, how can I work through a health struggle, an injury? What are your limitations? You have to prepare yourself for that, everything is going to hurt, it's going to break down, how do you will yourself past that? It really comes down to being prepared for unexpected challenges, how would you work through that, how does your crew help you work through this?"

I think I was born with joy. I was born on Christmas day in 81, and they said I entered the world with a smile on my face. My great-grandmother nicknamed me Smiley when I was born. I was born to be happy; I was always smiling and I loved to eat, and then I started walking, then running. Then here I go!

Another interesting thing is that I was born with a central auditory processing disorder. I didn't have all of my hearing and my speech was delayed, so my way of communicating was through my smile. I haven't really talked too much about that, but I think my brain is wired differently, because I had this disability that I had to learn how to overcome, I took speech therapy until I was 9. I was naturally a happy kid, so I expressed myself by smiling, showing my happiness. I think it was naturally wired into me, as I just wanted to say, hey I am

doing ok."

During a race, while you are experiencing struggle, do you think that this is why you can smile through it, telling the world that you really are, ok?

"Obviously I have my moments, where my smile turns to more of a grimace, there are pictures of me where my hair is all tattered, but I think I am wired from a young age to express joy, to feel joy, and even in my deepest darkest moments, I have had to overcome many challenges in my life, I find a way to find joy, happiness and hope. Find hope in these deep, dark moments that I can get through this. My friend told me I am like the Ted Lasso of ultra-running, my husband and I had to start watching the show. I am just a really happy Ted Lasso type of person."

Let's talk about your hair, I have heard that you feel super charged by your hair when you are running.

"I started running with my hair down in my freshman year of college, it just suited me. I felt so liberated and free. I don't let it bother me when it gets all tangled and then looks like a lion's mane, I just don't let it bother me. I have heard that native Americans don't like to have their hair cut off because it was their way of sensing the world around them,

like tentacles on your head. I think there is a sensory component to your hair, I feel that way, it feels like a cape on my head, a cape that is raising me up, I feel very animalistic like a lion, primal and it suits me."
What's next Camille?

"Everyone wants to know what I am racing next, but I am one of those people who has races booked, but I just want to focus on taking it a day at a time right now because I am trying to recover from Western States. We will see what I am feeling. We are going out to Colorado to do some training out there, and I will go with my gut feeling, what I want to do, we will see."





	Event	Location	Miles	S/M/L
Sat 5 th Feb	Pendle Way in a Day	Pennines	45	M
Sat 12 th March	Haworth Hobble	South Pennines	32	S
Sat 9 th April	Calderdale Hike	South Pennines	36	M
Sat 30 th April	The Fellsman	Yorkshire Dales	61	L
Sat 14 th May	Spire Ultra	Derbyshire	34	S
Sat 25 th June	Lakeland 5 Passes	Lake District	32	S
Sat 9 th July	Hallow 12 Parishes	Worcestershire	40	M
Sat 16 th July	Pennine 39	North Pennines	39	M
Sat 3 rd September	Bullock Smithy Hike	Peak District	56	L
Sun 27 th September	Lancashireman	Pennines	27	S
Sat 1 st October	Round Rotherham	South Yorkshire	50	L
Sat 22 nd October	Yorkshire Trod	Yorkshire Dales	62	L



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TOP TIPS

FOR RUNNING 100 MILES

By Ian Morris

So you want to run 100 miles? Good for you. I would suggest you guys go and read some of the fully psyched training plans that scared the life out of me after I first signed up. And good luck to you because honestly, running 100 miles seems like really hard work and not without serious risk of injury, chronic fatigue and maybe a little (well earned) smugness. No, this article really isn't for you guys who are going to scamper to the end like the superhuman athletes you undoubtedly are. This article is about the rest of us, the ones surviving a 100 miles where running will be an element of the experience but so will be walking, crawling, moaning, some pain and blisters.

CHOOSING AN EVENT

Knowledge is power; I would advise choosing an event where you know a little bit about the area. One of the main reasons I finished this event was that I knew where I was going. I had recce'd the route a few times and had been walking in the area for years. I can't imagine anything worse than being out there in the dark, cold and wet not really knowing where you are going. Remember, GPS runs out of batteries, route markings get blown down, nicked by kids and run off with by dogs and things do go wrong. Going to have a look at the route also takes the fear out of some of the steeper, trickier, or more technical parts of the event. Bear in mind though that at 60 miles I got lost on a part of the route I had been walking for at least 30 years.

If you do book an event that is in a new area, bear in mind we all like to explore new environments but you need to think very carefully about how much you are going to like that 'new' environment at 3am in the pouring rain.

CONFIDENCE

I had previously done a 100k event and a 42-mile one, as well as running 30 milers quite a lot. However, these events have been interspersed with periods of Playstation, beer and toddler raising.

The point of this is that although my fitness hadn't been constant I knew what it felt like to try and run in events where you hated the world and everything in it (I have done a few road marathons as well!) and whilst I am no athlete I do have the ability to keep going in some capacity until the end.

I find confidence is key in these events – you might not feel you want to do it when you are out there but you HAVE to know YOU can and I think the only way to do this is to build up to 100-milers by doing other events first. I definitely feel this effort was a culmination of 15 or 16 years of intermittent running and it

was the experience and confidence gained through this time that got me to the start line and over the finish line.

Training

First things first, when you first look into entering a 100-mile event there will be a ton of information online to scare the hell out of you and it will all be in a similar vein -- you don't have time to train for this, you need to be doing 1,000 miles a week and wait... What! the race is six months away and you're not consistently running 70 miles back-to-back every weekend?

Now there is some truth in the fact that the training will take some time out of your life, but let me say this: I finished a 100-mile event (actually it was 97.5 miles but honestly, I wasn't going to complete the 2.5 miles running around a car park was I?) and only once did a back-to-back weekend. I never went more than 30 miles in one shot and didn't get close to the miles suggested in every training plan. What I did do is hill reps, lots and lots of hill reps.

Hill reps in the books always talk about heart rates, recovery times and all that jazz, but I found that really you just have to hammer them, especially (and this advice differs from lots of plans) the downhills. I have taken part in shorter events where the downhills hurt more than they did on the 100 miler (which was bloody hilly in the second half) and I put that down to really smashing the downhills in training. They weren't technical (my longest reps were on roads) but they were steep, and whilst they were too steep to run up them I could smash them back down again. During my 15-week training block I did a hill session at least once a week and twice I did 27 miles on a hill that was 0.72 miles long where I couldn't run the first 0.25 mile up hill, and that was my recovery, the rest I did as fast as I could.

I did not use poles for the hill reps.

LSR – Long slow runs

I tried to match my long slow runs roughly to the terrain of the ultra I was doing. The first 50 miles were pretty flat and so I ran 20 miles of flat and 10 miles of hills always at the same tempo, 0.8 of a mile running 0.2 of a mile walking. I imagine it would drive some people crazy but it works for me.

I did not use poles for the long slow runs.

POLES

In the words of Father Jack, 'YES'. Unless you are religiously opposed to them, just do it. You have still done 100 miles, it just won't hurt as much and people will wonder at your abilities to get up a hill so effortlessly after 90 miles. Plus you can lean on them when knackered or use them to turn your coat into a bivvy if you want to quit.

I would suggest not training with them other than on some runs so they are a 'treat' when you get to the big day. I was worried I would think they lessened the achievement in my mind; honestly, they didn't.

Some ideas for poles

- * I did practise with them and they took about four runs to get used to them
- * I also did some weight training a couple of times a week so my arms would be okay
- * I also packed cycling gloves in case of blisters but it wasn't an issue and I didn't use them

Drop bags

There will probably be an option to have a drop bag at halfway. I didn't use anything in it apart from new socks and a change of t-shirt. I did have my headtorch in there because I was planning on getting there before dark, but this was stupid and I probably wouldn't do that again. I had a few treats in the bag in terms of food but I really wasn't interested in them; I think you get used to what's at the aid stations and anything else seems to be a distraction.

On that note

AID STATIONS

* Try and get a good idea before race day of what's going to be on offer. You don't want any nasty surprises and also you don't want to carry 15 bananas if you're going to get offered a plateful of the things every 6-10 miles.

* Eat LOTS of everything on offer, especially in the early stages.

* Sit down, you are likely to be going for a long time and it's important to get off your feet. You'll be surprised at how quickly the time goes and if you don't make an effort to stop at planned points you are going to knacker yourself out. It's also nice to stop and have a chat with people, this is fun!

SHOPS

I planned to stop in a couple and get supplies, I didn't, I don't know why but despite the fact I was out there for 31-odd hours I just never felt like I had any time. Also I was far more satisfied by the aid stations than I thought I would be.

CREWING

If you have someone who knows what they are doing, wants to do it and you get on with, do it. I am a bit of a lone wolf but I am not sure I would have finished if I hadn't had someone meeting me on the morning of the second day. They just need to be thick skinned, I don't mean because you might shout at them, but if you miss each other you have to keep going, it's their job to find you. Also give them what you want them to bring; asking them to pick up this and that isn't really fair and only leads to disappointment.

QUITTING

You are going to want to quit. A LOT. I wanted to quit at about 68 miles, I really wanted to quit at 70-odd miles and would have paid A LOT of money for a taxi at 72 miles. I actually told the guy at the aid station I wanted to quit and he said I couldn't unless I was ill or injured and as it was peeing down with rain and there was no cover to wait for someone to get me – which would have been hours – I carried on and I was thankful I did.

The problem is you can't account for your brain telling you to stop. If you have ever been an addict of anything you will know that your brain can make up lots of plausible stories to trick you into thinking a terrible idea is a good one (it tricked you to sign up right?).

If you decide to quit, try and do it between

two checkpoints where it's as far to go on as it is to go back. Hopefully by the time you get to the next checkpoint it will have stopped raining or something will have shifted in you to keep you going. You just have to hope you find the motivation from somewhere. I actually had a panic a week before the race because I suddenly realised that maybe I wasn't that sold on the whole idea and it had all been an 'in principle' idea up to that point. All I can say is that, as one of the leaders said to me on the out-and-back section, 'Give your head a wobble and put one foot in front of the other buddy', so I did – and so should you.

One of the biggest motivating factors for me was that it had taken quite an effort to get to the start line and I sort of owed it to myself and everyone that had put up with me for the last few months to get it done.

KEEPING IN CONTACT

Set up a Whatsapp group and send a notification at checkpoints. It's not easy keeping everything charged, especially if you haven't got up-to-date technology and those battery packs often haven't got as many charges in them as you think, but my little 2,000 mAh one kept my watch going through the race for three charges I think; my iPhone ran out though and I think that charger would have only charged that once.

NUTRITION

Eat what you want, I don't care. Satsumas seem brilliant and I had no interest in the chip shop I had been longing over for 50 miles, once I got there. Just remember to drink loads of water, all the time, and watch your pee; if it starts to look and smell like cheap lager, drink more water. I tried to carry only the water in the bladder that I needed and I ran out. Don't be like me. Carry enough water.

TIMING PLANS

My plan was 12 hours for the first 50 miles which would give me up to 20 hours for the second 50 miles. It turns out 2.5 mph over hilly terrain after 50 miles is actually pretty hard if you are mostly walking it and spending time at checkpoints. Be realistic and expect everything to take longer than you think.

Some things I did notice though that might be worth thinking about. After a certain distance I couldn't really run much faster downhill than I could walk it and it certainly was easier taking big lolloping walking strides than running. It seemed rhythm was more important than bursts ('burst' hahaha) of speed.

You will spend time at checkpoints, you might even record a few 40-minute miles. The mental calculations might tire you out but at the end of the day you just have to put one foot in front of the other.

PAIN/INJURY

I was really lucky, I got through without any injury other than one massive blister on my little toe and in the last few miles, the bottom of my feet really, really started to hurt. I don't know what I could have done about that but it was a real effort to keep going in the last two miles because of that pain. Oh and the chafing was horrible, pack a spare pair of shorts and underwear and some cream and a towel to dry your bits off, and find somewhere private to change because it turns out there are dog walkers out at 4:30 in the morning.

THE AFTERMATH/TIPS

WHAT WENT WRONG

I got really lost in the rain and fog at one point but because I knew the direction I needed to go I got my compass out and, like a good boy scout, worked my way out of it. Take a compass, even without a map they can help you out, plus the sharp edge can cut up a sandwich.

Don't take anything for granted. I couldn't work out how to turn off my new phone which meant it ran out of batteries much quicker than it should have. It turned out to be a good thing in a way but not ideal if there had been an emergency. It stopped me calling a cab.

Take enough water. The day was hotter than expected and I was trying to only carry enough water in my bladder that I needed and I misjudged it on one of the longer stretches, this was not a good thing. At all.

My drop bag was not at the aid station in the morning after being told it was going to be. It wasn't a major thing but I really wanted to change my shoes at 89 miles and this meant I couldn't and I also would have had to wear my overnight clothes to run in through the rest of the day if my crew hadn't had spares.

Training plans are a guide. You have to do what suits you and is going to give you confidence. You'll read a lot of plans telling you to consider if you have enough time to do the training or not, these are all demotivators that need to be taken with a pinch of salt. I only did

one back-to-back LSR weekend and got by on about four runs a week with a bit of strength training thrown in. I tried to concentrate on hill reps because I quite like them and even did a few marathon-length sessions on a hill of about 0.75 miles in length.

Poles are king. Seriously, if you are allowed to use them and you aren't going for some non-pole-based record just use them, train with them a bit and specific strength training does help. I used this [8 Great Strength Exercises - Using Poles for Trail and Ultra Running - YouTube](#). I didn't have any of the usual 'it's the downhill that's the worst' moments. They are also good for ultra running staples like leaning on, banging together to wake up sleeping aid station volunteers at night and for throwing down in a tantrum when it all gets too much.

Prepare for your feet to hurt, a lot. Changes of socks, shoes and other tactics might help but at the end of the day it really does take a toll on your plates of meat.

Nutrition – I cooked up cheap (because they are a bit lighter) pizzas and put the slices into sealable freezer bags and ate them as I went. I also carried the Trek protein bars because I found them easy to eat. I am not sure if they are 'as good as you can buy' but I liked them. I didn't use any Tailwind or similar but did carry lots of satsumas to suck on to help with hydration.

Planning – I spent A LOT of time thinking about timings. This is obviously a personal thing but I would concentrate on planning for time not speed. I knew if I covered the first 50 miles of my event in 12 hours I would only ('only' ha ha ha) have to average 2.5 miles an hour for the second 50 miles. This all worked out okay in practice but only because I knew the terrain really well and also I calculated that I would take about double the time I had in my recces. I would say that I spent nearly the whole event either thinking about timings or thinking I wasn't going to carry on because I was slowing down, which is quite a mentally tiring way to carry on for 30-odd hours. I had meticulously printed out timing cards but somehow lost them quite early on, oops.

Oh, try and enjoy it. It's cost you a fortune and has taken you away from family and friends for an age so just go and get it done. All those DIY jobs will still be waiting for you when you get home.

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INTERVIEW WITH:

JOSEF MAYERHOFER

RACE DIRECTOR, MOZART 100 UTMB WORLD SERIES

By Tracy Waite

Talking to Josef Mayerhofer, a former ultra-trail runner and brain-child of Mozart 100km. We start the conversation with me sharing my experience of the Mozart marathon 2022, and it being my first race in Europe. This soon moved to my experience with running The Coastal Challenge in Costa Rica 2019, and this is where Josef shared with me his own experience with TCC and how the Mozart 100 was born.

"That was in 2011, and the race where on the plane back I invented the Mozart 100."

And I remember standing in the square on Friday evening listening to the race brief and Josef saying that 10 years ago on the very first Mozart, he was addressing 250 runners, this year, the 10th anniversary, he addressed 2000 runners.

"When you start something, you have an idea, but you don't know what the event will be in 10 years' time. But I was aware that it would take about 10 years until the race would grow to a considerable size, and we have got to this point; this was owed to the hard work, good concept and professionalism, but you also need a lot of luck, because anything can happen. I am very grateful and always stay humble and not get too excited about what has been achieved."

How are you feeling after the event?

Happy, 10-day post-race. When the event is over and there are no major incidents, this is the most important thing for us. There is a lot of work after the event, but this is different to the race preparation when you are building tension, and of course the Friday and Saturday of the race are quite tough, you are awake for more than 24 hours. But it's a good feeling when it is over and especially when you receive an

overall good feeling from athletes, this is also very important for us.

How long does the preparation take on an event this size?

Basically, we say that after the race is before the race. We are mainly busy with post-race work and already start planning for next year's event. Whether that's changing the course due to issues with land owners, or we may extend the long race. The registration portal opens in October, so everything has to be in place for this. It is a year-long process, which varies in intensity. We are a core team of three people: Claudia, Gruger, our race manager who manages the volunteers, and myself. We work on the event all year long, then work with other people depending on what we need.

There was a huge increase in 100km runners this year, were there any logistical issues scaling for the numbers?

No, not yet. The increase from 2021 to 2022 was more than doubled. This was due to COVID and deferrals from 2021. In terms of new participants, the growth was enormous, and I think this has to do with the UTMB World Series, and secondly those who could travel were happy to enter an event safely and with no travel restrictions and vaccinations, and thirdly, our event is becoming more and more popular which added to the continued growth.

What made the race different being part of the UTMB World Series apart from the increase in numbers?

For me as race director there wasn't much difference. The difference is being part of Ironman Group, we have to follow corporate guidelines, but even with

those bureaucratic guidelines that exist in a big company like Ironman, the advantages are way bigger in terms of support, marketing and merchandise, because they are more powerful. What we are focusing on, even if it's an event of the UTMB World Series, is that we still maintain our own identity and characteristics.

Were the Salzburg City Council helpful and supportive with the expansion of the race?

Yes, they have been supportive right from the beginning. If they hadn't been the race wouldn't exist nowadays.

The weather this year for the event was considerably hotter than predicted, so a last-minute kit change was announced at the race briefing on the Friday evening. Alongside this was a clear warning to all runners, especially those doing the ultra and the 100km. All runners had to take into consideration the extremely hot conditions and whether or not they were in a good place to attempt the climbs before moving forward in the race. The rescue on some of the main climbs would be incredibly involved and the runner's safety was paramount. This was something that my own partner, who was running the 100km, really thought about before attempting each brutal, long, hot ascent.

Was the unexpected temperature on the event an added issue leading up to the race?

Well, the closer we got to the event, the more certain it became that it would reach temperatures of 30 degrees and beyond. We must always be aware

that these temperatures can be very dangerous for the athletes if they do not behave correctly. This is why we stressed in the race brief to drink a lot, take a rest, etc. We were prepared and fortunately we didn't have any major incidents regarding the heat.

Did the high temperatures affect the finishers rate?

I was surprised that on the 100km we had a finisher rate of 80%, on the 75km it was 90% and on the marathon, it was almost 100%. This was exceptional because we have had finishers rates a lot lower than that in more favourable conditions. This is because the athletes were very careful, and were aware of what could happen, so they were taking more care of themselves than if they would have if it was 20-25 degrees when everyone would think, wow, today we are going to rock it.

Are you hoping that 2023 is going to be an even bigger event



again?

I hope so, because the popularity of the UTMB World Series will increase, and the popularity of our race will increase, and all is driven by the growing population of trail running all together.

What we are seeing with the developments of trail running, and our main mission from the beginning, is that we get people off the road so that they get into trail running. And now trail running is becoming younger, when in the beginning it was the running veterans who were moving from marathons to the longer trails, and also trail running is becoming more female. We still have a considerable low participation of women in the longer distances, about 10-15% in the 100km, but it increases towards the shorter distances, the half marathon slight majority is now women.

What are the highlights of being a race director?

On the sports side, the highlights were the top three athletes that crushed the course record by nearly an hour, which was amazing under this year's circumstances, although course records are not the main issue. For me, the two most important issues are we have no incidents and everybody gets to the finish line safely, or at least drops out safely. And secondly that the athletes are

satisfied with the event altogether. The main things are that our runners are happy, that smiling faces at the finish line and that there are no incidents.

What is the best advice you would give to someone starting out or who is wanting to become a race director?

Unless you start your own race, one doesn't start out as a race director. I became a race director without any experience of being a race director, but it's important that you know what you are doing. First of all, if you are talking about trail running, that you know what trail running is about. What is needed? What do the athletes need? What is required to set up an outside event, especially nowadays, there are so many events that the market doesn't need just another event, you need to think about how you can stand out from the crowd with the event. You also need to be very good at organising and planning, it requires a whole set of skills that are to do with finance and budgeting, and how to find sponsors. If you start your own race then you become a race director by your own appointment, but usually you would gather experience by fulfilling the task of helping out as a volunteer in events, and then taking on more responsibilities and growing into it. So, there are different ways to get into it, but most importantly, know your athletes and know how to run your business.

Going back to The Coastal Challenge, when the first idea was born in 2011, how long did it then take to set up the first Mozart?

It took me 15 months. When I returned from Costa Rica, it was February 2011, then I worked on the concept and the brand for about three months before I presented it to the Province of Salzburg, and when they agreed to support it, we decided to host the race the following year in June. 23 June 2012, the first edition of Mozart 100 was launched.

