

2006 Word from the Runners

1 from Ben Holmes

Myself (and my supporting family) had a great time at this year's PCT 50. You have a wonderful race and course. Here's my race report:

On the last weekend in July 2006, two of us Kansas City Area Trail Nerds decided to do a decently-hilly 50-miler in the Pacific NW: Patrick Perry and yours truly.

We both flew out separately and showed up on race day to run in the Douglas Fir and Hemlock forests of Oregon. Namely, we decided to run in the PCT 50/50 "Scott McQueeney Memorial" Trail Race near Mount Hood, Oregon. Wow, there were mountains out there! (And we got to run over more than a few). I had a good 50-mile race with a finish time of 10-hours, 30-minutes and change, which was good for a Male Masters 5th-place finish. Patrick cruised-in with a 10:39, after taking a wrong turn. All in all, we dun good!

The race had some dusty parts to it, and the dust affected my asthma somewhat. The views on the trail were spectacular; I'll have to take a camera on the run, next time. I reached the 25-mile turnaround point (at Timberline Lodge) in 5:10:00. During the race, I had one rough 1-hour segment of time, but other than that I felt okay. I really love technical trail, and this race was part groomed trail and part single-track technical trail, with NO ROAD running!

The aid stations were spaced perfectly on this course. They were staffed by helpful and dedicated volunteers. The food offerings were good, for the most part. I especially liked the Norwegian lefse at one aid station. It is now my new favorite "ultra food."

One fun adventure during the run:

Just 4 miles from the finish, I was held up by a herd of cows and a large bull. They had swam across a small body of water to get onto the trail. The cows finally moved off-trail by me yelling at them, but the bull stood his ground. A runner caught up to me and asked me, "what if the bull charges?" I said, "I'm not worried, because I know I can outrun you!" He didn't find it amusing. I picked up a large stick and started thwacking it on the ground. It broke with a loud snap and the bull snorted, then took off up the mountain (and off of the trail) with his herd of cows and calves in tow. I wasn't too upset for the delay. It only took about 3 minutes off of my finish time and it was comic relief,

so what the heck?

My 23-y.o. son and wife flew out with me. We also got to visit with my Nephew who lives in Portland, and is my son's age. All three were my support crew during the race. The three of us Boyz went to the Oregon Brewer's Festival and had a good time. The hard part was going to the festival on Thursday and Sunday, with a 50-mile race on Saturday. I let my liver recover on Friday, at least. It didn't seem to affect me and my race at all, but my Sunday "sampling" was negligible. I guess that after a 50-miler, I'm a lightweight when it comes to alcohol.

I find reasons to go to the Portland area often, so I know the area very well. I won't go into more detail; just let it be known that we had a real blast out there!

Here's my photo slideshow:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/65423964@N00/sets/72157594221550888/show/>

...and the photos:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/65423964@N00/sets/72157594221550888/>

Happy trails,

"Bad" Ben Holmes
Lenexa, Kansas (Kansas City Area)

KC Trail Nerd Sites:

Trailrunning website: <http://www.psychowyc.com>

Group site: <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/kctrailrunning/>

Trailrunning Blog: <http://kctrailnerds.blogspot.com/>

#2 Brian Hanson contacted me a week before the race to ask how feasible it would be to run an ultra after having run a number of shorter races, but none longer than 10 miles. I encouraged him because PCT 50km is a good one to get ones toes dusty on trails, since there is long support for the 50-mile event. Brian ran a 6:04 in his very first 50km. It is stories like this that make our day as RDs:

Monika,

I had a great time at the PCT Ultra.

I'm glad I took the advice and did the 50K instead of the 50 miler though.

I plan on being back faster and better next year.

Could not stick around for the awards because we had a BBQ 2 hours later we had to get to.

Suffered a few battle wounds.

Scuffs on the the ankles from the heels of the opposite shoe.

(lesson learned-tape the ankles)

Skin rubbed raw at hip bones.

(lesson learned-carry water bottle instead of wearing water belt)

Knees are a little sore/achy.

(lesson learned?- More training???)

>>>Re: Knees, how long should I wait to start running again?

>>> Is there a standard recoup time after a long run like this?

I do not think there is any injury to the knees.

the soreness is almost gone this morning.

>>>Can you tell me when the results will be posted on the web site?

#3 Jeff Wilson joined us from Shanghai while on a family vacation, and he even brought me a couple of Pudong Hash House Harrier shirts as souvenirs, knowing that I have a love for marking trails with flour and sharing a few beers after a run.