Personally, what are your running plans going forward?

To be honest, The Coastal Challenge 2011, was my last race. Before, I did several large races like the Jungle marathon in Brazil, MDS, Himalayan Stage Race and others. For me, trail running is about staying fit, and supplying oxygen to my brain. I now run 2-3 times a week for about an hour for these reasons, but no more ultra-running.

Photo Jo Meek finishing Mozart 100. Read Jo's blog at: JoMeek-blog.wordpress.com





Mozart 100



By Florian Neuschwander

A 105 km ultra trail with around 5,000 vertical metres. Wonderful course but really challenging especially when it's hot. Starting in beautiful Salzburg this awesome course goes along the Fuschlsee and Wolfgangsee and over two big climbs to Zwölferhorn and Schafberg. Then back to Salzburg along Fuschlsee and the last fight over the last two climbs Nockstein and Kapuzinerberg to the finish line. My race preparation was not the best. I was sick for eight days during my 12 weeks' prep, fell on my back and ended up with bruised ribs and had Covid four, five weeks before the Mozart 100. But after Covid I had two weeks of good training. Not enough training to win such a race or even to go for top five. I decided to start because I was feeling good and healthy again. My target was to do a good finish and do my own race. I started relaxed. Letting the fast runners go. After around 16 km I ran behind two other fast guys but after a while they turned around and asked me if we were on the right course. I thought we were, but we were wrong. We found ourselves on the way back to the finish. So we had to fight our way back to the right direction. After a while we found it and ended up in the main field of runners. We lost around 20-25 minutes to the front runners. I thought about dropping out of the race but with a friend of mine and my lovely family as supporters I decided to go on and go for that finish! I stayed relaxed and at every aid station I took the time I needed to refuel and relax. I felt quite good even though it was pretty warm and a lot of runners were in front of me. I don't know but I think I was around position 120 when I came back on the right track. So I worked my way in the direction of the finish line step by step. When I was in St Gilgen am Wolfgangsee again (kilometre 66 or so) I knew I could easily do it. I hiked a lot. More than usual. But still I felt ok. The heat was not a big problem for me. It was around 30 degrees. I picked up the pace a bit and moved forward step by step. In the end I came home in position 24 and a time of 11:55 hours. Far away from what I can do but still happy about three Running Stones for UTMB and a ticket for the Western States lottery. So far I don't have any points for races like this. So I start collecting Stones and Points from now and who knows, maybe I will be much faster in the next race with more luck? I don't know yet which races I will do next. Let's see... Who knows what the future will bring. I just know that I am well recovered already two days later and I can start training again very soon for my big goals. A participation in UTMB and Western States again.



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- 6-times Champion of Spain
- Award for Sports Values
- Team Trail World Champion
- European Team Skyrunning Champion
- 2-times Winner of the Ultra Transgrancanaria
- Winner of the Templiers Festival

Mozart 100

By Azara Garcia

I had little time to prepare for Mozart. I've been running again for about two and a half months.

I went through a band, or iliotibial band, injury which began in October after winning Ultra Pirineu, that led me to go through the operating room and to have surgery in February of this year.

It's been six whole months without running.

In April we started little by little again and we haven't had time to train much to get to the Mozart 100.

My training sessions were two competitions on 21 May at Desafío Somiedo in Spain and 4 June at Trail Lozère in France.

The main objective that I brought to Mozart was to test myself again in ultra distance, after eight months without running an ultra, and check that the knee was healed.

Of course I am very competitive and I wanted to go out and win.

It wasn't a good race, because from the beginning I had stomach problems and I didn't feel very well, and on top of that, with the high temperatures, it was even worse.

I ended up very happy because my knee worked well, it didn't hurt and it let me run.

In the end, despite all the problems, I managed to get the victory, it was a great birthday present!

The Mozart was the acid test to return to ultra distance and good training for my great goal this 2022, which will be to debut in my first hundred miles in the UTMB.

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24 HRS of Happiness

By Philippe Fourment
Translated by Sarah Cameron



Once again, I signed up for a 24-hour race.

That kind of hamster race where you go round in circles on a very short loop. This time the loop is 1,124 metres long around the Capitany stadium in Colomiers, France.

It's really not my specialty, but do I actually have one? My decision to participate in this race is so that I can work on my mind which fails me over long distances and also, of course, to catch up with friends.

About 25 years ago, I met Rémi Brouard, a runner from Auch who specialises in timed-format races. I told him that I didn't see the point of running slowly.

He replied, "Try it one day and come back to see me". He was there this weekend, and despite being 10 years older than me, he put 13 kilometres on me.

Back to the race.

As usual, the euphoria of the start is palpable. In addition to the 24-hour 'Capitany' event, there are also 12-hour, 6-hour and even 3-hour races and several of my friends are registered for one or the other of the formats.

I settle down with one of them, Fred, under one of the marquees reserved for the athletes, after having collected our bibs and presented our now infamous health passports.

At 10:00 it's time to move towards the start line. Everyone seems happy and relaxed and there's a very short delay while the spectators find seats.

Pistol shot... LET'S GO!

I'm not going to tell you about the journey step by step, but rather give you a feel of it. The course consists of 800m on tarmac and 300m of tartan track. A very slight slope (that we only notice at the end) leads us to the refueling point.

In terms of pace, obviously everyone is running below their capabilities. Therefore it feels like fun and as we turn and turn, friendships are born. We encourage those we pass, and those who pass us encourage us.

At midday we're joined by the 6-hour competitors, then by the 3-hour athletes at 14:30. With the arrival of more people on the circuit, fresh conversations are taking place.

And finally at 21:00 it is the turn of the 12-hour runners to join us, including my friend Cricri.

Unfortunately, the cold sets in and we have to cover up. This intense cold (0°C) when you are exhausted is hard to bear. There's no chance of accelerating in order to warm up. The cold will become my biggest enemy during this competition.

Followed by fatigue. I have to stop three times in all. The first time, at 22:00, I stop for an hour and try to sleep on a stadium bench. The cold has other ideas for me. Getting started again is really hard. You have to convince the mind to allow you to get moving again.

For several hours during the night I decide to sit in a heated hall

provided for this purpose. I'm unsure if this is a good idea because it makes it harder to go back out into the cold. In any case, it passes.

When the sun rises around 07:00, morale rises too. The other people who took a night break return to the track and smiles are once again displayed on heads bruised by fatigue.

I meet Cricri quite often and each time I run a few laps with her. Her feet are suffering but her mind is strong. Her race will finish at 09:00 and there's a podium at stake. It is no longer cold, and our legs feel less painful too.

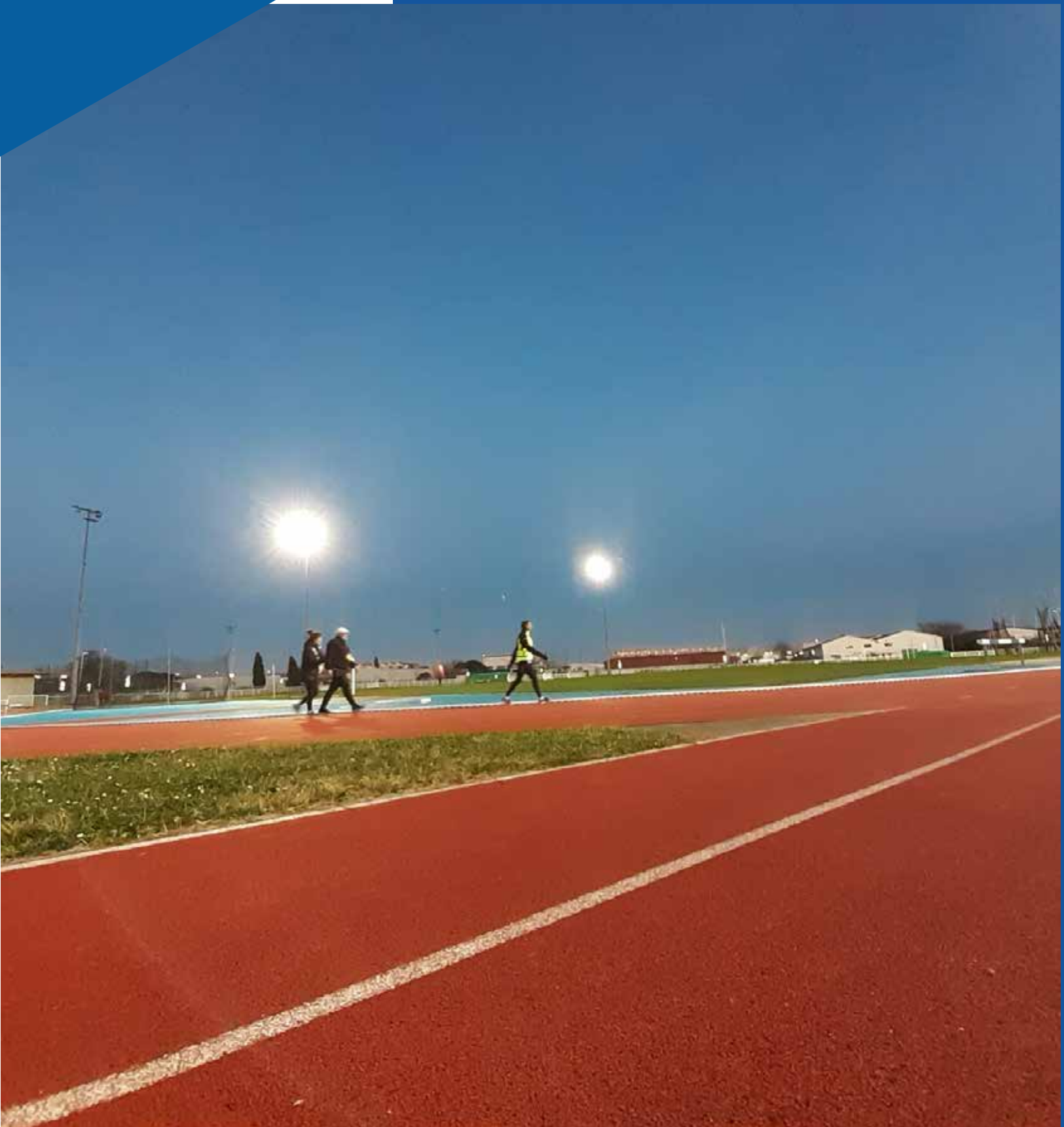
'Ça sent bon le foin.' The hay smells good; the French version of 'the hay is in the barn'.

It is approaching 10:00. Over the tannoy we are reminded of what to do when the final hooter is sounded. Fred and I decide to meet at the aid station to drink a victory beer. Of course... not the victory of the event, but a victory over ourselves, with a distance covered of nearly 150 km.

We thank the volunteers who supported us so well for 24 hours. The night was just amazing. Good music (even if, as Jacques commented, there was not much reggae) and varied dishes to eat.

That's it, it's over... It's time to start looking for new challenges, and some ideas are already creeping into my head.

Thank you to 'Les Columes'Runs' for this day that we will remember for a long time.



THE MONTANE YUKON ARCTIC ULTRA M.Y.A.U

By Jessica Gladdish

WHAT IS THE MYAU?

Not many folks out there can say they love the idea of a winter ultra where the temperature could drop to -50°C , but for some reason, each year there are a few of us who sign up for it. These winter ultras are a niche within a niche; they draw in a strange group of accomplished ultra-runners, recreational winter enthusiasts, and a handful of people who will refuse to call themselves the athletes that they are.

The Montane Yukon Arctic Ultra (MYAU) is a multi-distance, multisport, single-stage race held in the Yukon, Canada, every February. North of the 60th parallel in February is dark for 16 hours of the day, and often has cold snaps of down to -40 below zero, sometimes colder. Participants in the race travel on foot, on cross country (Nordic) skis, or by fat bike, over a distance of a marathon, 100 miles, 300 miles, or the 430 mile route – all distances start in Whitehorse at the same time. The full distance is only an option on odd-numbered years, which finishes in Dawson City, Yukon. This is not a normal ultra; it requires pulling a sled loaded with mandatory survival gear for winter camping, water in insulated bottles so it doesn't freeze, and enough food for up to three days between drop bags. The sled can feel like nothing, or like dragging an anchor through sand. The terrain varies from flat, wide frozen rivers and lakes to thick spruce forests and rolling hills – some steep and short, and others gradual but sustained climbs over many miles. To me, the beauty of traveling on snow is the ability to walk for hours without having to watch for rocks and roots, and instead focusing on animal tracks, watching the scenery slowly change, and listening to the cold crunch of snow beneath footsteps.

MY STORY

I'm a Yukoner, born and raised, so the dark and cold northern winters didn't seem unusual to me growing up. The 1,000 mile Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race would start each year in February and I remember watching the dogs howl with excitement, leaping and straining against their harnesses – eager to run in the snow for days and days. My parents billeted a dog musher for a couple years in a row, so we had a team of dogs in our yard and a musher in our house, which made watching the Quest even more exciting. I knew the dogs' names and even got to jump in the sled and get pulled by them. For some reason as a kid, I didn't want to be the musher, but I did wish to be the dog – nothing to do but pull and run and sleep and run some more. Years later I'm still a human, so the dog wish didn't come true, but I did harness myself to a sled in the winter and pull it over the same Yukon Quest trail as the dogs do – only a little slower.

In 2015 I completed the 430-mile distance on foot in 12.5 days. It was my first true ultra-distance; I skipped all the distances that 'normally' come after the marathon. I believe what made this possible is the fact that the pace is slower – it's more of a hike than a run (for most), and the soft snow surface lessens the impact on the body.

I swore I'd never do it again a few days into that first race, but by the time it was all over I was already missing the trail and planning my next one.

I made a lot of mistakes, yet managed to keep myself safe, healthy, happy (enough), and ultimately fell in love with the dark and cold Yukon winter. It was *cold*. The first two nights of the race saw temps down to -48°C , and barely got to -30°C during the day; many racers dropped out on the first night; only 11 of 20 finished the 100 mile, 3 of 18 finished the 300 mile, and 12 of 31 finished the 430 mile.

TRAIL DETAILS

The first 100 miles of the trail are spent entirely outside with no access to indoor buildings; it is truly a test of gear management, layering, physical fitness, and above all: mental strength.

There are two checkpoints which provide a hot meal and hot water, plus relief from the solitude of the trail. Racers are alone out there – The Yukon is 474,712.64 square kilometers, a territory larger than California but with only ~40,000 people, who are mostly (80%) concentrated in the capital city of Whitehorse. The real point here is that there is a nearly unfathomable amount of wildness to this territory, and anyone who has done the MYAU can attest to the magnitude of space and the weight of being truly alone. The MYAU trail leaves civilization shortly after the marathon distance, and there is nothing except the snowmobile trail, a few shoe tracks, and trail markers indicating there has been someone there. It's important to enjoy being by yourself for at least three days straight.

After 100 miles there is an opportunity to sleep inside and dry out gear, before the next 80-mile stretch. Some racers can go checkpoint to checkpoint and avoid 'bivvying' (camping) beside the trail, but most of us will have to camp out and rest

for a couple of hours each night. It entirely depends on trail conditions, mode of transport (bikes tend to be faster), temperature, and individual abilities for pacing and how much sleep/rest one needs. Whether a racer is fast or not, the ability and confidence to sleep out alone in the cold is a requirement. Small mistakes are amplified in the cold; problem solving and making decisions ahead of time and in time are the key to success – nothing can be ignored or put off until the next checkpoint. Blisters, chafing, fatigue, old injury recurrence, over-use injuries, dehydration, low energy, cold injuries (frostbite, hypothermia), trench foot... these are all the most common issues that take people out of the race, either directly or indirectly.

The 300-mile race finishes in Pelly Crossing, after an out-and-back section to a well-loved checkpoint at Pelly Farm. The 430-mile race continues from the farm into even more remote territory and longer stretches between checkpoints. There are two checkpoints on this 160-mile stretch from Pelly Farm to the finish line in Dawson City, and only one has indoor access, which is a tiny trappers cabin where Scroggie Creek flows into the Stewart River.

WHAT NEXT?

After that 2015 finish I was hooked. The next year I came back with a friend, Julie Pritchard, and teamed up for the 300 mile. We finished in just under 8 days. In 2017 I walked the 430 mile again, in 11.5 days. In 2018 I decided to try the 300-mile Iditarod Trail Invitational in Alaska, and finished in 7.5 days as the first female finisher on foot that year. In 2019 I was back in the MYAU, but this time I switched it up by skiing the 430 mile and finished in about 12 days. I made many mistakes

on skis – if I could redo that race, I would have changed my pack/pull system and ski choice and done a few more long training sessions. But I did finish even with the challenge of a low snow year and consistently cold temps.

GO FOR THE TRIPLE?

This wasn't the plan all along, but I realized I had completed two of the three modes in the long race, so why not do it on a bike too? Only one other person, a man named Enrico from Italy, has done (and won!) the 430-mile race in all three modes. So, the opportunity is there for me to become the first woman to do all three.

I wanted to sign up right away and get it done in 2021, but due to both Covid-19 and finishing my geology degree, it was looking like 2023 would be my next chance to attempt the 430 on the bike. I'm a patient person but I was antsy to get out on my bike this past winter, so I signed up for the 300 mile MYAU – intending it to be practice for the long one the following year, and also on a whim signed up for JP's 120-mile Fat Pursuit in Idaho in early January. The Fat Pursuit took me a total of about 41 hours. A week later I was on a plane to Canada. I landed in Kelowna, BC, picked up my truck parked at my uncle's farm, and drove for four days up the Alaska Highway, finishing the road trip in my hometown of Whitehorse. The MYAU start was a cou-

ple of weeks away still and I filled my time with race prep, riding my bike, visiting friends and also taught a pre-race training course for the winter ultra the weekend before the start.

The Yukon had significant snowfall all winter, so the snowpack was deep off trail, and the temps were warm – hovering around 0°C. Not great conditions for the race. Ideal conditions are cold (-20/-30°C ish) and clear which means a hard-packed trail and frozen overflow are more likely. Covid-19 rules also impacted the race this year in many ways, but the most significant change was that the race would go out 150 miles, and then return the same way to make 300 miles, minimizing the race impact on small communities and keeping the racers closer together. All the logistics were made easier with the altered route. Next year it will go back to normal, so in a way I felt lucky to be a part of the 'weird year' and experience the trail in a different direction.





MYAU - FEB 2022 - 300 MILE RECAP

14 people started the 100-mile race and 3 finished. 17 people started the 300 mile and 6 finished. Another woman and I were the only two on bikes and she decided to pull out of the race early due to a few things going on, so I was the only biker on course after day one. The temps were cool, about -25°C overnight on day one and day two, but the challenge was the snowfall. It snowed for 24 hours straight, and the trail turned into a slog for everyone. Fresh snow makes a sled feel twice as heavy, and pushing a bike is just demoralizing when the trail could've been rideable. All of us out there sweated more than anticipated and were slower than anticipated. A lot of the scratches were due to wet gear plus cold temps, too slow of a pace while expending a lot of energy to move forward, and a couple of cases of frostbite. It was not super fun. I made ground early on before the snowfall accumulated, so I was ahead of the front runners on foot and maintained my position even with many hours of pushing towards the 100-mile checkpoint. I did want to quit – but I had no good reason to. Being able to reset, sleep inside, dry my gear, eat some hot food, and chat with volunteers, all boosted my mood and I decided to at least see how the next 100 miles might be – I could also quit once I got back here. The reason I wanted to bail was the soft trail. I wanted to *ride* my bike, not push it. Especially on the flat lakes, where I could make decent ground and cruise. I did ride a few lakes on day three, until it started snowing again. I also hadn't seen another racer since checkpoint one, only 30 km into the race on the first day – I was 16 km ahead of my friend, Kevin, who was first on foot behind me. In this race that could be four hours ahead, especially at the pace we were going in the soft snow.

The fresh falling snow dampened my spirits and by 9pm it was so heavy I decided to camp and rest instead of continuing sweating into the night. I slept under a tree until 3 or 4am, and then got up, melted snow to refill my thermoses, and had some oatmeal for breakfast. I packed up my bike and started back on the trail, pushing through half a foot of fresh snow. I pushed all morning, waiting for the sun to rise, and waiting for some snowmobiles to show up and pack the trail to at least make the pushing easier. Finally, they showed up from the opposite direction, soaking wet, tired, and frustrated from long and deep sections of overflow. I still had at least 40 km to go to the turnaround checkpoint. The temperatures were supposed to get warmer and stay warm for the next week – overflow would not be freezing over any time soon. A decision from the RD was made and the turnaround point would be changed to a spot closer to where Kevin was. I was sled transported to Kevin's location, and we'd turn around there, with time credit given to me to maintain my lead. Kevin and I traveled together for a bit, human company was welcome and trading stories helped to feel less alone. We stopped and had a hot meal before parting ways. We



had a different plan for sleeping and weren't quite at the same pace. Often in these races it's better to stick to your own game plan rather than adapt to someone else's for the sake of company.

15 km from the next checkpoint I was tired and needed a break from pushing. I found a spot to camp, set up my bivy and aimed to sleep for a couple of hours with a 2:30am alarm. I woke up around 1:30am, on the verge of shivering. Anything involuntary in the cold is a sign to fix the problem, asap. I was a bit damp, tired, and hungry... all a recipe for cooling down which leads to shivering and eventually hypothermia if it's not stopped/reversed. I jumped out of my sleeping bag, packed up, layered up and got moving. I needed body heat and once I got my own furnace burning I could delay, have a snack, and calm down. I finally got on some solid ground that trended downhill about 10 km out from the checkpoint. It was dark and lonely; all I could think about was ordering some breakfast and having a real sleep. Suddenly the trail was covered in wolf prints of various sizes – a pack, who had been there recently. Poop, and pee, and vomit were shining wet still under my headlamp, and the tracks leading into and out of the forest were all over. Ah man. My imagination went wild even though I knew the likelihood of wolves attacking me was super slim. I rode hard, avoided looking into the trees with my light, and thought about daylight coming, and the coffee with toast and eggs I'd be ordering soon. Finally the lights of the checkpoint were there and I flew down the hill and across the road into the parking lot bathed in the safety of streetlights. I parked my bike and forgot

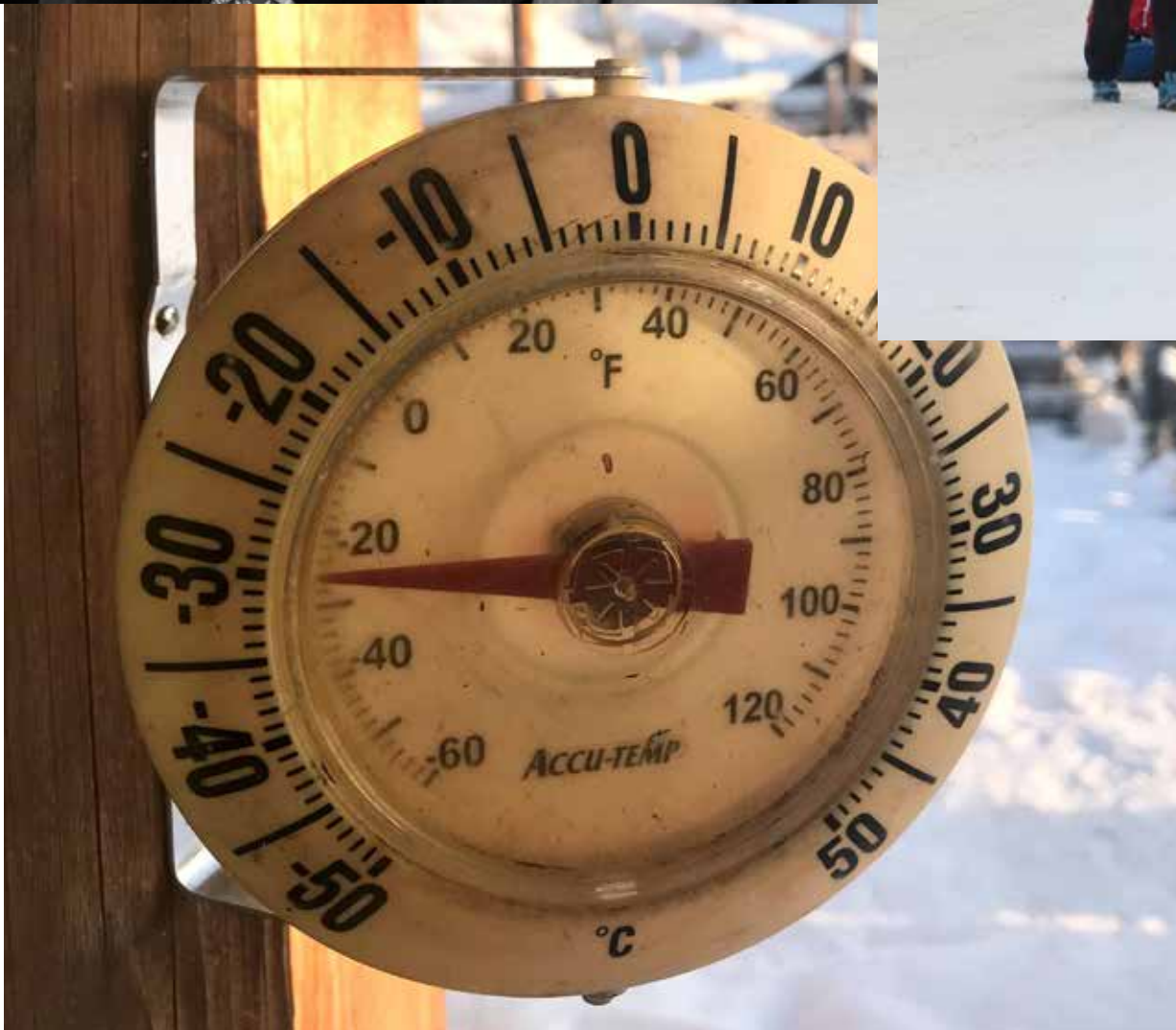
about the fear. Food, warmth, people, sleep.

I stayed at the CP from 6am to about noon. It was a great reset and while I left feeling tired, the sun energized me, and the trail firmed up and was completely rideable for the whole 56 km to the next CP. I coasted all day and enjoyed the freedom of my wheels rolling, carrying me instead of needing to be pushed. The day was still long, and I finally arrived at the CP around 10pm in the dark. I had a meal and slept until 3am. 15 km from the next checkpoint I was tired and needed a break from pushing. I found a spot to camp, set up my bivy and aimed to sleep for a couple of hours with a 2:30am alarm. I woke up around 1:30am, on the verge of shivering. Anything involuntary in the cold is a sign to fix the problem, asap. I was a bit damp, tired, and hungry... all a recipe for cooling down which leads to shivering and eventually hypothermia if it's not stopped/reversed. I jumped out of my sleeping bag, packed up, layered up and got moving. I needed body heat and once I got my own furnace burning I could delay, have a snack, and calm down. I finally got on some solid ground that trended downhill about 10 km out from the checkpoint. It was dark and lonely; all I could think about was ordering some breakfast and having a real sleep. Suddenly the trail was covered in wolf prints of various sizes – a pack, who had been there recently. Poop, and pee, and vomit were shining wet still under my headlamp, and the tracks leading into and out of the forest were all over. Ah man. My imagination went wild even though I knew the likelihood of wolves attacking me was super slim. I rode hard, avoided looking into the trees with my light, and thought about daylight coming, and the coffee with toast and eggs I'd be ordering soon. Finally the lights of the checkpoint were there and I flew down the hill and across the road into the parking lot bathed in the safety of streetlights. I parked my bike and forgot about the fear. Food, warmth, people, sleep.

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The next 24 hours was a mix of all emotions, warm and cold temps, wolf tracks, some race re-routing, and eventually a final 19 km slog on the Yukon River towards the finish line in Whitehorse. The temps were around zero or maybe even warmer and the overflow was bad, but worse was the softness of the trail. I pushed for hours and hours along excruciatingly long bends in the river. At 4am I was approaching the finish line and couldn't wait to be done, have a shower and get in bed.

The finish line was surprisingly crowded. Some friends were there, along with the volunteers and race crew. Pushing across the finish line felt way less cool than riding across, but I finished, and I was in first place having maintained my lead on the five people on foot behind me. It felt sweet to be done, and to have not quit when it was tough.



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An Interview with: JO MURPHY

UW I read on one of your instagram posts that your performance in Perth "surpassed any expectations" you had. This made me wonder how your running began, what attracted you in the beginning?

JM I've always loved running and it's been a part of my life that I dipped in and out of when I was growing up but when I joined the Police at 20, my love for it was reignited.

UW Did you have any mentors or role models when you were coming through school?

JM I had a great P.E teacher (Mr Munn) through high school who took the cross country and running club. He encouraged and inspired me and we're still in touch today. He was very much a part of my journey.

UW Were you quite good at school? Did you realise you had some capacity to run?

JM When I was younger I was quite chubby but I discovered I had great lung capacity after going along to the primary 7 running club. I went on to win the high school 'feeder race' for our primary school.

UW Can you identify anything that you got from the running that fed something within you?

JM My mum passed away when I was 16 and I wanted to do something for her. I started raising money for cancer charities through running. This allowed me to channel my emotions in a positive way and grieve whilst doing something I love.

UW Do you feel you still have a connection with your mum?

JM Absolutely. Sometimes if I'm at a low point during a race I think of her and realise I'm doing it for her and that picks me up. I'm lucky to be healthy and I'm at one with enduring the pain that ultra running brings. She's like a little Angel on my shoulder.

UW How were ideas of faith and self belief anchored in you as you were growing up?

JM My mother was a single mum and she worked full time as well as looking after me, my sister and brother. She was always positive and always had a smile which is something I have embodied too.

UW This idea of a sunny outlook is connected to the idea of "Trusting in the process". Is this important for you?

JM It's a phrase I use often, we have peaks and troughs both in life and training but it's not the individual weeks of training that count, it's the blocks of consistent training over the years that count. A bad day doesn't mean the end.

UW I think that is something that has become a maxim. I used to read Runners World years ago and they were always talking about how important the mind set was and if you're not in a good place it's going to be very difficult and might not even be possible. Do you have strategies to deal with mind states especially when things aren't going as well as they could?



Photo by John O'Regan



Photo by John O'Regan

JM I know that there will be highs and lows during a race, especially when the distance is 100k or more. It's being able to embrace those low points and identify what it is you need, whether it's more fuel or to reduce the pace slightly and ultimately knowing that it won't last forever and you'll likely feel better soon. You have to be flexible with your end goal, having a Gold, Silver and Bronze plan is one thing I always do and if all else fails then simply to finish.

UW Right your splits don't show you had a big dip. Trusting the process for me refers to the things we have put in place to allow us to do the best we can in the situation we find ourselves in. Do you feel better when you are out running in a more natural environment than being in the arena of the race where there are more pressures around you.

JM There are a lot more pressures in the race, pressures I put on myself and expectations of friends and the people around me. I think it's only natural to feel pressure when you are doing something that is important to you and when you set yourself goals. If you didn't care about it then you'd have to question why you put yourself through it. I love the racing environment, after all it's what you work towards and it's a chance to have some fun after all the hard training. Like the cherry on top! I love being on the trails and often spend a lot of my time training on the West Highland Way route. Scotland is such a beautiful place to explore.

UW Was the Deeside Way in 2015 your first ultra?

JM It was.

UW What inspired you to do that race?

JM That was a year I was doing a lot of fundraising in memory of my mum and I wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone by running further than a marathon. It felt like a really good personal challenge too.

UW You won the Deeside race. How did you feel after that? You must have been really excited.

JM I was over the moon, it was rather unexpected. I had been told I was in second place and I felt strong in the later stages. I saw the leading lady up ahead with about 2 miles to go, I wasn't sure what the etiquette was and whether I should pass her or not but it was a race after all so I just went for it and took the win.

UW The following year you ran the West Highland Way (WHW). How did that go, that's a big step forward.

JM Yes it was a big step up and if I'm being honest, it was a really tough day out. Everything beyond 55 miles was going to be new to me but I was prepared to embrace it.

UW Were there significant issues in the race? It's a long way.

JM Yes tiredness especially in the last 20 miles. I said to myself if I get to Glencoe which is about 70 miles in that I would definitely finish. The section from there to the finish takes in two large climbs which are taxing on the already very tired body and by that time I had been on my feet for about 20 hours. Other than having about 50 percent of my feet covered in blisters, I held up well and managed to get to the finish in under 24 hours. In 2017 I did the West Highland Way again. My goal was to get under 20 hours and I did it with 3 minutes to spare. 2018 Glenmore 24 hour and 2019 Edinburgh 24 hour. Both of these events cemented my love for long distance.

UW I guess you had learned from the previous year how to deal with it. What did you do differently? Was it strategy and fueling? What kind of fuelling do you use?

JM I use normal food, sandwiches, crisps, cakes for as long as I can when I'm running on the trails. The slower pace allows my body to digest real food early on in the race and I only use gels at the end when my body can't tolerate chewing and swallowing. When I'm running 100k on the roads I fuel solely with gels and liquids due to the intensity and prolonged faster running.

JM 2021 was a busy year which started with the Highland Way 180. I hadn't heard of this before. A friend of mine, Derek Fish invited me to help crew for him but I decided to run it with him. The East Highland way runs from Aviemore to Fort William and then takes the West Highland Way to Milngavie. It was hard with the sleep deprivation. We managed to sleep a little in a bothy on the banks of Loch Lomond which I've subsequently had tattooed on my wrist as a memento. We finished this race in 55 hours. This race was really helpful for me going into

a 24 hour event later that year as I was less daunted by the thought of running through just one night.

UW Is it an Annual event?

JM I think it was one of the events that didn't make it through the pandemic but I have heard that because of its popularity there is hope of it being held again. With any point to point races the logistics for crew and event organisers can be tricky.

UW Then you had Gloucester. How long did you have to prepare for Gloucester?

JM I was selected in May for the 100k in Dublin that was to be held in August and I had already entered Gloucester. I felt that the race preparation for the 100k would serve me well in the 24 hour race and as they were 8 weeks apart there would be sufficient time for me to recover and prepare for the latter.

UW How did you find the pacing at Gloucester as it was a slower race.

JM It wasn't easy. In the first 3-4 hours I was talking to other runners before finally settling into a pace that was comfortable. To run slower means running at a cadence that feels less natural but is wholly necessary to ensure that you can last the duration of the race.



ACP Perth Photo by Stuart Ross



Photo by John O'Regan

UW Did you have a crew at Gloucester?

JM Yes my friend Derek took care of me making sure I was on pace and giving me the right things I needed at the right time. He also took charge of my lap splits and ensuring my fuelling was satisfactory

UW Did you have any breaks?

JM No, apart from toilet stops and changing my top as it got cold at night. I ate while taking short walking breaks. There was a little attention to a blister required but once seen to didn't give me any further issues.

UW Were you racing anybody?

JM Derek told me not to worry about what other runners were doing and to run my own race which is something I am good at doing from the start, however when tiredness increases and emotions heighten it is helpful to have a crew that will keep you calm and ensure your racing doesn't become erratic or influenced by others.

Sam Amend was in front for a large part of the race but she took an hour's break after getting hypothermic but I kept going adding the miles which enabled me to build up a lead and maintain to the finish.

UW What was it like racing after 20 hours?

JM It was harder to think towards the end but I knew that my Godson was going to be there for the last hour. That was enough to keep me pushing on.

UW I've done some longer races and it was my experience that the mind begins to operate in a different way, the further you go, the longer the event. It's a natural thing, in some ways things become simpler as you said you just have to focus on what you're doing. You can't control what other people are doing though that's not something we think in our normal mind state because our energy does affect other people but it becomes clearer we have less control over



ACP Perth Photo by Stuart Ross

what other people are experiencing. The mind is operating differently to how it does outside of this kind of endurance event.

Some people say that the thought of doing a 24 hour is so boring that they can't entertain it. I've had a similar experience to you in that it's not boring. There's so much going on as you are so focussed in the moment and because so much has been stripped away, all you have to do is be there in that moment and you realise that it's so full.

UW So Gloucester went really well. Was it better than you thought it would be?

JM I wasn't sure what to expect as my previous 24 hour races have been on larger loops and on road or trail so this was my first track race of this kind. I went into the race with an A,B and C goal and had the qualifying distance for Great British selection in mind. I was delighted to run over 230km and position well in the overall Scottish and British rankings.

UW So that brings us back to where we started, where you said that Perth surpassed any expectations that you had. You must be feeling pretty solid now knowing you have this capacity?

JM The two races have given me a lot of self-confidence. Qualifying for the World 100k Championships in Berlin in August and hopeful that I will get selected for the 2023 World 24 hour Championships which is in China. It is nice to now have cemented my performances from 2021 with this most recent one.

UW Has your involvement with Hour 7 helped you move forward?

JM Hour 7 is a very recent thing, it's only been going a few months but I have been hugely helped by Wendy Martinson with my nutrition plans. During the Perth 100k I had absolutely no problems whatsoever. I am keen to see how this will develop over time as we have so many expert advisors on the team giving us advice and assistance in many key areas.

UW That's a key thing trying to discover what works for you, having a professional who is able to give new ideas for you to work with. You finished the race looking so strongly.

UW Will the Gloucester race be used as a qualifying distance?

JM I hope so. I think it's in the 2 year qualifying window but there may be a requirement to prove fitness. It all comes down to the selection policy at the time.

UW Would you be interested in longer events, like 48 hour or 6 day?

JM I think things are working for me now at this distance and I want to make the most of the opportunity while I can.

UW Do you have any other races lined up for this year?

JM I have a marathon in May and then the 100k in Berlin in August

UW Have you recovered yet from Perth? Have you been working?

JM Still a bit muscle-soreness but nothing else that causes any concern. I've been out walking our dog and yes I had Monday off and then back to work. I think it's good to keep things moving.

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

HARDMOORS 55

By Kendra Wedgwood

So... how did I find myself taking home the trophy for third female at the Hardmoors 55 on 26 March 2022? This is an absolutely stunning event taking in the North Yorkshire Moors and over 2,000m of ascent. It certainly wasn't in the plan to podium but I guess some accidental wins of late had meant that people were expecting me to do well; some even thought I would come first!

1st Female in Hardwolds 80 : Kendra Wedgwood in 15:38:45



Let's go back to 2019 when I had started jogging my days in the mountains with friends instead of solely walking. One such day led to a conversation with a friend about how to celebrate my 40th and it was suggested I should do the Hardmoors series. This consisted of five races (30, 110, 55, 60 and 80 mile events). In 2020 this is exactly what I did, and I did well. I was first female and third overall in the series. I remember finishing the 110 thinking that I would never ever complete a 100-mile event again but then being told I was third female and nearly choking on my own saliva in shock. I mean, I am not really a runner and so assumed all the good runners must have pulled out or not done their normal training due to covid.

I then decided to enter the Spine Challenger. I'd forgotten how awful I felt in the 110 and wanted more of the long stuff. However, covid meant the race was postponed and so I entered the Hardmoors 160. The training went a little too well and by April 2021 I had a hip stress fracture (arrrrgggggggggh). After some shockwave treatment, I decided that I wasn't very good at structuring my training so I sought out the help of Kim Cavill and begged her to coach me. She agreed but on the condition I stopped entering every big race in sight. Apparently an 80-mile event is not a training run for a longer event. Who knew ha ha. The Hardwolds 80 in November 2021 would be my first run since my fracture and so although I knew I could do well now I had Kim, I didn't once think about a podium. Top six female would do nicely. Not only did I come first female but I also broke the female record. I'd gone into the lead about mile 30 and held it without meaning to or even trying. Mmmm there was something to this coaching. I'd even begun stretching (something I had never ever done).

Then it was onto the Spine Challenger. I had emailed the race directors and asked if I could postpone as I hadn't recced due to my injury and I had other races lined up. But as always, I'd left it to the last minute and missed the deadline. So, in Jan 2022 I put myself at the very back of the start line and set off without poles or waterproof socks or having done any recc. The goal was to simply complete it and then go back and do it justice. Again, I came first female. This was most certainly not in the plan. As it transpired, only three females finished and I just happened to be the first. Again, an accidental win.

However, people were now starting to think I was a proper runner and I found myself going into the 55 a little bit anxious. I spoke to my coach in depth and we agreed that I would stick to the plan, not race and just enjoy myself. However, I very quickly found myself in second place and completely racing. This lasted 30 miles and I remember going into the Osmotherley checkpoint and seeing a lovely friend, Andy, and having verbal diarrhoea telling him how I wasn't enjoying racing. I left feeling guilty and having a real dilemma with myself about whether I was racing or not. I was soon taken over by second female and then another lady came by. I felt almost relieved and decided I wouldn't chase her but she stayed with me and we chatted for ages. She definitely wasn't racing. I remember we were leaving the White Horse checkpoint which meant there were about nine or so miles to go. I told her to crack on to finish third and she said no. It was so bizarre but we both wanted the other to go on. I remember thinking that we didn't know how far behind the next female was and so one of us should go on for it. The lady (Lovely Alice) told me she wanted to walk for a bit and she had her dad with her at this point as a support runner. I made the decision to head on and I did... all the way to third female.

My next race in the series is the 110 and I have made the decision that I am racing (I think). I don't know how I have got to this point as I am an older woman (42) and I have come to this party so very late in the game but I feel I need to be clear in my head what I'm doing so that I don't have the inner turmoil that I had in the 55. I'm not a competitive person but I guess the only person I'm racing is myself and if that leads to more shiny trophies then brilliant. I have the Hardmoors 160, Mark Cockbain's Tunnel Ultra and perhaps even the big daddy Spine in my future. All I know is that I am truly happy when I am out running all day and I'm grateful I get to do these silly things.