Thank you Jeff and I hope you liked our Sh!tty trail☺

#4 Jerry Duncan

Just a quick note to tell you both that the PCT was, as always, a great event! The race was very well organized, the weather was perfect (no heat!), the course was great (only fell down twice), and the aid stations had everything anyone could want (well, maybe with the exception of cold beer). What a great bunch of folks your volunteers are!! They were really helpful, cheerful, and always offered to fill my water bottle and help me with anything I needed.

Thanks for a great weekend adventure! Let's do it again next year!!!

Jerry

#5 I cannot remember the runner's name but he mentioned that Kate Merrill's foot massage at Timberline aid station made his day and he was eternally thankful for it. Thanks Kate; we hope to see you running the 50-miler again next year.

#6 Vicky Griffiths (63) ran the 50-mile event with Barb Macklow 72 in 13:56)

I hear Vicky held a national record in the 800M until just recently. Vicky and Barb are amazing women and role models for the likes of me.

I want to thank you and Bob and all the wonderful aid station people for the great race you held. The aid station people treated me like I was a celebrity! They would take the bottles out of my pack, fill them up and put them back, all along asking me if I wanted anything. Since Barb and I brought up the rear we were so surprised when we were asked if we wanted hamburgers at the end, and anything else we wanted. This race was a great experience and all the people so kind. Thank you for putting on the perfect race.

Vicki Griffiths

#7 Ken Briggs

Many thanks to you and Bob for all of your efforts. I am the President-Elect of the Bloomsday Road Runners Club here in Spokane; and I know how much goes into directing a race...especially an Ultra. You and the other volunteers made this a very special day for me. A first 50 miler is something one doesn't forget soon.

8 Michael Sweney

Since I live in Portland, I get the honors of filing the first race report of this year's PCT.

Three Penguins and one associate member (my niece, Jenny Krumper) showed up this year in the beautiful forests that adorn the crest of the Cascade Range. The deep sky blue waters of Timothy Lake are just a little north of the race start and the coolness of those waters framed the day: coolness, freshness, sparkling vivacity!

Ok, I will quit trying to be a poet. Karen M had prayed for cool weather, and given the results, I would like to ask Mossy now to pray that I win the Lotto!! The weather was all you could ask for. It felt more like an autumn day of those particularly clear cool and bright kind that we all love so well. Jenny and I had set our sights high: we wanted to go the 50 mile event, so we took an early start at 5:30am. This entailed leaving our little house on Water Street at 2:30am which we did. We were rewarded by driving through early morning low clouds and then getting a great parking spot opposite the race start.

I took our drop bags (as usual I had packed for a multi-week himalayan expedition) to the race start in the 4:30 darkness, talked with Bob Boss a little as he was setting things up, and then went back to the car to nap a little before the official start.

Jenny and I finally got our game faces on, locked up the car and went over to the race start where about 20 early starters gathered. Monica this year had the honors of briefing us our crucial pre race instructions: "Does everyone know what trail you will be on today? It is the Pacific Crest Trail! Do you know what trail you will use to get back here? It is the Pacific Crest Trail! What trail do you use if you come to a trail junction? The Pacific Crest Trail!"

Satisfied we all now had our marching orders and that the race management wouldn't have to call out the air national guard search

helicopters, she turned the start over to Bob, who did his usual ultra-low key, "well, I guess you're off" start. And away we went!

We run up a short distance of Hwy 42 and then turn into the woods with our lamps going on, cause it was still a little dark in there.

I led Jenny and it turned out that a small group of about 4 other runners drafted off us and we formed a small peleton for the first six miles. I set about an 11 minute pace of steady running (I knew there would be plenty of walking later) and we ran along Timothy Lake whose surface was covered with fog!

Got to see Fritz at Little Crater A.S. and he talked to me about making an encore appearance at the Autumn Leaves AS job this year. I temporized! Jenny and I alternated leads going out of Little Crater and for the rest of the race. We got to FS 58 aid station right on schedule but then slowed down to walk as the first big uphill of the day lengthened.

Once we got to the ridge trail, we started running again and were being passed by the fast runners of the regular start. No views this year of Mt Hood as the clouds still hung low, but we could see the valley below us and that was beautiful.

Running down to Hwy 26 A.S. was joyous as ever, knowing that the first hard part was over and the cold HEED there was tasty! Jenny and I had decided up on the ridge to chop our distance down to 50km, so we just went up the climb out of Wapanitia to the 50km turn around point that was manned this year and they were playing lively music {an explanation: when I passed that way in the 2003 50 miler race, there was nothing there but flour markings on the trail--the crew and music are a nice innovation (for me)} I have to admit a little wistfulness not continuing on up, but my timme was almost 40 minutes slower than that of 2003, so it was best to return!