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THE KEYS 100: RACE REPORT

By Laura Watts

6:39am, one minute after sunrise, and it was 82°F/28°C. I started the Keys100 from outside Divers Direct in Key Largo with 100 miles and 40 bridges of the Florida Keys ahead of me. There were no aid stations this year so I was reliant upon my husband Matthew and my solo crew who were very experienced after supporting all my ultras, to look after me and keep me alive on the course. Other runners had two or more crew supporting them. The crew points ranged between 1.5 miles and 3 miles with the longest being the infamous unsupported Seven Mile Bridge, where I wouldn't see Matthew. On a regular ultra in the UK seeing Matthew every 3 miles was far too frequent but out here in the savage heat and humidity of the Keys I was to realise that it was essential.

I started off well, wasn't too hot and did my first ten miles in 2 hours which was the pace I was aiming for. We had pre-planned regular core temperature checks using an in-ear thermometer to monitor overheating and indicating time to walk to try and get my temperature down. However the day soon started to heat up and soon Matthew was spraying me with ice-cold water, covering me with ice-cold flannels and Mission Cooling towels which became our ritual at every crew stop. When I left each crew stop with ice in my hat and my neck bandana I remained cool for 10 minutes, then after that I overheated again!

It soon hit 88°F-90°F (31-32°C) where it stayed all day. I was just praying for night to come all day! We have subsequently found out from the legendary Race Director Bob Becker, Badwater veteran, that this year's Keys 100 had exceptional conditions - it was higher than normal humidity and there was a Saharan sand dust hovering in the atmosphere



affecting the combined impact of temperature, humidity and intensity of the sun which kept the relief of rain and thunderstorms away. Either way... it was relentlessly savagely hot and humid.

At mile 32 I arrived at the Kwik Stop Store in Layton where several runners were laid out on the floor with bags of ice on them and we heard 6 people had been taken to hospital with heat-related issues. My shoes and socks were squelching with all the water I had been pouring over myself and my clothes were just drenched. I decided to change shoes and socks as I felt like I was getting blisters already and when I took my socks off it looked like I had trench foot! I don't think I had a toe without a blister! I tried to dry my feet and put on new dry socks and shoes which felt blissful but this was the first lesson learnt for Badwater as my feet were in a bad way.

Matthew was very good at making me eat but all I fancied were ice lollies and fruit which aren't very calorific, but I was doing really well at drinking lots of water.

On and on the miles went by, following the long straight road along the ocean, going over bridge after bridge with runners' support cars beeping in support. Our support car was adorned with Union Jack bunting and my Team Laura Watts door stickers - I felt very patriotic being the only girl from the UK out there in the race so had to bring it home for them!

Mile 41 was "Hell's Tunnel" - a 4 mile windless path with mangrove on one side and tall trees/bushes on the other where the heat was oppressive. Apparently it wasn't too bad in there today. Here I caught up with Rhys Jenkins, fellow Brit and Badwater competitor in 2022. We have known each other for a couple of years 'digitally' but never met so it was lovely to share some miles with him and it felt like we had known each other for years. It was also lovely chatting to someone from home. At the end of Hell's Tunnel there was an ice cream van and Matthew got me a strawberry lolly, heaven.

I was now in the town of Marathon and hit the 50-mile mark just as the sun was going down. I decided to have a complete outfit change, which was a moral victory to take off the saturated clothes I'd had on all day, and dry myself and put on my neon night gear and clean fresh socks although as I only had two pairs of my Hoka Bondis with me, I had to put on the first pair I started in which were still slightly wet; anyway better than the soggy ones I had just taken off! Rules of the Keys100 say you must wear a vest or similar item with reflective material clearly visible 360°, as well as clearly visible coloured blinking LED lights facing front and rear so I donned my Nathan bandolier vest and two clip-on red lights plus Petzl head torch and was ready for the night shift!

The next crew stop was 3 miles down the road and this was the last time I would see Matthew until after Seven Mile Bridge. It was just a chain-link parking lot on the Bay side and I had a quick sit down in our fold-up chair and tried to take on some food, Marks and Spencers iced fruit cake to be precise! This fruit cake is usually one of my fail-safe ultra foods as it's dense and packed with fruit and calories; however, I felt so nauseous and as I tried to swallow it, it made me start to wretch and I ended up being sick at the back of the car. I tried to take some salt tablets too (they were like oversized suppositories!) but they weren't going down either! As an aside, I had a sweat test a few weeks before the race to see how much sodium I lost and also how much I sweat. It turns out that I am a "salty sweater"!! And I lose 1,392mg of sodium per



hour. So rather than relying on a little tub of rock salt that I would take salt from and using salt from food, I bought some salt tablets and the aim was to take two an hour to replenish lost salt. However I hadn't factored in the "not being able to swallow them" issue or the fact I couldn't hold food down so I am on the lookout for high-dose soluble sodium for Badwater if that even exists!

I was a bit disappointed to be crossing the iconic Seven Mile Bridge in the dark as I had been looking forward to seeing this spectacle, but I was just so happy it was now night and felt slightly cooler, although it still was 82°F. Matthew went to get some dinner at McDonalds and planned to have a power nap if he had time at the far side of Seven Mile Bridge. Crossing the bridge, there was the most amazing strong breeze pushing me along, it was wonderful! It was pitch black apart from the flashing lights of a few runners in the distance and the car headlights. As we were running in the bike path, literally on the side of the road, the cars were coming quite fast right next to us. It was quite surreal running over the bridge and it actually seemed to go quite quickly.

I was 65 miles in and entered Bahia Honda State Park. Four miles and five bridges later I was in Big Pine Key. The speed limit for cars at night in this section was 35mph as it is a deer protected habitat and sure enough on the side of the road I saw two deer just looking at me, probably wondering who all these people were disturbing their peace!

I think it was around this time that I shared some miles with a legendary runner, Pamela Chapman Markle who at the age of 66 was running her seventh Keys100 race and has run Badwater 135 four times and is going back again this July, along with a heap of US records for 24 and 48-hour distances. It was wonderful to chat with Pamela and she is an inspirational woman. My feet were really starting to hurt now and I could feel some bad chafing around

my back and tummy from my running vest. I had also tried to take some painkillers earlier but again was unable to swallow them so this is another lesson learnt for future, to have some soluble painkillers in reserve.

I crossed the 75-mile timing mat which was at Dion's store although it was the middle of the night and was closed. The race staff asked if I was alright and I said I was looking for my husband as I couldn't see the support car. They were so sweet and offered to go and drive to look for him, they were genuinely caring. But no need as Matthew was parked on the far side of the car park. One thing with Matthew, he gets the best parking spots, he likes to be as close to the course as he can legally get so I don't have to walk far. I think he was trying to close his eyes and get some rest but he dutifully got out of the car, got my chair out and tried to cool me down and refuel and rehydrate me.



I was now adopting a run/walk strategy but was starting to feel very tired and dizzy. I felt like I was staggering along. The runners at this point were very sparse but other runners I did see, did seem to be suffering too. I think after 14 hours in the scorching sun and heat plus the heat of the night was starting to take its toll on people. I continued pushing on and feeling pretty wretched until mile 83 where Matthew was parked in the Sugar Loaf Motel. I told him I felt really faint and needed to lie down and raise my legs. It was just before sunrise. He laid out two towels on the floor of the car park, got the chair out for me to put my legs on and a bag as a pillow. Bliss. I lie here for a few minutes and decided I needed to go to sleep. I asked Matthew to wake me in 20-30 minutes, but I woke up naturally after 30 minutes

and had an internal chat with myself to "get it done". It was now light. I felt like a different person, the faintness and dizziness was gone. I started running again....

17 miles to go. I knew I was going to do this. When I started the race I had no expectations of how long this would take me as I had never run so far in the heat. As long as I finished within the 32-hour cut-off I would be happy. I had now been going 24 hours so I knew I could do 17 miles in the last eight hours even if I death marched it out.

Seven more bridges and it was lovely seeing the beauty of the Keys in daylight. The temperature had been bearable but at 8am it was like someone had opened the oven door and the temperature shot up and I could feel the sun burning on my back. I just kept putting one foot in front of the other and was grinding it out.

Soon I was at 94 miles and I had to cross under the highway to the Bay side. The only thing I had been able to eat since mile 50 was ready salted Pringles and watermelon with some sips of Sprite but I was doing well with drinking water. At the crew point at mile 95 Matthew got the last of the ice (he bought nine big bags throughout the race) and put it in my hat and neck bandana and off I went. I was so ready to get this race done!

Soon I was to leave the highway US 1 and I turned left into South Roosevelt. This road was heading straight to the ocean in Key West.

Cars were beeping me as they went past and waving. Now I was feeling emotional.

As I rounded the sidewalk I saw Matthew who had got out of the car to come and walk with me for a bit. We passed Key West Airport and Matthew got my Union Jack out of the car for me to have for the finish line. This was the last crew point so Matthew headed to the finish at Higgs Beach and I powered on, reflecting on the race and how far I had come whilst holding back



tears. Two more roads to go, right on Bertha Street for one block then left onto Atlantic Blvd to the finish line. I could taste the finish! Atlantic Blvd seemed to go on for ages then I saw the Ultra Sports sign saying Finish Line ahead. Matthew was on the corner videoing the finish so I held my flag behind me and ran into a fantastic welcome at Higgs Beach and crossed the finish line 29 hours and 38 minutes after I set off from Key Largo Saturday morning! I was so happy! Someone immediately put a medal round my neck and handed Matthew my buckle to give to me. The atmosphere was amazing and they had even paused the awards ceremony for everyone to cheer me in. Matthew asked me how I was feeling to which I replied "knackered" then someone asked me where in Australia I was from! There was a barbecue going and a party atmosphere down on the beach but we just wanted to get to our hotel and air-conditioning!! We took a few photos then I hobbled to the support car and headed to the hotel.

Wow, what a race. What a challenge. Even though I had been heat training in our home sauna for four weeks before the race, spent ten days in Barbados prior to flying to the Keys and had a session in the environmental chamber at Chichester University I still found the heat and humidity really tough.

In the post-race email from Bob Becker, he wrote, "this past weekend there seemed to be a little something special. Proof? The finishing percentage in the 100-mile individual race, our usual bellwether, was 51.9% – the lowest percentage in race history. Perhaps it was higher than normal humidity. Maybe it was the Saharan sand dust hovering in the atmosphere affecting the combined impact of temperature, humidity and intensity of the sun. Whatever it was, the effort by everyone, on or along the course or at the finish line, was quite extraordinary."

I couldn't have finished the Keys100 without my amazing husband who selflessly looked after me on the course and literally kept me alive.

A week later and I have lost four toe nails, the serious chafing on my middle is starting to heal and I have slept lots. I have learnt a great deal for Badwater 135 in five weeks. It's already 45°C/ 113°F out in Death Valley but I am looking forward to running in a hairdryer with zero humidity.



CLASSIC QUARTER

Saturday 21 May 2022

By Nick Wright



Over 650 competitors pushed their limits whilst taking part in the 16th edition of the Endurancelife Classic Quarter on Saturday 21 May. The Classic Quarter is a relentless ultra marathon along the South Cornish coast in the UK from Lizard Point to Land's End. The task is brutally simple: to run non-stop from the southernmost point of England (Lizard Point) to the western most tip (Land's End), along the legendary South West Coast Path.

This translates to running 90 degrees of the compass, hence the name, Classic Quarter. This Cornish ultra marathon challenge can be undertaken as a solo, a relay team of two, or as a relay of four. The atmosphere is of keen and friendly rivalry and has become an annual favourite with Cornish runners. £1,000 in prize money, split between the winner and a charity of the winner's choosing, was up for grabs this year if the existing male and female solo course records could be broken.

Whilst Zelah Morrall finished third overall and came tantalisingly close to breaking her own record in a time of 07:04:07 in the female competition, Jamie Stephenson produced a terrific run to set a new course record in the male competition. Over the 44-mile course, he managed to better the old record, held by Alex Van Tuyl, by a mere three seconds to finish in 06:26:57! Jamie's chosen charity to donate 50% of the prize money is [Papyrus](#), a charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people. On what it took to break the record, Jamie said: "This course record had been several years in the making. I attempted to break it in 2020 but blew up with 20k to go. This year things felt different. I was more experienced at running this kind of distance, I had put in some great performances in races earlier in the year and, most importantly, I had been enjoying my running. Everything was clicking and I was understanding my body better than ever. The day didn't go entirely to plan - a stomach upset at 50k had me leaning into a hedge! The last quarter of the race was a real struggle because of this. However, mentally I was stronger and ready to grit it out to the finish. Over the crest of each hill I would urge myself to break into a run and open up on the descent. It turned out, with just three seconds separating me from the previous record holder, I couldn't have afforded to let my concentration lapse once. Crossing that finish line brought feelings of pride, euphoria and relief. This one's been put to bed... or at least until someone betters my record."

Every year, participants raise significant sums of money for charity (in 2021 Classic Quarter participants raised over £21K for good causes) and this year is no exception with many runners fundraising for charities close to their hearts. Endurancelife offers free event entries to anyone who raises at least £400 for a charity and encourages as many people as possible to take up this offer for the 2023 edition next May.

Find out more at www.endurancelife.com





SERPENT TRAIL 100K

By Tom Sopp

When signing up to Freedom Racing's Serpent Trail 100km, my goal was simply to beat Robin Watson who was club Captain at Falmouth Road Runners while I was Chair of the club. Robin has a few years on me but he's a bit of a machine, running most days, and if he does take a rest day, he does things like cycle 80 miles!

I'd planned to train hard but as always, life gets in the way, so my training was sporadic at best with a couple of 45-mile weeks here and there, and most falling drastically short. Robin had never run this distance before so I was hoping experience would conquer his superior fitness. With a relatively flat course compared to the Cornish coast I'm used to, I was hoping for around 11-ish hours.

Unfortunately, my strategy of starting steady evaporated in the first 30 seconds as I took off at a stupid pace! Leaving Robin behind, I hit the first CP in fifth place and the second CP in ninth. A fellow runner mentioned there was a Salomon-sponsored runner some distance behind us! I remember quite vividly the words, "Oh dear," going through my head as it confirmed how stupid tearing off at the start had been. Still, I felt good so decided to just go with it and see how far I could go before crashing.

By CP 3 I'd slipped to 21st. At 17 miles I'd seen a snippet of a message from Robin posted on a group chat saying he'd covered 15 and felt great. Trying to psych me out I thought.

Next up, my stomach started to give me shit! Quite literally! Desperate, I veered into the woods and reminded myself I wasn't bleeding internally, it was just the beetroot

juice I'd been consuming. Then the cramp in my calves hit as well! By the time I hit Petworth CP at half way, the cramp was even stopping me running downhill. I grabbed three Marmite sandwiches and a bag of salted nuts. I'd been continually eating and drinking so was a bit peeved that I was in this shape, but the heat of the day was taking its toll. Half a mile from the checkpoint my stomach decided it wasn't a fan of Marmite and I lost more time throwing up in what I thought was a quiet lane. The old boy I hadn't noticed behind me polishing his Morgan didn't look too impressed!! After apologising, I trotted on.

It became a battle between trying to devour enough peanuts and absorbing as much salt as I could before throwing them up again. I'd get a mile or so running every now and then, and then cramp up and have to march again. Knowing Robin must be gaining was increasing my frustration! At around 40 miles, Robin eventually overtook me. I shouted my excuses and he hollered, "Oh dear" as he shot past.

At CP 6 I bumped into a chap I'd run the first three sections with and was now in a similar state of regret to myself. We set off discussing our woes. At one point we both stopped for a tactical chunder, and both failed. Must have looked ridiculous, like a heaving orchestra!

CP 7 and 11 miles left. With some salt picked up I started to get some momentum again and could see from messages I was closing the gap on Robin. This created the following battle for me.... sod it, Robin can see the same messages, he'll push himself harder so what's the point in killing myself trying to catch up versus, if I did push myself, could I catch him?

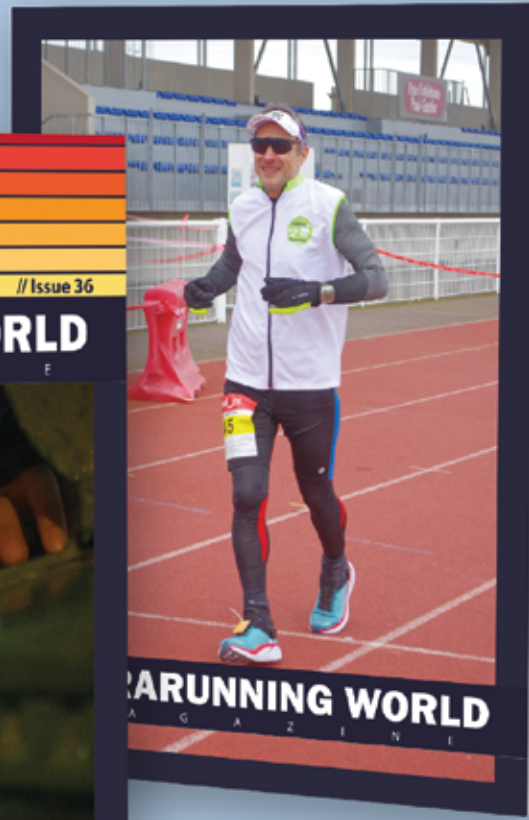
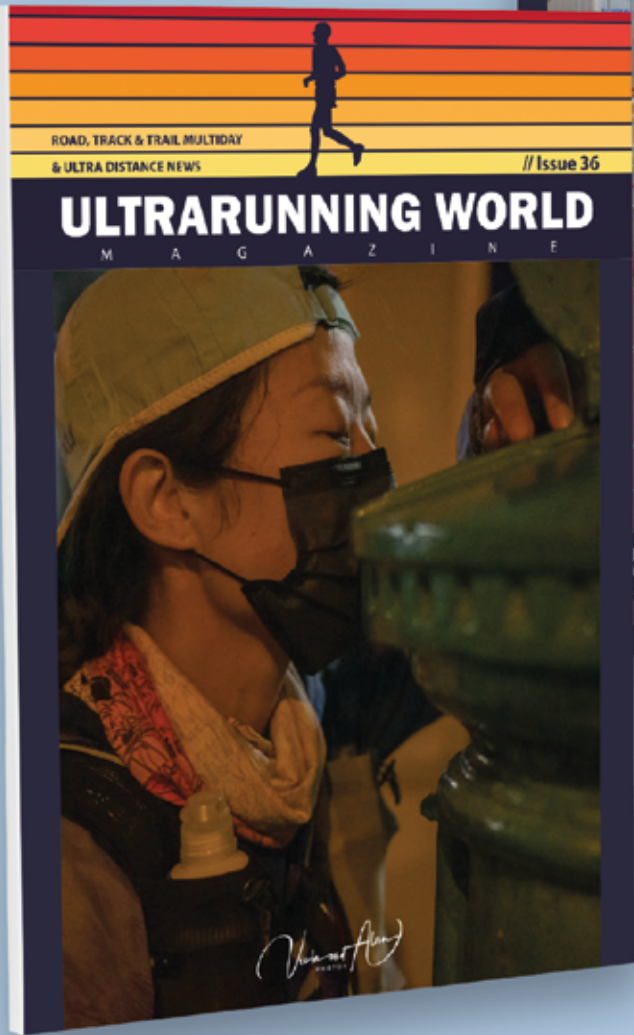
As I approached CP 8, I was asked if I regretted my fast start. I think my face said it all!

While emptying salt sachets into my mouth, they informed me I had closed the gap between Robin and myself from 20 minutes to 5. I covered the next four miles to the last checkpoint and passed it with a bit more oomph!

With two miles left and the same mental/physical battles trying to break my resolve, while thinking I'd see a message pop up at any moment saying Robin had finished, I rounded a corner and there he was!! He glanced back and did a double take as he spotted me. I could see him trying to leap into action as he disappeared out of view. With the help of the salt and the adrenaline kicking in, I was off. Rounding the corner, I'd already halved the distance and was closing in fast. I shot past him and didn't slow down for a good mile until I felt sure it was in the bag.

When I hit the finish, I promptly bent over and spent the next couple of minutes heaving and drooling, but super chuffed! Turned out Robin had been fighting cramp in his quads for some time as well. Not that he was going to let me know when he'd overtaken me of course. It's a great race with beautiful scenery and soft sandy trails and I'll be back to do it again. Next up, back to my winter comfort zone: Cheviot Goat in December and the Arc of Attrition in January.





Ultrarunning World is an independent magazine written by ultrarunners for ultrarunners. Since 2007 Ultrarunning World has published race reports from some of the greatest to the more modest ultra and multiday events around the globe.

Ultrarunning World informs and distributes information about all aspects of ultrarunning for the benefit of runners, crews, organisers, supporters and support services.

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19th-20th Feb 2022

This was a very welcome addition to the race calendar and certainly raised many eyebrows when it was announced.

However many runners became aware of it far too late to prepare or plan for, which was a shame as I'm sure the interest was very strong.

I was determined to participate despite not being in 24 hour shape or having banked the key training necessary as Sparta has become a big part of my life.

George Koulogiannis (President of Spartan Runners) was very helpful in bringing me up to speed on the details of the event and the British Spartathlon Team got the word out to as many runners as possible.

Courtesy of Sparta Photography Club and Spartan Runners

This unique event was organised by Spartan Runners with the support of the Municipality of Sparta and a host of support or-



ganisations and sponsors. This was the first time an ultramarathon was to be staged within the Sparta City limits.

There were three different formats offered including 12 hr and 24 hr which started together at 17:00hrs whilst the 6hr started at 10:00 a.m the following morning.

* 24 hours: 17.00 (Sat 19/2/2022) – 17.00 (Sun 20/2/2022)

* 12 hours: 17.00 (Sat 19/2/2022) – 05.00 (Sun 20/2/2022)

* 6 hours: 10.00 (Sun 20/2/2022) – 16.00 (Sun 20/2/2022)

The course was a 2km loop (1km out, 1km back) along the main street of Sparta leading to and from the statue of King Leonidas with intermediate timing mat at the 1km mark. Personally I found the turn too tight.

This event will undoubtedly secure a prominent place on the international race calendar as it's ideally placed as a last minute Spartathlon qualifier but aside from that its location affords huge appeal too.

It can only be a great addition for the city, perfectly complimenting the Spartathlon and reinforcing Sparta's historical association with athletic prowess.

In light of the above I was delighted to see some members of the International Spartathlon Association (ISA) in support including Kostis Papadimitriou and Panagiotis Bonelis, together with Kristian Tsantoulas, Panagiotis Ermilios and Dimitris Karvelas.

With Kristian Tsantoulas (Left) (Courtesy of Αλέξανδρος Τσαντούλας)



Kristian Tsantoulas is the media artist behind the superb Spartathlon movies produced over the last four years. On this occasion he was also running himself in the 6 hour race supported by his father Αλέξανδρος Τσαντούλας.

The support in Sparta was fantastic as always and everyone was so warm and hospitable. I've been coming here so long now it's like a second home to me.

Dora Papadopoulou, the international consultant who usually heads up the medical team in Sparta as part of Spartathlon remarked that I now spend more time in Greece than she does.

In this its inaugural year the event was IAU Bronze label accredited along with AIMS and World Athletics which meant of course that any records achieved could be officially recorded.

The elevation on this 2km course was zero gain but there is a subtle rise and fall to and from the famous King Leonidas statue at the one end and the

intermediate 1km timing mat located at the other.

Plan/Strategy

I knew I certainly wasn't in 24hr form having only ticked over with low mileage over the previous two months, although I had maintained my strength training. However the short notice meant I realistically had insufficient time to prepare.

Nevertheless I certainly couldn't pass up an opportunity to run in Sparta again and being part of the inaugural event was really irresistible to me.

Pursuing a Spartathlon AQ was unrealistic of course but foregoing an opportunity to even try seemed crazy too.

Given the above, plus a scary flight outbound due to Storm Eunice and repeated flight delays resulted in a very late arrival at my Athens hotel. Arriving in the early hours of race day, trying to get a few hours sleep before an onward three hour coach journey to Sparta was far from ideal.

Going crewless with limited time to source supplies just added to the stress and tiredness but on reflection the time frame was way too tight anyway, so I only have myself to blame.

Paul KatsivaCorderoy and Maria Katsiva of "Eventswerun" knew Athens very well having resided there and kindly provided great tips on hotel choice. I opted for The Stanley which was

excellent but the Wyndham Grand was also an option.

Both hotels were situated on Karaiskaki Square in Athens where the courtesy coach would collect athletes from for the onward three hour journey to Sparta, so this was perfect.

The coach provision was hugely helpful for International athletes, which included the UK, Hungary, Sweden and Finland. I would anticipate that the international presence will be far more comprehensive next year.

Myself and Marcel Brandon Mckinley (Courtesy of Dimitris Karvelas)



Luckily, friend and fellow Spartathlete Marcel Mckinley, a Hungarian runner based in the UK, was also staying at The Stanley, so after some shut eye we located the coach on the square and at 10:00 a.m departed for Sparta.

I'd emailed in advance to arrange for the provision of a table and Eirini Gianne a Spartan based Spartathlete kindly helped us set up. Eirini completed Spartathlon last year putting in a very gutsy performance!



Spartathlete and volunteer Eirini Gianne (Courtesy of Panagiotis Ermilios)

Due to inevitable time constraints we were unable to source specific items so it was really a case of relying on the organisers race provisions.

Shoe Choice

I Opted for Hoka Carbon X 2 which were unproven in an ultra for me but I'd decided comfort over speed was the most important consideration for this road ultra,

I'd previously erred at Spartathlon by wearing Saucony Speed 2 which weren't fit for purpose but in fairness Saucony never claimed them to be.

For info, Saucony Speed 2 and Endorphin Pro 2 were nevertheless ideal for my track ultra targets in 2021.

I'd calculated splits to work to but knew roughly what I wanted to hit around the 6hr, 12hr and 18hr marks



Courtesy of Sparta Photography Club and Spartan Runners

I realised quite early on in the race that I was really struggling with tiredness which was compounded by several toilet breaks (unusual for me) so it meant I was losing far too much time.

Hitting 100k in 11hrs wasn't a disaster as this would put me around 110k at the midpoint. However, the reality of being unprepared physically, unprepared provision wise and no crew to mitigate the consequences took a real toll, resulting in uncharacteristic breaks from the course and more frequent walk breaks. This wasn't going well!

Even with perfect pacing and no slow down 112.5 km would have been required in the first/second half for an AQ and in my current state it was obvious to me my goal was no longer realistic.

I'd have needed to be hitting around 118-124 ideally at the midpoint, which wasn't on the cards, so I resolved to just seeing this one out.

I'm sure many ultra runners would agree that only a few 24hr races actually go as planned and the numbers yielded are rarely what we seek.

This is certainly true in my case and although I have exceeded 200km on many occasions with my two best being 218km and 216km, I know I'm capable of much better. I was in no shape to demonstrate that this weekend.

I really should mention that the support was tremendous and the volunteers, support staff, Physios and Medics, Police etc all helped ensure the event ran really smoothly.



Bill Kouman, Angela Terzi and Kristian Tsantoulas (Courtesy of Panagiotis Ermilios)

Some 6 hour runners, including Greek Spartathlete Angela Terzi came out to show support for the 12hr and 24hr runners before embarking on their own challenge, whilst Giorgos Panos, another Greek Spartathlete was supporting and crewing for a friend.

Huge kudos to Angela who ran the best Greek female mark of the year so far, the second best Greek female mark in history and the Greek AG best AT mark.



Courtesy of Sparta Photography Club and Spartan Runners

Results:

Well not the result I was after and I've already confined this one to history but I was so pleased that I did manage to participate in what was the inaugural event and witness some gutsy performances. Not least those who succeeded in securing Spartathlon ballot qualifiers.

Two females secured ballot qualifiers in the 24hr race, Tzima Eleni and Ntoutsis Lambrini with respective performances of 176 and 172 km, whilst Angeliki Stefani secured a ballot qualifier in the 12hr race with 111km.

The male qualifiers in the 24hr were Vasileios Glentzes 182km, Panagiotis Mikrogiannakis 192km, Efthymios Vlachos 182km, Georgios Koulogiannis 181km, Spyros Spyropoulos 180km, Vasilis Koumanakos 181km and last but not least Ivan Bretan 210km who won overall but decided to call it early when his AQ attempt looked mathematically out of reach.



Ivan Bretan (Courtesy of Panagiotis Ermilios)

Whilst Ivan has the pedigree having proven on previous occasions that he is more than capable of hitting the AQ mark, I have yet to repeat an AQ over 24hrs since the criteria was raised from 20% to 25% but I'll be attempting it at Gloucester in August.

With Thanos-KalamarasMpompos, who was tremendous support throughout (Courtesy of Panagiotis Ermilios)



It was really enjoyable witnessing the enthusiasm from runners, volunteers, supporters, the organiser and Sparta Photography Club.

I think Sparta certainly did itself proud with this first outing but I'm sure they'll be making some tweaks for 2023 so that the event will be even better.

With Maria Kavouri of Sparta Photography Club (Courtesy of Παναγιώτα Καρύγιαννη)



I firmly believe this event will soon establish itself as a unique and special addition to the ultra racing calendar and I'm convinced its appeal will be truly international.

In its debut year, the event witnessed a new 12hr Finnish National record from Noora Honkala.

Impressively, Noora did in fact set four national records. She went through 50km in 3:39.32, then 6 hours with 79.00km. She then followed this up by hitting 100k in 7:41:54 and despite suffering with stomach issues in the latter hours Noora still managed to set a national record over 12hrs with 145.5km.

Had it not been for the stomach issue it is very likely she would have set a new world record. Amazing performance!

We've also witnessed a Greek AG AT Best performance

from Angela Terzi in the 6 hour, many Spartathlon Qualifiers over 24hr and one over 12hr.

I predict that many more new marks will be realised across all three formats at this event in the future.

6 HRS

1st Λεωνίδας Τζωρτζάκης 73 km 5.59

2nd Balatssimonyi 72 km 5.58.

3rd IoannisDimopoulos 69km 5.57

12 HRS

1st NooraHonkala 145 km 11.58

2nd Thomas Vouzonis 118 km 12.00

3rd Maltezos john 114 km 11.59

24HRS

1st Ivan Bretan 210 km 22.47

2nd Panagiotis Mikrogiannakis 192 km 23.41

3rd ΕυθυμιοσΒλαχος 182 km 23 47

Huge thanks to Sparta and Spartan Runners for staging this unique event and congratulations to all prizewinners!

Noora Honkala (Courtesy of Sparta Photography Club and Spartan Runners)

Looking forward

I'm now refocused on trying to improve the GB AG V60 AT Best Performances I set last year over 50 mile, 12hr and 100 mile in addition to reclaiming the 6hr GB AG V60.

The GB AG V60 24hr target eluded me in 2021 but I'll be focused again for this year.

Of course, anyone that knows me won't be surprised to hear that my 'A' race of the year is Spartathlon and I'm delighted to have secured my place again for 2022. I hope to achieve my seventh consecutive finish but never take anything for granted in this race.

It seems appropriate that this report should conclude as it started with thoughts and dreams of Sparta!

[Ultraian.wordpress.com](https://ultraian.wordpress.com)



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ladybirdultra@gmail.com



THE GREAT GLEN ULTRA

By Catherine Cowie

I'm not sure where to start when it comes to my experience of running The Great Glen Ultra; a race that starts at 1am in Fort William and finishes in Inverness following the undulating Great Glen trail path. I should probably start by saying I'm afraid of the dark! This fear kept my legs moving faster than they probably should have been going the first few miles into a 72-mile race, but there was no way I wanted to be left alone with just the light of my own headtorch and an eerie silence. The first section along the canal was littered with frogs and every other one appeared to have been squished – I really hoped my partner, who was running up ahead, wasn't one of the culprits.

It didn't take long before the headlights up ahead faded into the distance and as I glanced behind, I could see only blackness and the odd bat. To be honest, I thought this was probably the ideal time for a quick loo break. Unfortunately, not long after that point I was beset with the worst period pain and tummy upset I've had in years and wondered if I'd have to take an early exit from the race. Luckily, the fear of the dark kept me moving at a decent clip and distracted me from the sickness and cramps until the first signs of daylight at around 3am. With no darkness to distract me, I started to feel quite unwell and was grateful when I ran by a 'no trace' composting toilet with a door. However, I took one look inside and decided I'd rather take my chances next to a tree. You really can't afford to feel any shame in this ultra running business, so when a fellow runner ran by within inches of my bare front-bottom I finished my business and ran to catch up with him as if nothing strange had just happened. If you are easily embarrassed, then ultra running probably isn't for you; as if you're not caught peeing then you'll likely still be caught dribbling or chattering away nonsensically at some point in the longer races. I say this as if I'm an experienced ultra runner but this was actually only my third ultra, and first race over 50 miles.

I managed to get some paracetamol at checkpoint 2 (Laggan Locks – 20 miles in) and once that kicked in, I felt like my race could finally start. I was feeling strong just in time for the first climbs. At this point I was first female in the race and in fifth place overall. The thing about the Great Glen is that it is actually a very runnable trail which means you can feel quite guilty walking any of the sections, even the steep climbs aren't the worst I've experienced. I 'fast-hiked' some of these sections nonetheless and soon caught up with the runner in front who was starting to struggle. It was nice to have some company for a while and to enjoy some of the views through the mist. It wasn't long before my companion informed me that he'd received a text message from his wife letting him know that two other runners

were apparently not too far behind at the last checkpoint. I asked if one of them was female as I'd spotted a couple of French sponsored runners at the start who looked like they might be quite competitive. He suggested one of them might be, so I stopped enjoying the views and started to pick up the pace as I descended back down the hill as quickly as possible. I didn't see another runner for the rest of the race and I still had another 30+ miles to go.

At checkpoint 4 (Invermoriston – 40 miles in) I was relieved to spot a carefully clingfilmed (and very tasteless looking) wrap alongside some abandoned cheddars on the drop bag table. I asked how the owner of these sorry snacks was getting on and was informed that my partner was in second place and only 30 minutes behind the leader at that point. I also found out that the runner ahead of me had gotten badly lost and dropped out of the race putting me in third place overall. No-one at the checkpoints could tell me how far behind the next runner was, so I felt I had to keep pushing on ahead, with no time for relaxing or enjoying the views. Being the leading female is great but the thought of being overtaken in the last few miles after putting in hours of effort is soul-destroying, so I pushed on up the next hill as fast as possible (almost choking on my Twiglets) and didn't rest until I made it to the top. I swiftly ran by the obvious viewing points where I hoped the runners behind me would be wasting time taking selfies.

In the last 20 miles or so of the race the intermittent downpours started and the trails started to get quite muddy. I felt very sorry for the marshals at checkpoint 5 (Drumnadrochit – 54 miles in) as the roads started to get badly flooded. I still had another big climb to go at this point but first had to run along a busy tarmac road where the cars were speeding through puddles and I got completely drenched through. I couldn't risk slowing down too much as I didn't want my body temperature dropping so I bribed myself to keep moving with frequent Haribo treats and by swinging my arms in an exaggerated style which seemed to give my body enough momentum to keep moving forwards.

The finish line is at an outdoor track in Inverness so despite having already run over 71 miles I felt obliged to sprint the last 200 metres into the finish line (well you have to, don't you?) and into the open arms of my partner. I have to say that overall I think the Great Glen is a great route and very well organised. Apart from a couple of wrong turns due to the darkness I didn't go wrong once. All finishers receive a whisky glass and a bottle of whisky which is a really nice touch. I'd definitely recommend this race for anyone looking to do their first ultra over 50 miles. The organisers (Rocket Events) also hold a Backyard Ultra event that I may try next year.

Two days on and any lasting memory of pain and misery have already started to subside so naturally I have already signed up to the next race: The Transgran Canaria Classic (126k). I think there must be something wrong with my brain...



GREAT GLEN ULTRA

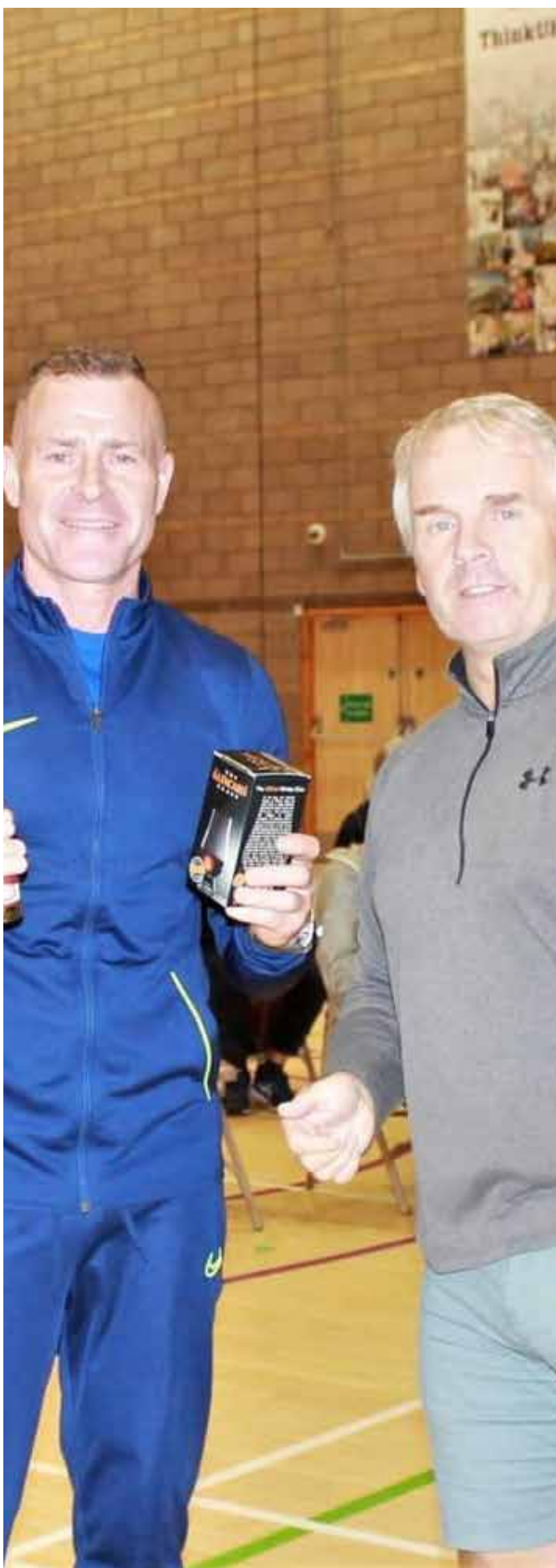
By Darren Stoker

Hi, my name is Darren Stoker. I met my partner, Louise, a year ago in July 2021, who had done ultra running before. After two weeks we went for our first 5k run together where she handed me my ass! I decided my fitness wasn't up to scratch and had to do something about it.

We started doing hills, walks and Munros. I joined a running club and off I went. Louise had booked the Falkirk 33-mile ultra in February so I challenged myself to do it with her and we completed in 5 hours and 38 minutes. Then we decided to book the CATERAN 55-mile ultra in May and the 72-mile Great Glen Ultra Marathon on 2 July. I do like a challenge but when I booked it I thought, this is madness. Through all the blood, sweat and tears the CATERAN was upon us and off we went. First mile in I fell and hit my hip, you couldn't write it. Managed to run it off. Then 20 miles in I stood in some deep mud and as I pulled my leg out, my hip popped. I could barely walk at this point and I decided to carry on after taking a couple of painkillers. I managed to lose the limp and run 35 miles in pain and as the body compensates through injury I finished the race a broken man. Second ultra - check. I had a full week off then we did a half marathon, I had to have another week off due to abdominal strain and a very sore ankle.

We continued with the 40-mile Fife coastal run which gave me hope as I felt not too bad apart from an ingrown big toenail which could potentially put me out of the game. A friend, Cam, from the run club asked if I would be a support runner for him for the West Highland Way, doing Glencoe to Fort William, I thought, maybe I'm not that bad as he is a very good runner. So myself, Gman and Louise did the support running for him.

Then it's two weeks out from the Great Glen ultra and my ingrown toe is full of pus and not looking good. I am hardly getting a trainer on so I get an appointment with a podiatrist and she gets the stray nail out; instant relief and the race is back on. My sidekick Louise and I finished the 72 miles in 15 hours and 4 minutes with Louise getting second fastest female. So all in all, from the hundreds of miles of training, I went from 5k to three ultra races in under a year.



TUSCANY CROSSING ITALY

By Cees Dijkstra

Tuscany Crossing - enjoy 100 km. What a wonderful run. It's not without reason that this ultra is in the Forbes top 12 of the most beautiful marathons in Europe. The ninth edition took place on Saturday 23 April. The run starts in Castiglione d'Orcia, the centre of the most beautiful region of Tuscany in Italy. You could participate in a 100 mile, 100 km or 53 km. I've chosen 100 km and 3,500m elevation.

This run has been very high on my wishlist for years. I'm not disappointed. How lucky we were. Lots of rainy days before the run and the day itself sun, sun, sun. Roberto Amaddii, the organiser, was gloomy the day before. I spoke to him. "I'm afraid that the river will soon be too high. Then we have to change the course and that's not going to be fun." I told him we can go through the river. We do that in the Netherlands too: don't talk, but walk. Luckily it all went well. Also through the streams and rivers. I crossed the finish line with a big blister. The ball of my foot was completely filled with fluid. It didn't bother me during the run, but the next day it wasn't really pleasant. The problem was that after two kilometers we had to cross the river and had wet feet for the rest of the race. I've learned that walking with wet feet is fine, but that it's smart to replace your footwear if necessary and at least put on dry socks. I had this ready in my drop bag at 55 km, but didn't think it necessary to change. After all, I had nothing to worry about and it was going well.