So we bounded down the trail back to the aid station, laughing and joking about how we were super-elite ultra athletes returning from the 50 mile turn-around. And indeed, as we returned, the outgoing runners started to address us with "Awesome! Great Job!" remarks and we realized that given the start times, that to them we HAD to be 50 mile contestants already coming back, and at an insanely fast pace at

that!

So we started saying "we turned back early" to them (so they wouldn't get the wrong impression), and eventually took off our bibs!

Anyway, the journey back was slow with her uncle's slow pace so Jenny took off by herself at her own pace about 10 miles from the finish line and she set about an 8minute mile pace. In fact she kept up with some lead male racers for "a glorious two minutes" (Jenny's description). Although she had only 10 miles to do it in, she got to the finish line over an hour ahead of her uncle. Ah to be young again!

Jen-ster headed off at a fairly rapid clip and I continued on down the ridge doing what I usually do at this race when I find myself alone: praying for family, friends, and people in general.

Maybe in answer, after about 4 miles, who should appear heading up the trail but Deborah and Wendy! It was incredibly sweet to see them again after what seemed like years. 😊 Wendy is getting to be an old hand at this event. I think she has run it 4 years in a row now. We did a quick catch-up on things (while brushing off mosquitoes) and then parted. I promised to put my phone number on Deborah's windshield so we could get in touch after the race.

On to Little Crater! Which eventually appeared--as I was running still at this point--out of a fog of fatigue. A plate of brownies had appeared since the morning and I took no time in appropriating a couple of them. Yum!

Leaving LC, I knew from sad experience, the next 6 miles would be endless and so they were, but I did something this race I hadn't done before and that was to stop at various viewpoints along the lake and just gaze out over that beautiful sight. It brought back memories of my childhood and lakes in Minnesota and Wyoming I had seen then.

"Stop and smell the flowers" is genuinely good advice and I took it. Besides, my back was aching terribly, and it was good to stop and give it a rest.

Actually the break out of the forest and back on the 42 road came

sooner

than I expected and I ran down the highway feeling great that the end was in sight. The usual cheers and backward run at the finish line and my race was over! Jenny came up from the car where she had waved me in

and immediately started to helping her sore uncle get food etc.

We decided it would be neat to see Deborah and Wendy come back so we

pitched some chairs and cheered the runners in, all the while scarfing down cheeseburgers, chili, granola, watermelon, corn chips, fritos, and chocolate chip cookies. Have to re-fuel! The race organization puts on a tremendous feed! Alone, its worth the entry fee!

I am always, always, moved by the experience of cheering-in runners. I have only been running 4 years and the sight is still comparatively new to me, but it is tremendously inspiring to see people coming in across the finish line after so many miles of effort. Some run in with smiles, some with faces set in determination, some could jump over the line, one collapsed after crossing it. Some showed signs of having taken falls, but also showed something in their faces of the joy of the whole day. This is such an amazing sport....

After a while, I saw two figures running side by side down the highway and I turned to

Jane Updegrave who I was talking with and said "Thats them!"

and sure enough, Wendy and Deborah came up the final straightaway and across

the finish line to semi-hysterical applause (from me and Jenny) and "woooo-hooo's" They looked spiffy and chipper, and unlike your writer, were not covered

with dirt and grime! How do they go 50km and look so fresh!? This was Deborah's first ultra and I could tell she was hooked! We'll probably see her again...

Well congratulations were in order, and were duly made and it was so nice to see them. Far better than a phone number under a wiper blade!

So that's about it. I struggled home, fighting the tiredness that set in once I got behind the wheel. Jenny was very proud of her accomplishment (she kept repeating: "I can't believe I just did 31 miles") and I was happy to have seen everyone succeed and prosper on a

sweet bright day in the gentle cascades!

This race, for me, was about people. How our paths take us apart and back again; of temporary partings and permanent ones, and how very, very important friendship and family and community are. At this race I got to enjoy all three, my family: Jenny; my friends: Deborah and Wendy; and the gathered community of the day: the volunteers and trail runners, so many of whom I know from races past.

A good day, one for the memory book!

Michael

Final Word

I am glad not even the Canadians jumped into Little Crater this year☺
It is a huge pleasure to get to meet all of you even if it is just for a little bit.

Happy Trails to all and farewell until we meet again,

Monika and Bob