The Tuscany Crossing is a trail where enjoying and experiencing is perhaps more important than





running. You pass through beautiful areas with rolling hills and you walk through picturesque villages. Castles, old thermal baths, piazzas and you cross the areas that are made famous by the movie 'Gladiator'. The first half is amazingly beautiful. After that it gets tougher and you start to feel the heights. Climbing and descending from one castle to the next. Nothing's flat. The most important advice we received from the organisation was to divide your forces well, to pay sufficient attention to the distances and to adjust the water and food. Bring at least a litre of water and plenty of food. For me that meant biscuits, raisins mixed with roasted peanuts and an apple and then just walking. Eat and drink well at the aid stations.

The Italian organisation knew exactly what you're going to need on the road. Here and there a plate of warm pasta with red sauce and cheese on top. Delicious. And then broth and some sweet soup. I also ate and drank things I normally never eat or drink. It was my tenth hundred-or-more run and I was determined to do this as a workout. At one post the coke was gone. But don't worry: they did have biera. So beer. Stupid, but it was so good, I took two glasses. Wonderfully fresh and delicious. To my surprise, I was not bothered by anything. I ran fine on that stuff. So I'll have that more often. I had heard something like this from ultra runner Barry van Oven, but seeing is believing. There was plenty of food. It was actually a buffet.

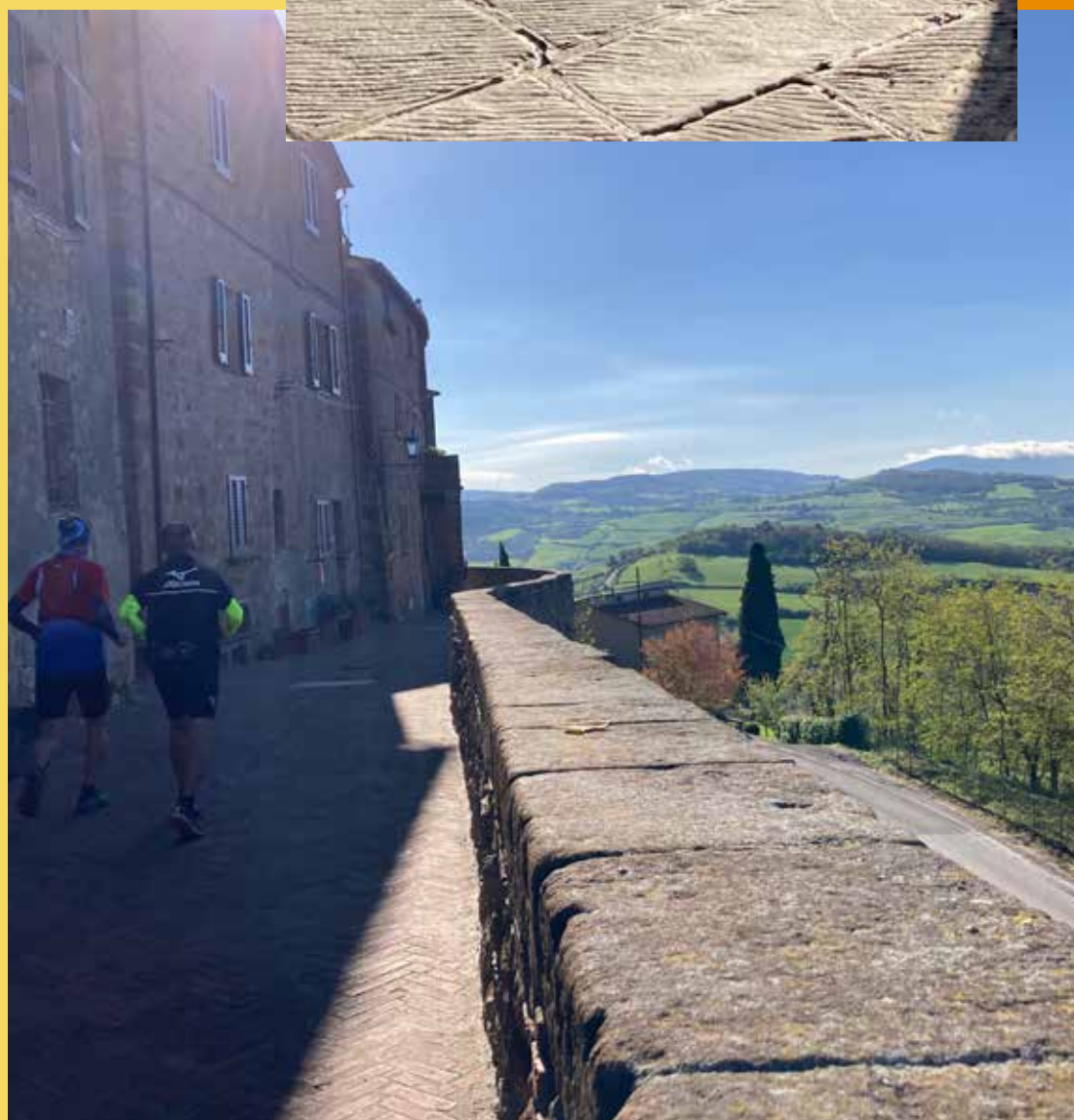
The Italians are friendly and also spoke a little English.





That's fun. Chat a bit. Did the last part with the young Canadian, David. He was wearing a hat from the UTMB. He ran it. Well done. Still, he had to give up. Just like a Frenchman who lives and trains near Mont Ventoux. I thought, I want to outrun him as a 'countrysider' and I succeeded. He was faster on steep parts down, but luckily there weren't that many. Also uphill the steep parts weren't too bad in distance. This ultra was not really heavy and technical. It was tough, but doable.

The Italians were very helpful and friendly. You're welcomed everywhere. Halfway through, I took a nap on a field. That also belongs to an ultra and works fine. Just close your eyes for ten to fifteen minutes and doze off. Delightful. Pick up the thread again? No problem. What helps is to drink some liquid magnesium before the stop. As a result, your muscles stiffen less and you suffer less from pain. I learned that from Jantine Geurken van Ginkel. Just like Barry, also an ultra-pro. I was very happy with my Garmin GPS unit (GPSMAP 66st). Expensive thing, but what a pleasure. Download the route, start it and every now and then check if you're doing well. It went great for a hundred kilometers. It only went wrong at the finish. I called Saskia that I was coming. She saw me walking into town and said I was going the wrong way. She was able to track me through a live-tracker. I quickly go back a bit and pick up the thread again. Technology stands for nothing these days. All you have to do is running. What a great sport this is.







K6

By Konstantin Wiesner

Spring 2020, I'm getting ready for my first six-day run because time flies and why not try it out while you can: EMU 6-day race 2020 in Hungary. Covid is coming. The race is postponed to the autumn. Then from autumn to spring, from spring again to autumn, from autumn to spring. By the end of 2021, I'm fed up. We have experience in organizing the Baroko Marathon, an outdoor run with a 14-year tradition that has become one of the most popular in our country, so why not prepare a six-day run for ourselves?

A few days of touring the region, looking for at least a little flat circuit with accommodation and friendly staff nearby. In the end, such a venue is found: Konstantinovy Lázně, La Rocca camp. In one week we have a provisional website, in January we start running our Facebook page and registration; we expect a couple of runners with whom we can fulfill our dream. We also announce a race for 24 hours, 48 hours and a marathon; we can handle a few people, as most runners are likely to have their diaries for this year full but we are wrong. The legend of Czech running, Miloš Škorpil, is one of the first to register and other well-known names from the running community, home and abroad, follow. I'm starting to realize that organizing the Baroko Marathon was different, as my friends and I have run dozens of

marathons, but our knowledge of the six-day is only second hand. Fortunately, we are joined by another three friends, Kýta, Lišín and my supporter from Spartathlon 2018, Benny, who became the director of the race. A couple of meetings over beer, a couple of sleepless nights, consultations with Petr Prokop Tůma, who inspired me to run a six-day run, devising a menu, distribution of competencies, finding about 20 friends to help, providing track lighting and lots of other things that we have to deal with.

Succeeded!

On 23 April we start. There are 11 ultra-marathoners and 1 three-member relay for the six-day run, 23 runners for the 24-hour run and 9 for the 48-hour run. I would really like to write here about heroism and stories of some participants, highlight the winners and point out the best. The participants that kept running at the almost 3 km long circuit in the nice landscape of Konstantinovy Lázně deserve admiration and recognition and it would be unfair to elevate anyone above others. As an organizer I couldn't run, but I didn't regret it. Among a bunch of enthusiastic and modest racers, full of perseverance,

courage and humility, among a bunch of friends who came every day after work or took their vacation to help take care of runners day and night, I was extremely happy. All the organizers thanked us for the opportunity to be there, the runners were thrilled with the cooking of our canteen chef, Kyta, as well as with the overall organization. We all agreed that in a year we must meet again since those were six beautiful days. We hereby invite you to come and see for yourself. You can feel the atmosphere from the stories and photos on our K6 Facebook page.

The results are available at www.k6.barokomaraton.cz. See you in 2023, April 22 -28 at Konstantinovy Lázně.



SOUTHERN LAKES ULTRA

By Gwenan Riley

Lockdown 2020, the world has changed overnight. We are working from home, home schooling the kids, living in a digital world and surviving on Pinot Noir and chocolate. Each night the family chats on the couch get crazier and crazier, until the night in question.

Over the first glass of Pinot my husband turns to me and says, "Why don't you give multi-day running a go?" By the time we had finished the bottle I had entered Southern Lakes Ultra – 7 days, 6 stages, 264km and 10,000m+ of elevation. It is official, lockdown has made me crazy - what on earth have I got myself into?

Fast forward to February 2022 through more lockdowns, closed borders, and an event rollover due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is finally here, race registration at the Skyline gondola in the beautiful Queenstown. We are on the top of the world looking down on Lake Wakatipu with the stunning Remarkables mountain range in the backdrop. There is no turning back!

But the question remained, had lockdown made me crazy or was this going to be the best week of my life?

The answer is, of course it made me crazy! I was planning on running from Lake Hawea to Queenstown, now that's just nuts. But with the craziness came without doubt the best week of my life. Why? Five reasons, let me explain.

Reason one: The rivers and lakes.

We started on Diggle Burn station on the far side of Lake Hawea, running along the shoreline back to the township hypnotized by the lake and sheer beauty. It's like a turquoise mirror reflecting the mountains that stand tall all around, so peaceful and calm, an untouched beauty.

Stage two and onto the high banks of the Clutha River, it was a beautiful sight, running through a narrow path in the

of the final run into camp at Glendhu bay, straight over the finish line, no stopping and into the lake with shoes, running vest, spot tracker and a smile. Magic!

Reason two: Mountains and views

The adventure takes a turn and "we head to the hills", or mountains more accurately. Big, steep, fabulous mountains. The Motatapu trail on stage three, followed by the

mountain running is hard, but the strange thing about mountains is that even though they are hard, they fill me with energy and the Motatapu mountain pass was no different. The more we climbed, the more I found my energy looking back down the valley for the views of Lake Wanaka. They were amazing! Hard to believe that we had been sleeping on the shores of that lake not so long ago.

The magnitude of the mountains in this region is unbelievable and certainly makes you feel small, and on stage three we climbed three of those mountains. I know because the quads were kindly telling me.

Day four and the highest point of the event at 1,300m, Advance Peak. The climb went on forever, but the views were breathtaking. The higher we climbed the more amazing it was, we were climbing to the top of New Zealand. I had to keep stopping and checking myself into the surroundings. It was just unbelievable. AND when you think it cannot get any better, we crest the mountain saddle, traverse around then get our first peak into Skippers Canyon. OMG!

Words cannot explain what it is like up there. It was just perfect.

Reason three: Uncharted trails and the "wall"

After a rest day and regroup, it's stage five and we are moving on to uncharted trails. A



Long golden grass scorched by the Central Otago sun. Etched in my memory forever. Fast flowing fun trail running leading on to Lake Wanaka, through the township and past "That Wanaka Tree".

The famous Central Otago sun was out in full force meaning the rivers and lakes, so fresh and clear, provided the necessary cooling stops. With my favorite memory

"longest day" and Advance Peak on stage four.

The mountains were brutal and brilliant, backcountry mountain running at its best.

We were told "once you head into the mountains, the only way out is on foot or by heli". It certainly added to the intrepid nature of the running ahead.

I am not going to lie,

new trail to the region, not yet officially open. The trail runs through old gold mining settlements through deep creek. Lovely flowing mountain bike trails, easy relaxing running.

But the day must finish with a punch and that's what it does, 2km straight up almost vertically into the sky on the aptly named "wall". We scramble and climb, slipping and sliding, laughing, not believing how ridiculous the whole experience is as the sun sets behind us over Queenstown and we say goodbye to another day.

Reason four: Camp life

Ahead of the event, the thought of sleeping in a tent and eating

dehydrated food for a week sounded like hell to me. How wrong I was.

How simple life can be out in the New Zealand backcountry. Eating, running, eating some more and sleeping. Press repeat. No work, no emails, no errands to run. It was that simple. So simple I now miss it.

It also helped that each campsite was special: a private station, a riverbank, a lakeside spot, we camped deep in the mountains, at a historic old school and finally a ski field (without the snow).

Reason five: Friends for life

He Tangata He Tangata He Tangata. It is people, it is people, it is people.

We ran through some beautiful places, so breathtaking it's hard to explain. But what made this week the best week of my life, was not the mountains, or the lakes and rivers, but the people.

The support from the athletes helping each other achieve their own personal goals, the amazing volunteers for giving up their week to be with us and finally the Race Director Kerryn Bell, standing on the finish line day after day personally congratulating each and every runner.

So how perfect it was to finish Southern Lakes Ultra with my new SLU family on stage six with a short sharp fast run down from

Coronet Peak ski field to the Shotover Jet.

Celebrations, hugs, tears and laughter. We did it. 264km, 6 stages, 10,000m+ and definitely the best seven days of my life.



THE LISA WATSON INTERVIEW PART 1



Why We Run photographer Danielle Ledbury spoke with women's winner Lisa Watson after this year's 2022 SILVA Northern Traverse.

Danielle Ledbury.

Hi there, it's nice to meet you. How are you doing? How's everything going?

Lisa Watson.

I'm doing a bit of chill time. It's quite nice not to feel like I have to go running all the time. I actually went for a run yesterday. That was the first time I've run properly since the NT (Northern Traverse) so it was quite nice to get out. It's good to have a bit of a break from thinking really hard about a race and actually letting your body recover and spending time seeing all the people that you didn't see while you were training.

DL. When you're in the zone of something like that it's quite consuming. Well, Congratulations. How long have you been running? How did it all start?

LW. The first time I was introduced to running was when I came to uni in Sheffield, and I joined a mountaineering club, they organised a race called the High Peak Marathon. I was not a runner, and I hadn't considered getting into running but each year they would get the students to checkpoint the race. So we would sit out on various checkpoints for the High Peak Marathon, which goes around the Derwent Watershed, it's 42 miles. It's run overnight and in teams of four. There are students sitting on these checkpoints every 5 to 10 kilometres. I spent a few years sitting on these checkpoints thinking, what on earth are these nutters doing? Through the mountaineering club I generally trained up, and got a couple of race team entries into the race each year. I was aware of my friends and colleagues going running. I started in about 2008 and before that I'd never really even considered running as a hobby. It wasn't something that people did, where I grew up, I was fairly active, I played tennis and did a bunch of sports but I didn't really think about running.

In about 2012, my friend decided that she wanted to do a half marathon and she'd like me to do it with her. I did and I actually quite enjoyed it. Then I started running off road and decided that I really liked that. I had a bit of a false start, I got injured, because I was an idiot and got straight into doing ridiculous distances. I didn't run for a couple years and got back into it in about 2014 with more of a sensible attitude. I took it from there because I knew about the High Peak Marathon, that was the race I wanted to do. I found a group of similarly keen women to do it with, which I was really pleased to do in a team of girls that was their first ultra running experience. We all learned together things like doing navigation, running off road and running overnight. We spent a long time training up to that race and then trying to get an entry into it. It's not the most straightforward thing in the world, it took a couple years to get a place, just because it's a ballot system. Eventually we got a place and we did it. It was great.

DL. All learning navigation together? That sounds like a really nice experience.

LW. I'm still really good friends with those girls now and we made a little film about doing that race and we've started a website, we are still keeping it up occasionally it's called [Beauties and The Bog](#). That was our team name for the race, Disney inspired. We were singing lots of Disney songs during the running of this race.

DL. How long was that run?

LW. *It's 42 miles, a fairly decent distance, overnight. You have to navigate it yourself. It's not easy terrain, it's rough and boggy. That's why I particularly enjoy the rougher parts of it, for example, in the Dragon's Back Race I really enjoyed the tussocky boggy bits, that's where I do well, I'm better at that than I am at running on roads.*

DL. The more challenging the terrain is, the more at home you feel in it?

LW. *I learned fell running skills in the Peak District which tends to be tussocky and boggy. Rocky stuff is still a bit more challenging for me, I definitely noticed that when I do races, particularly against people who do a lot of running in the Lake District. I'm not as quick over rocks, but I'm fairly good on grassy, boggy, tussocky stuff.*

DL. It really does depend on what you've had experience in, doesn't it? Did you grow up in Sheffield?

LW. *I grew up in the Midlands and moved to Sheffield for uni. It keeps people, everybody stays in Sheffield because it's a great place to live.*

DL. Would you say that's how you got into ultra running specifically?

LW. *Training together with the people that I did, we just enjoyed going out for long days together and spending all day in the mountains. With that same group of people I did the High Peak Marathon, we tend to try and do a fast-packing trip each year and do multi-day runs. That group of friends are still very much going and we do a lot of running together still.*

DL. The community aspect of running is a really big part of it. Isn't it like that? That connection you get with other people.

LW. *A lot of it comes from just being in the mountains with friends and having a nice time. That is how the majority of my training goes, it is wanting to spend time in the mountains with people you know, I like spending time with. Then the more you can do that, the better really.*

DL. What would be your first race that you did?

LW. *The High Peak Marathon, that was my first race of that kind, I had done an ultra before that because the year we tried to get into the High Peak Marathon it ended up being cancelled, it was really snowy. I think it's been cancelled twice in the history of the race and it was*

two of the years I tried to enter, that was really disappointing. In 2016 it was cancelled. So I did another ultra that summer called The Long Tour of Bradwell, which I think was longer than just 30 miles. Which was really fun.

The key race for me was doing the High Peak Marathon. That's what everything was aimed at. After the High Peak Marathon that summer in 2017, me and one of the girls went to Scotland and did a Munro Round. We spent all summer in Scotland climbing Munros, cycling between them, kayaking across various bits of water. That was the best base training you could ever possibly ask for. That's what I'm riding on for a lot of the big races that I've done. I've got that stamina from doing that summer of climbing mountains, which is a big base and loads of experience just being out in the mountains in horrible weather, it was a really wet summer.

DL. You had to really dig deep through it.

LW. *We weren't running, but we did long distances, often doing 40k plus a day, 3,000 metres of ascent then sometimes cycling either side. I would still say it was a holiday pace, it's definitely beatable. It is the female record for that. It's 77 days, the men have done it in 30-something now, but we had a nice time. We slept every night. We went to cafes and had rest days, we didn't do it in a really sufferer way. It's logistically challenging though and I think that precludes people from doing it faster. You've got to have a balance with something which is so long, you've got to enjoy yourself. Before us I think the record was four and a half months, we took a significant chunk off it.*

DL. Were you aiming to beat the record?

LW. *Libby only had three months off work. We had to finish before she needed to go back and she wanted a week of holiday after doing it, 11 weeks was perfect.*

DL. The cycling and the kayaking, was it all human powered?

LW. *Human powered the whole way. We started on Ben More on the Isle of Mull, then we did a really wiggly route around Scotland and finished up in the north on Ben Hope. We went in a van, on our rest days we drove off to places but we always started back in the same place that we'd finished.*

DL. That sounds like a really brilliant experience.

LW. *It was ace, both Libby and I learnt loads about self manage-*

ment, all the things that could go wrong went wrong on that trip, getting food right, blisters, all that sort of stuff. You learn how to deal with everything well, having said that blisters are something I don't know loads about and I did have blisters on the Northern Traverse and that wasn't very pleasant.

DL.

That was the first time that you had to really learn about planning?

LW.

We had done a couple of multi-day trips before, that was before the Munros and Hadrian's Wall was three days. Doing loads of days back to back, you need to look after yourself, you can't let anything get on top of you, particularly that first week of that Munro trip, we learnt loads, we weren't eating anywhere near enough. We got really hungry and we had to massively up our food intake and sleep as well. We ended up sleeping about 10 hours a night. I'm pretty sure the guys who've done it, and did it faster didn't sleep as much as we did. We got really quick as well, really slick, we were walking, but we were walking pretty fast. We decided that running wasn't really worth it, there's so much non-runnable terrain in Scotland. We thought if we ran we'd only be running small sections of it and we're actually likely to get more tired than if we just power walked everything.

DL. That makes sense. What can you learn from that trip? Do you feel you can draw on when you're in your races today?

LW. *It's all the self care stuff, I'm really used to the kit that I take now. I learned how to use poles, I feel like I've got a good technique with them. Sometimes people think, oh, I need poles for this long race, and then they bring them and things are a little bit more difficult. I carried on running after that trip, staying relatively fit. I know what it's like to be out in terrible weather for lots of days in a row. I guess some level of toughness comes with that. Sometimes you're on a horrible hill and at least it's not as bad as that time. I came away with an increased love for being in the mountains.*

DL. So what did you enjoy most about that experience?

LW. *On the Munro trip it was the freedom of being in the hills every day, it's a real break from reality and the stress of everyday life, you don't have to think about anything else, all you think about is putting one foot in front of the other. The physical side of it is not a problem. You've got a real purpose, you know exactly what you're doing. It*

becomes a really enjoyable job, the simplicity of it, just moving, eating and sleeping. A massive privilege to be able to spend all your time in beautiful places with one of my favourite people.

DL. It's always helpful doing it with people you like.

LW. It was very weird at the end of the trip, when Libby went home and I went home. Oh, I have not been more than 50 metres away from you for about three months.

DL. Do you still do stuff together now?

LW. Libby doesn't do as much running now. She's got a little boy. We still spend loads of time together. I'm off there for tea after I'm finished here. She's less keen on racing and stuff but does as much running as she can. I've moved more into doing lots of races.

DL. Is there anyone that's been an inspiration to you?

LW. People like Jasmin Paris, Nicky Spinks and Sabrina Verjee are all hugely inspiring, and it's really awesome to see how they trailblaze in fell running and the ultra running world. I love Sabrina's Wainwrights' attempts. I think it's awesome that she didn't just go for the women's record, she went for the overall record to show we can challenge the men at this.

The people I know in my everyday life are really inspiring, the people who overcome normal barriers to do the things that they want to do. My mom got into running in her 50s, she has done ultras, it's really cool that she decided she wanted to do that, stuck at it and did it. Likewise, my friends who've gone and had kids and are now working really hard to get back to doing running alongside making sure that their kids are active. I find everyday people inspiring.

DL. That's really nice and do you have a coach?

LW. I don't have a coach. I don't think I would cope with someone telling me what to do. I run because I like running. If someone started telling me I had to do this and not do that, I'd not like to run any more. I did think about it for a while, I had to have training plans written. I had a training plan written for me before the Dragon's Back Race, but it just confirmed that I was doing the right thing. I trained very much by feel and because I like spending time running. I don't struggle with doing too much. That's something that a lot of people say where they need the coach to stop them overdoing it, but I have plenty of other hobbies and things that I like doing. I naturally get a balance.

DL. Do you write your own training plans?

LW. The two big races that I've done are the Dragon's Back and the Northern Traverse; in the Dragon's Back I was really methodical. I knew I wanted to recce it all, I wanted to do a few runs of a certain distance, a few multi-days, I wrote a checklist of things that I wanted to have done a day, which had the same amount of ascent, the highest amount of ascent a day. I wanted to do a day that had the same distance or at least nearly the same distances as the longest day to make sure I knew what that would feel like. There were so many things with the Dragon's Back that it was quite hard to know what to focus on. There's all the ascent, there's the multi-day, there's the massive distances, there's a really rough terrain, I had a few different checklists to go against. It was hard to know whether it was doing enough. I actually used a sticker chart and had these little smiley face stickers. I roughly paid attention to making sure I was doing a couple of high-mileage weeks and then an easier week and that that was built in gently but it wasn't that regimented. I did it off feel, I found that I needed rest weeks more often than I thought I would.

I had a few races, other races that I was fitting in, events and runs that I wanted to do, it was relatively flexible, which is why I didn't think I would manage with having a coach telling me I needed to do this, that and that when



I wanted to recce this. I wanted to be quite flexible with it. If I had a weekend where I wanted to go see my family and not go running, then that wasn't a problem.

I did something similar for Northern Traverse. Although I have to say I did bury my head in the sand quite a bit more because I was really scared about the whole continuation of it and I didn't know what to do about sleep. I did do some long runs. I was planning on having a practice at sleep deprivation. I never managed to motivate myself to do that because I just didn't want to.

I came to the conclusion, I don't know if it was just to make myself feel better, that it was better just to be well rested, and not having had loads of weekends where it felt like to only sleep for two hours. That is how I justified it to myself. I think that was the right decision, going into these races it is better to be rested. I guess the way to learn is to do more of these sorts of races and see what works and see what doesn't but it's also dependent on what you feel like on the day, isn't it? I'm still learning.

DL. Could you talk through your process, what you were thinking for example when you were going for the Dragon's Back?

LW. *I really liked recceing, that's generally what I focus on because you know where you're going. I find it helpful not just for navigation, I find it helpful during the race because you know what to expect. It's easy to break it down. When you're doing a long race, it's hard to think about the full distance. When it's a stage race, thinking about running 70K in one go feels like a big ask, but when you are looking forward to places, I find the mental boost really nice. I find it good to know what to expect and what's coming up. It helps you get used to the terrain you're going to be running over as well. It's easy to motivate yourself to go and recce and do a multi-day weekend where you do two or three days running over a section of the course. I also find it genuinely very enjoyable to do a weekend away from a particular section of a race where I can be with friends or other people who are doing the race, which is just a lot of fun. So that tends to be what I focus on. Around that there's all the normal boring stuff like doing a bit of strength conditioning, and a bit of interval training. Your regular runs or club runs or short races during the week and the other weekends, doing stuff you know, or other cool routes that you find around to run and do, There's plenty of them listed in the Lakes.*

That was what I was thinking about



Dragon's Back, I was thinking about doing lots of ascent, also thinking about what I need to carry. On those days, particularly when you're recceing, are you carrying all the kit that you're going to be carrying on the day? How does that feel? What kit are you going to use? You're going to use poles, then make sure you practise with poles. That ascent day after day made sure I really thought about it. I put a year into doing that without many other goals in between just because it was a massive thing for me to do. Cape Wrath is a bit harder to recce but I'd spend a lot of time in Scotland and I was fairly confident that I could navigate the bits that I hadn't recced. I did two or three trips up to Scotland to go and recce sections of it which are just nice holidays mostly walking due to a foot injury.

DL. So you went out walking as part of your training.

LW. *I walked day six and seven of Cape Wrath and we walked day three and four and then I've done lots of the other bits through other trips to Scotland. Having done Dragon's Back I had some level of confidence. I knew how the camps worked and what the food was going to be like, what worked before, and I used the same kit so it wasn't really a problem having done walking with a big walking rucksack. Walking with a massive hiking rucksack and all your camping kit is good training and when you're running you're not carrying anywhere near as much so it doesn't feel so bad. There's not as much as ascent in Cape Wrath, it seemed like an easier undertaking, longer than*

Dragon's Back but not as long each day, there's not as much ascent, the terrain's not as rough or where it was rough I was fairly confident I could manage the roughness having spent so much time in Scotland previously. Eight days in a row was just three more. I found it easier. I still had the remnants of a foot injury, which was not super comfortable but it was manageable.

Then Northern Traverse. I did spend a lot of time recceing. I recced everything from Patterdale to the end but I didn't repeat any sections. I tried to do some really long runs. I did the West Highland Way over a couple of days, I did another 90k run; beyond that I just carried on running and hoped for the best.

The furthest I'd run before was 100k, 107k. So it's just under three times as far as that but I didn't have the time trying to do longer runs in training, so doing the West Highland Way over a couple of days was great. Recceing Richmond to the end over a weekend to see what that section felt like. It wasn't really reasonable to do any runs that were much longer than that distance, 80, 90k is manageable without too much recovery afterwards. More than that, you're going to end up putting yourself out so I had to hope that it worked. It seemed to work for me, by accident rather than design. I guess a lot of people have probably done 100-milers before, but I haven't. It was nice getting to 100 miles on the Northern Traverse and feeling like that was an achievement. Unfortunately, my sleep deprivation brain was like, you did 100 miles. That's great. You can stop now. Don't think about the next 90 miles.

TO BE CONTINUED...



WOLFIE'S BACKYARD ULTRA

By Emma Morton

“Who let the dogs out.....” You’d have thought 12 hourly loops with the same song to send us off would make us sick of it and slightly nuts. But far from it. Every time I replay the song in my head (it echoes quite often in there less than a week after the event!), I have such happy memories that I can’t stop smiling. Sarah Cameron, whom you all know well from this magazine, had organised a stellar ultra through the vineyards of her backyard.

Rewind a year and Wolfie's ultra had to be postponed. Sarah had a really nasty bike accident resulting in a hip replacement for her recent hip replacement. In true Sarah style, she bounced back (no pun intended Sarah!) incredibly well and here we were on 18 June lining up to our first rendition of that song – and apt it was too with Sarah's rescue dogs and Raff getting all worked up at our excitement. Poor Colin attached to Raff's harness coped admirably well with the obstacles. Sadly Wolfie is no longer here to cheer us on but, as Sarah said, he'd have hated the crowd of people and the noise anyway. Each time we ran past his resting place I gave him a little wave.

We'd had a heatwave in the south of France for over a week prior to Saturday and a tentative forecast announced a cooler day for us. It didn't turn out to be the case, but Sarah and her husband Angus, had thought of everything possible to keep us runners cool, hydrated and fuelled ready for our loops. In the barn was a shower head attached to a hose. We all looked forward to that fresh jet after each loop, and at the five minute cowbell warning we all dashed back for another soaking.

There was no obligation to run the entire 12 hours. Some people joined for three, four or even one loop.

For us 12-hour runners it was really refreshing and motivating to have new faces to chat to, even if on fresh legs they soon dashed ahead. Gareth bravely tackled cycling the route after ending up with stitches in his foot earlier in the week, and even completed the 12 hours by walking after saddle-soreness, punctures and a missing front wheel derailed his plans!

Sarah even proposed a beer loop event! I had to have a giggle at her well-worded disclaimer on that one. Although we all sensibly declined the offer – HopDuk's homemade brew was to be our reward once we finished.

Sarah is, quite frankly, a race director extraordinaire. She'd covered every detail and possibility – setting out the signs and ribbons along the route, mowing the grass on the course, replenishing her awesome aid station – energy bars, pâte de fruits, cola, ice, you name it. Even after running some loops herself, she went off to bake samosas for us. Not to mention patching up Sophie's knees after a "its-so-unlike-Sophie" tumble. The heat began to take its toll by 4pm (except on the incredible Wiebke who powered on through lap after lap) and Sarah didn't hesitate in meeting us halfway around the course to douse us with a watering can and provide drinks.

Us girls had taken to putting ice cubes down our bras – quite handy if you have forgotten your buff to put around your neck. I got a bit of a fright on a loop nearing the end hearing a rattle in my chest. I thought my lungs had a big problem for a split second – then I remembered the ice cubes.

A special shout-out to Angus who bested his 50km distance by running the whole 12 hours. And that is after piloting in from New York the night before – what better way to recover from fatigue, jet lag and a long-haul flight than by setting yourself a new longest distance in 40 degree heat. Well done Angus.

Post ultra was such a joyous atmosphere. Sarah surprised us with the most unique medals each in the shape of a dachshund. I named mine "Boucle" which is French for loop! How many people can say they name a medal?! DJ Morton provided a bespoke playlist for us to shuffle our feet to from our chairs. And Sarah had prepared, (I don't know when or how!), the most wonderful vegan feast.

So THANK YOU Sarah for organising and hosting the most wonderful event. And you know to keep the ribbons and signs safe, don't you?!





SHARP TOP 50K

By Vanessa Gonzalez

Ultra Marathon. Something I never thought I would or could do. I always wanted to but didn't know if I would have the dedication or the time to run one. Until one day somebody signed up for one and I said "I'm in!" I'm a weight trainer with the casual run mixed in a couple times a week, usually 3-6 miles. I had never even ran a half before let alone a 50k. Without question though I was all in. It was November when I started training for a race in March but unfortunately Covid had other plans for me. After seven weeks of solid training in January I got double pneumonia and had to drop out of my race and stop running all together. I gave myself a start date of 1 March to start running again and I did, just a couple of miles every few days. That's when I decided I needed to sign up for another ultra, because I wasn't quite ready to quit.

I signed up for the Sharp Top 50k in Pennsylvania and got the ground running. I had to start over with my training program and wasn't as motivated as the first time but I kept showing up for runs regardless.

As I mentioned above I had never even ran a half so my training was incredibly rewarding because within my training I had run maybe 10 half marathons, 4 runs of 20 miles or more and a full marathon. That was a win for me. Another thing that kept blowing my mind was my recovery. I'd run 18 miles then go to the gym and deadlift 225lbs. It was amazing. I truly believe my weight training kept me from injury and helped me recover from my runs.

As with any new marathon runner, I read Born To Run, it really helped me find a place in the running world. Before reading it I didn't see myself as a "runner" even though I've run for years, but I didn't have the cool CamelBaks or the cool running shoes. I had

a lululemon fanny pack my daughter got me for Christmas and some old shoes that became running shoes because they had gotten too dirty to wear to the gym. I didn't feel I fit the part.

Race day was approaching and I was a little nervous because of the "taper", which I've read is a common feeling for most. I felt like I had too much down time and it would hinder me in the race. Race day was coming regardless of my feelings so I had to push on.

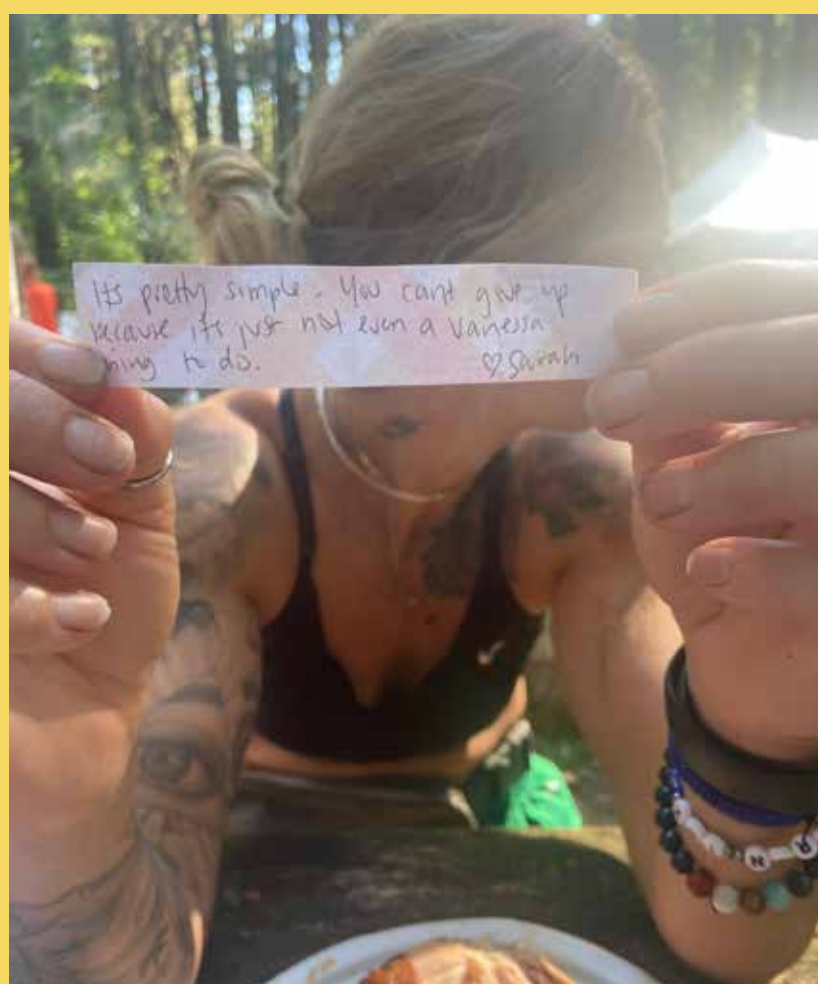
We drove four hours to get there and when I saw the elevation of the Pennsylvania mountains I was a bit nervous because Maryland doesn't have anything like that. A few times I even cheated myself and ran on bike trails so I could be on the flats.

I stuffed my face with pasta and bread the night before, slept terribly and was up at

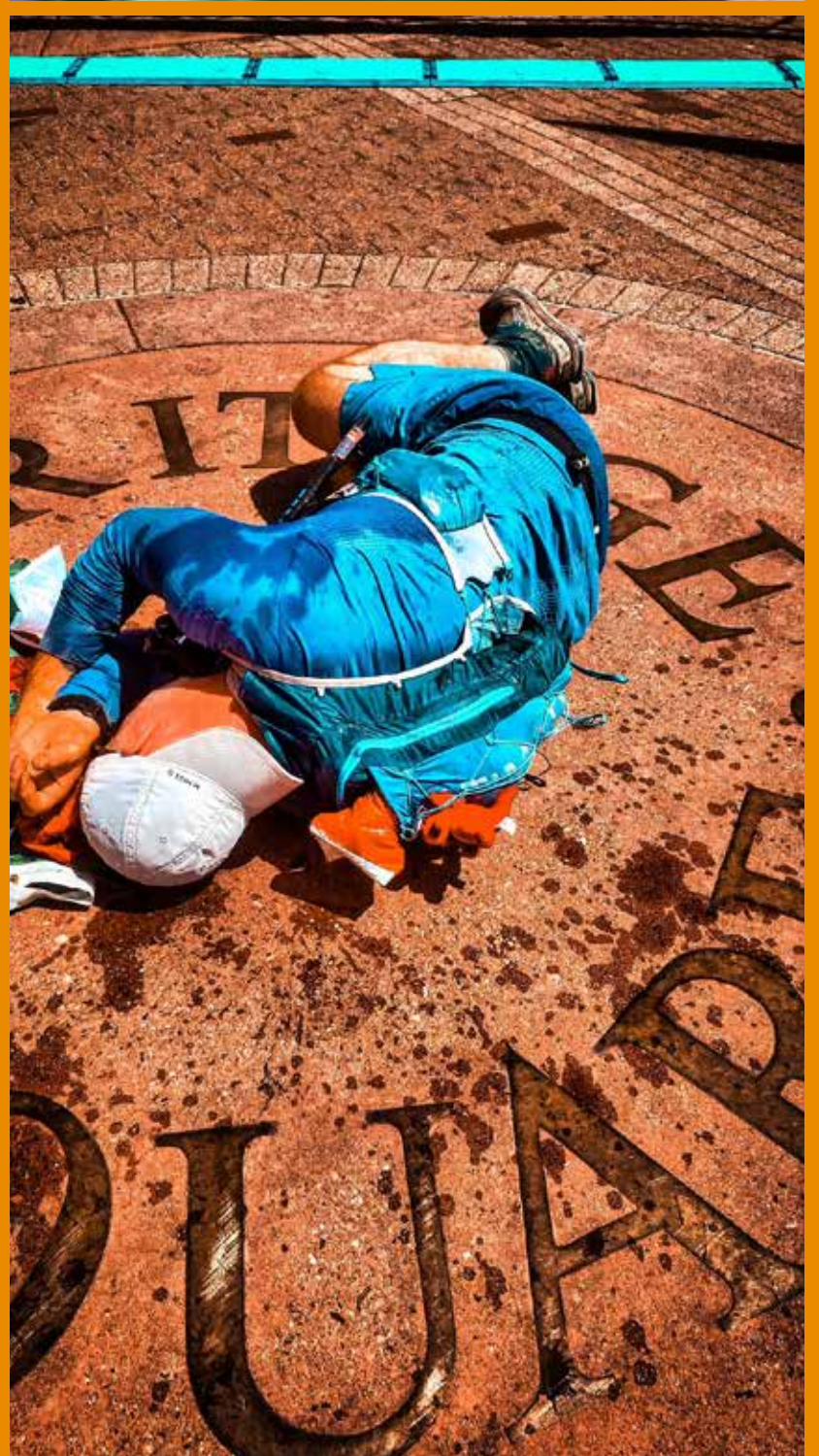
5am to drive 45 minutes to the start line. (The trail was completely off the grid with no cell service and dirt roads leading you in and out.) I didn't have any nerves because it didn't seem real, I couldn't think about how long or how far I'd be running so I sat in the back of the pack for the start and ran my own race. I went slow and steady and at mile 13 I felt good and I knew I was finishing without question. Most dropped to the 25k but not me, even though I took the 25k detour by accident and had to double back! Nonetheless I got back on the right trail and kept on trucking. At mile 17 I was out of water and dehydrated. It was 90 degrees and the steep slopes were killing me. I started to think I was lost again even though I saw the flags clearly, but I was in my head. Finally! I saw a cooler and oatmeal cream pies, but started chugging water and yelling into the woods with excitement. Skip to mile 26, I felt great even still. No pains, nothing. Only 3.6 to go... then I took a wrong turn again! Ugh, I dropped a lot of F-bombs and turned back around. Then, there it was, the music from the finish line!!!! I did it!

I talked a lot to myself in the woods, I cursed a lot, I tripped a lot, I got lost twice and added three miles to my run and I was covered in mud. BUT I did it, I ran the whole thing and said I never wanted to do another one, I said I was one and done after crossing that finish line.

I signed up for another one in October...



THE UK'S 200 MILE MAN COMPLETES GRUPELLING 250 MILE RUN FOR CHARITY



Despite agonising ankle injury at mile 87, finishing 36/239

[Scott Jenkins](#) is fast becoming the UK's 200-mile man. Readers may have read of Scott's countless endeavors over the years from running 2,000 miles from Boston to Austin to setting a new British course record at last year's Moab 240 and becoming only the second Welshman to run Badwater 135, alongside his brother. If this is the first time you are reading of Scott's epic feats for charity, that's not uncommon either given he is not a professional athlete and takes these crazy challenges on outside of his day job working for American corporate, Johnson & Johnson.

The Cocodona 250 is the longest non-stop trail race in the USA and was the brainchild of Aravaipa's director, Jamil Coury and Race Director, Steve Arnolt, whose joint desire was to create a race that traverses a large portion of the state of Arizona, connecting national parks and historic towns along the way. The race had its inaugural year in 2021, which Scott was signed up for, yet with COVID travel restrictions still in full force, he had to defer his entry to 2022.

Ultra running has exploded over the last 3-5 years in popularity and through the number of events available globally. Participation has increased by 1,676% in the last 23 years from 34,401 to 611,098 yearly participations and 345% in the last 10 years from 137,234 to 611,098. There have never been more ultra runners globally and the UK has some household names within the elite categories such as Damien Hall and Tom Evans. In the 200-mile plus category, Scott is fast becoming known as the UK's 200-mile man given his impressive participation to date after deciding to specialise in races over 135+ miles in the last few years with a real love of anything 200+ miles. "I'll never be the fastest but I have a unique ability to go for a long time and problem solve as I go, which I think are key components to doing well in 200-milers. I'm still very much learning and a novice to the 200+ miles and I'm loving the learnings that come from each race" added Scott.

Interestingly, the same research by [Paul Ronto](#) found that in ultra running, runners in the longer distances have a better pace than the runners in the shorter distances for each age group, with the average ultrarunner doing 1.7 events per year. For

Scott, his average is 3-4 per year, which places him in a very unique group of runners being able to perform in event after event. The UK sits proudly at sixth globally for the highest proportions of the world's ultra runners. At one point a marathon was considered the limit of human endurance performance and what we are starting to see is the evolution from 100-milers to the popular new term, "200 is the new 100" as individuals seek to explore the very limit of what is humanly possible. What you see with the distance evolution is two categories of ultra running, stage race and non-stop. Non-stop sees runners run consecutively with limited sleep as you are always on the clock, versus stage races where pre-determined distances are set each day and non-timed sleep ensues each night. Both present unique challenges and strategies to each participant. For Scott, he adopted NuCalm to help him fall into deep sleeps quickly as part of his Cocodona 250 race strategy for short periods to minimise "wasting" time, resulting in only 3 hours 50 minutes of sleep over the course of his 97-hour race, avoiding race-ending hallucinations often ubiquitous

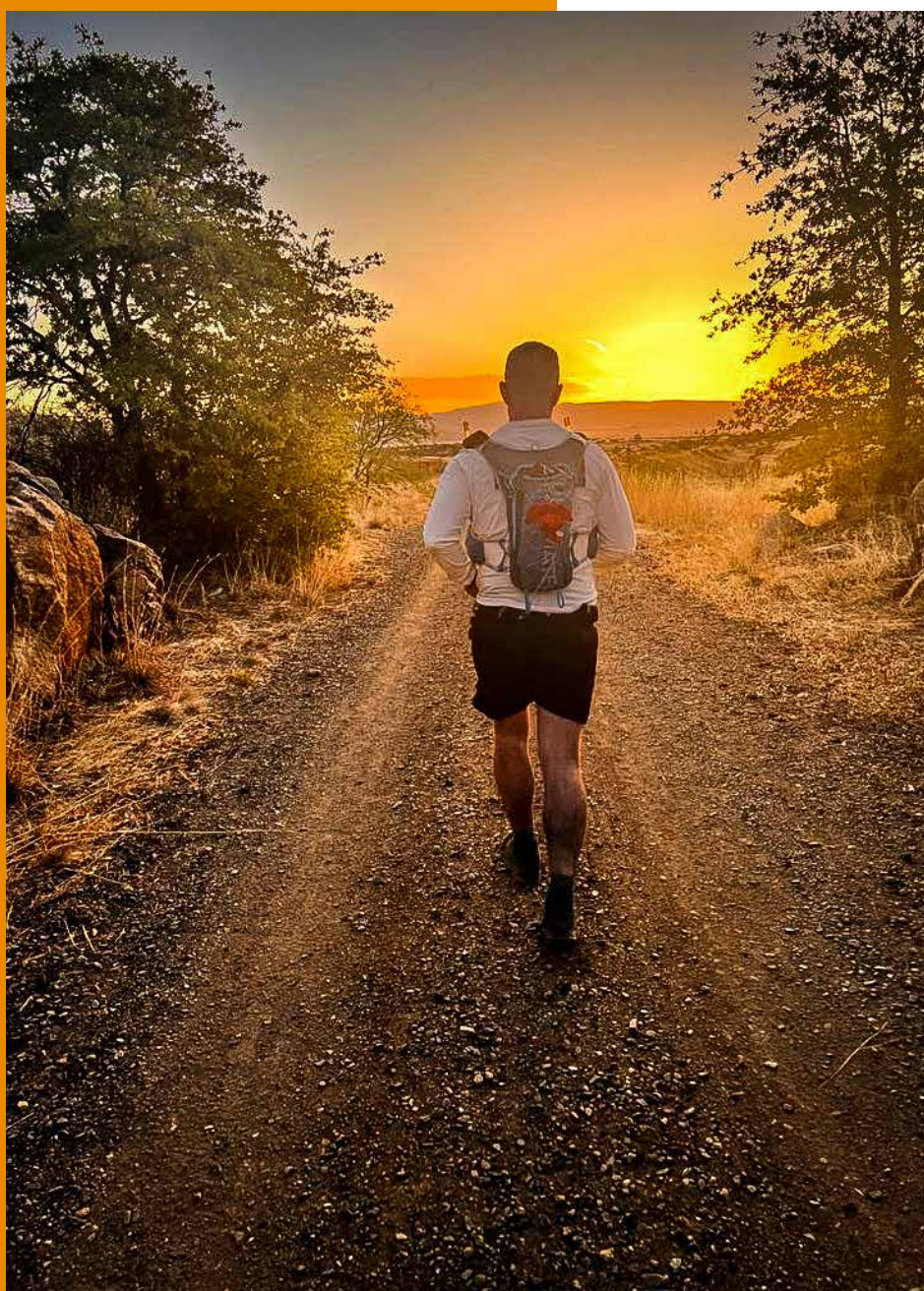


with long races. Another tactic deployed was lightweight gear with Scott opting for sustainability brand Patagonia for his clothing, given that you have to carry all your clothes for day and night and given the average distance of around 20 miles between aid stations. Given the need for SPF-clothing and warm night gear, Scott finds Patagonia has everything he needs for 200+ milers with durability.

The Cocodona 250 route itself (started 2 May 2022) starts at 2,000ft of elevation just outside of Phoenix in Black Canyon City. However, this year, due to the unfortunate event of wildfires that has plagued the US in recent years, saw a course reroute, meaning the race would start in one of the most historic western towns in the USA - Prescott, Arizona. At 5,400ft it sees runners complete a long out-and-back via Skull Valley before rejoining the original route from Prescott's Whisky Row and traversing through the Granite Dells of Watson Lake. A nice elevation starting profile for a Welshman living at sea level in London. "The pace at which Aravaipa, Jamil and Steve turned around an alternative route whilst still delivering a 252-mile course was exceptional and massively welcomed by international runners" praised Scott.

From Prescott the course then heads up and over Mingus Mountain into the old mining town of Jerome (where the copper mined here is used to make finishers' belt buckles - a nice nod to the town's mining history). The onward route then goes through Sedona National Park, experiencing a mix of stunning red rock formations, gradients up to 57% and high sun exposed desert vistas. As runners leave Sedona, the course starts to get into the pines of Flagstaff, finishing up and over Mt Elden (elevation of just shy of 10,000ft) and into downtown Flagstaff. It is an extraordinary undertaking and gives runners an incredible point-to-point experience through some of the best landscapes that Arizona has to offer coupled with cumulative elevation gain of 32,000ft over the 250 miles. "I'd have to say the course is savage, extremely technical and brutally hot and dry in equal measures. It has to be up there with one of the toughest races I've done given the number of challenges you are constantly having to problem solve and the sheer technicality of the terrain - not quite the same as Richmond Park in





London. That's the essence of what a challenge is, if the outcome was guaranteed then it wouldn't be a challenge in the first place" beamed Scott.

This all sounds pretty challenging for a route for any runner in peak condition, but couple that with rolling your ankle several times on rocks until it blows up at mile 87 to something that resembles a symptom of elephantiasis. This is exactly what happened to Scott and when asked if he wanted to continue, he simply replied, there's no way I'm not finishing what I started for Operation Smile. Many other crews suggested to Scott and his sole crew member and wife Abby, that Scott should pivot his mindset from being competitive in the field, to one of just getting to the finish line. A mindset that has never been and would never become that of Scott in the race. Although his pace dropped after this, he still maintained a competitive mindset and pace to finish 36/239 with a 10-15 deep field of elite and professional ultra runners. His coach and number 10 ultrarunner in the world, Jeff Browning, thought prior to the ankle injury that he could have potentially placed in the top 20. Scott's mental resolve remained consistent throughout the race and as a result, he raised enough money for Operation Smile for 10 children to have a Smile Operation to repair their cleft lips or palettes and became the first Welshman and Brit living in the UK to carry the Cocodona 250 finishers' buckle home.

So what's next for the UK's 200-mile man: rehab of his ankle, speaking at Orbit Festival in Shropshire, Bigfoot 200 in the Pacific NorthWest in August, Autumn 100 in September and potentially another 200+ miler. For Scott, these races are about three things: raising money and awareness for Operation Smile, pushing his own personal boundaries and making memories and having adventures with friends and family.

If you wish to donate to help a child smile for the first time, you can do so via the link, <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/scottjenkins> and one operation is only £150 to give the gift of a smile.

PACRIM 2022

By John Zeier

The Pacific Rim One Day Run, a 24-hour endurance event, is held at Lake Sacajawea in Longview, Washington, on the third Saturday every March. After a three-year hiatus due to Covid, the race was held again in 2022. Longview is a small community where rivers join before emptying into the Pacific Ocean. The event is staged by Confluence Racing, a local group which sees in Confluence not just the coming together of waters, but the meeting of runners.

PacRim, as it is commonly called, is a small regional event drawing most of its field from ultrarunners near the Interstate 5 between Salem, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. There is always a wonderful mix of new runners to meet, as well as many athletes who return frequently. The race occurs on a one-mile loop with easy access to your vehicle or a local motel, depending on your needs. It is a well-organized event with great support for the runners, especially from the kitchen crew who will keep you well fueled.

This year's running of PacRim started under gray skies and a moderate drizzle, but within an hour the sun was out. Scheduled this close to the Spring equinox, the athlete should be prepared for cool temps, rain, and occasional sleet. Lake Sacajawea is a beautiful city park. This year we were treated with sunshine igniting the cherry blossoms of the park, while the local population of ducks preened their feathers and chased down breadcrumbs. Kayakers can be seen plying the waters, while neighborhood runners and walkers will mix with the racers - the trail is wide enough for all to enjoy. The park is very child friendly, and participants often show up with their children, or run with older children, making for a complete family experience.

This year's female winner, Van Phan, one of the strongest female runners on the planet (she plans a mountain 100 next week), carved out 104 miles in 2022. The male winner, Ryan McKnight, set a course record of 132 miles. The best thing about both winners was their friendly presence as they exhorted other runners with a shout of 'good work' as they sped past. The beauty of ultrarunning is found in the comradery. There were six runners under the age of 20, half of them running 50 miles or more. On the other end of the spectrum there were seven runners over age 70, one putting in 76 miles. The older runners included some great athletes who helped make ultrarunning the sport it is. We take our hats off to what they have accomplished over the years.

This year's running of PacRim had a field almost perfectly split between male and female entrants. Some runners accomplished a specific goal and then stopped. Other runners stayed on their feet for the full 24 hours. And still other runners took some time to rest in their vehicles (parked curbside to the course). Night running is special in many ways and the timing of PacRim is such that a full moon, or near full, will often appear, as it did this year. If you're looking to test your endurance in a 24-hour format, come to Longview for the confluence of water and ultra spirit.

The author's own race went well even though he missed his goal of 100 miles, coming up 10 short, for 90. My wife and dog came up during the day and spent a couple of hours with me. During darkness a close adventure friend ran 30 miles to pace me. My third PacRim.

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Antonio Codina, I am a runner based in the North East of England. My sporting background is in mountaineering and rock climbing, and I started running ultras four years ago. This probably explains my interest in mountain and winter races such as TDS, Lakeland or the Spine races. My dream race is Tor de Géants.



Azara García, from Salmenes Marcano. I was born on June 18, 1983 and I am from a small town in Cantabria called Los Corrales de Buelna. My son Miguel is my little engine for the day to day and my husband Álvaro Postigo my great support.

I started in athletics when I was 8 years old thanks to the "Looking for Athletes" event that was held in my town. It hooked me so much that I didn't stop running until today.



Catherine Cowie, age 38

Running club: Portobello RC based in Edinburgh
Coached by Sean Meissner (Sharman Ultra Coaching – based in US)

I ran at country level for cross-country during my school years and then later competed for my university, but then didn't run seriously again until 2019 (almost 15 years later) when I joined Portobello RC in Edinburgh. I started ultra running last Autumn and have managed to finish first or second female in each ultra I've participated in. The Great Glen Ultra saw my highest placing so far, coming in at 3rd place overall and 1st female.



Cees Dijkstra, lives in Appelscha/ Leeuwarden in the Netherlands. At 58 his running experience includes 117 marathons and ultra's, eight times covering 100 km or more in races such as the Bear Trail 100k, Indian Summer Ultra and the 105km Trans Aubracc as well as the Bello Gallico (100 miles).



Danielle Ledbury, I work as a freelance educator, encouraging curiosity of the world around us through photography and art. Originally from the south west but my interest in the outdoors and all things nature based drew me to relocate to the Lake District, where I quickly fell in love with Fell running, being out in the Fells and the community here.



Darren Stoker, 47 years old, originally from Sunderland, been living in Dunfermline since 2014. I played a lot of football till I was 33 then only ever did weights and short runs. I did do 2 half marathons for a bet at work in 2018 which I won then dropped down to 5k. Joined Pitreavie AAC running club last September.



Dawn Nunes, is an experienced sports physiotherapist with a Masters degree in Sports Physiotherapy. Dawn is an extremely dedicated runner, both on trail and on road, and has completed two Comrades Ultra Marathons (90km) as well as Ultra-Trail Cape Town, Two Oceans and a number of ultra trails. Dawn's passion is to help runners of all abilities to thrive.



Emma Norton, I live in the south of France, close to the Pyrénées mountains. I discovered trail running seven years ago, aged 41. As mid-life crisis' go, I can't think of a better one! I'm an active member of our village running club, and I love to encourage more women into our sport.



Florian Neuschwander, after winning the Trail Uewersauer three years in a row from 2011 to 2013 in both 2015 and 2016 Florian Neuschwander was the national men's Wings for Life World Run champion in Germany, covering 75.5km and 63.66km respectively. Between the two he travelled to the US and conquered Colorado's prestigious Transrockies Run – a stage race covering 200km and 6,000m of altitude in six days. In 2018 Florian took 25th place at Western States. Visit Florian's website at: run-with-the-flow.com/



Gwenan Riley, "A proud Mancunian, that has long since called New Zealand home. Mother of two boys, working full time as a partner in a big four accounting firm.

Life is busy to say the least. So hitting the trails that surround the Wellington harbour brings some balance and is my happy place.



Ian Thomas, started racing in earnest around 2009 age 50, initially focusing on road racing 5k to marathons before venturing into Ultra's in 2013. Now age 62 Ian holds several GB AG V60 AT Best Performances and is now targeting further GB AG Bests and a seventh consecutive Spartathlon finish.



Jessie Gladish, I was born and raised in the Yukon, Canada. After high school I lived in British Columbia for several years for university, did a bunch of travelling, and also got into trail running and biking, and then eventually long distance endurance events. I've had the privilege of exploring beautiful and remote parts of both Canada and the USA, and can't wait to see more.



Joanna Murphy, lives in the Kingdom of Fife in Scotland and works as a Police Officer. In 2021 she represented Scotland in the Anglo Celtic Plate 100km, placing 2nd overall, and 1st Scot in a time of 7.50.58. Earlier in 2022 Joanna won the Anglo-Celtic plate in a time of 7.41.12. This now ranks Jo 4th all-time on the Scottish 100km list. Jo trains with Team Hour 7.



John Zeier, is a retired RN, father of 2, runs with the tolerance of his wife, Sue, and in the company of his dog Tate, and his friend Kas. He is a sometimes poet/philosopher, and an always outdoor adventurer. He has almost run too many races. After he runs he likes to eat ice cream and sleep.



Josef Mayerhofer, 57 years. Founded Mozart 100 in 2012. Back then I was still managing partner in an international advertising agency. After the birth of my son (born in 2011) and the first edition of Mozart I gave up my former professional life and focused on Mozart 100 and my golf business. I have a masters degree in business administration. Apart from trail running I enjoy golf, tennis, skiing, cycling and reading. My motto: "Love it, change it or leave it." [Mozart 100](#)



Kate Maltby, lives in a yurt in West Cumbria with her partner and dogs. She is a qualified Pilates and Yoga teacher. Check out her YouTube channel- Stretch Mountain Pilates and Yoga. Her background as a runner begun aged 15, where she ran for England in cross country and then went on to run for Great Britain in mountain running. Currently studying a PhD in sport at Stirling University focusing on elite athlete's transition to retirement with attention to coping, addictive behavior and intervention, built upon previous studies in sport psychology and coaching. Kate also loves cycling for fun, growing vegetables, swimming, reading short stories and living a balanced life full of all things creative! Kate now teaches Pilates online and provides free videos via her YouTube channel, [Stretch Mountain Pilates and Yoga](#).



Kendra Wedgwood, is a police officer in North Yorkshire who started running ultras in 2020. After competing in the Hardmoors 110 and Spine Challenger, she learned that she prefers the longer stuff. "I really want to complete the 230k Arctic Ultra, everything about it appeals to me. I also want to complete Mark Cockbains tunnel ultra which is 200 miles. It's not just the distance, it's the mental challenge that appeals to me and I want to see how far I can push my body and mind".



Konstantin Wiesner, (1966) has been running ultras since 2004 including 12, 14 and 48 hour races.

2016-Champion of the Czech Republic in marathon cat. M50

2018-Spartathlon

2019-Champion of Czech Republic 100k, cat. M50

2022-1st place cat. M55 in Poland Championship Pabianice

Author of a book "To(ne)dáš!" "You can('t) do it!"

Works as a chief educator at a diagnostic institute for children. Konstantin is the founder of the K6 multiday race. Checkout the race website at [K6 Ultramarathon](#)



Laura Watts, is an ultra runner who lives near Bognor Regis in the UK. 2019 Laura was first woman in the 145 mile Kennet & Avon Canal Race and set an FKT on the 62.6 km Fox Way in February 2022. Recently Laura finished 20th lady in the 2022 Badwater 135. Follow Laura on Instagram: @laura_runninggirl



Philippe Fourment's, DUV history stretches back to 1996 where the first entry was Les 100 km de Millau, a race which is still taking place now in its 49th edition. More recently Philippe has sprinkled his resume with 24 hour races in Albi, a 24 hour trail race and this year saw his second visit to Capitany and his 24 hour pb. Philippe Fourment is on instagram @phil_auch.



Scott Jenkins, was born in Penarth, Cardiff, Wales, he moved to London in 2013 to pursue a career change from a GP exercise referral personal trainer to join the corporate world of Johnson & Johnson. Scott recently just set a new British course record for Moab 240 following finishing Badwater 135 (second Welshman ever). Scott completed the Canal Slam, a series of 3 races (130, 145 and 145mile races) along the UK canal systems. Having raised over £75,000 for a variety of different charities, Scott has been selected as 1 of 3 UK Ambassadors for the charity Operation Smile



Tracy Waite, is a personal Trainer based in Hayle in Cornwall specialising in fitness and wellness, feeling well through movement. She believes that by using our bodies well we can truly feel happier. Tracy has a passion for fitness as it has played a key role in improving her life and general well being. Combining functional and lifestyle fitness with wellness and self-care. Through her CIC, The Waite Room, Tracy offers help to members of the community that have a physical and/or mental difficulty and/or those feeling isolated, that prevents them from leading an active life.



Vanessa Gonzalez, I live in Baltimore, Md. Have 3 daughters. Love being in the woods and I am planning another 50k in October and hopefully a 50 miler by the end of the year.



Nick Wright, endurancelife Event Team - we organise epic trail running events in breathtaking locations.



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