

Typical accounts of our odysseys over hill and dale revolve around time and place and personal accomplishment. Well I'll leave that up to race results, for I'd rather talk about a more human side of this event, one involving for lack of a better term "Ultra Friendships"

Rob (ole goat) Volkenand and I planned to tackle this apparently vague and awesome course as One - sharing the pacing, decision making and motivating together as much as is possible for individuals in such a sport as ours. The plan was good, and is the reason I appear in the results, but not all went so well!

Going into this event I was about as much of a weak link as there could be. Consider

- 1) We planned to leave Bend, Oregon 3-4 days early to scout out parts of the trail. When I arrived at Rob's home I was a total wreck with the worst toothache ever (with swollen lymph glands and the works) T.L.C. from Rob and Gail (not to mention medication) helped until Rob arranged for help from a friend (of course - a running dentist) On Labor Day he performed an emergency root canal, free of charge!!
- 2) With a long drive to Salt Lake City the next day, Rob literally pulls me out of bed (I didn't want to go) as the antibiotics had begun to make me extremely nauseous. He pushes me into the car and drives the whole way himself. When we get there I couldn't even help with setting up our tent.
- 3) At no time did Rob consider WE would not be at the starting line - I needed that.
- 4) Quitting the medication helped. Rob managed to drag me out to scout out parts of the trail. He runs, I walk and stumble around, but it helps bring me around.
- 5) We get caught in a heavy duty rain and hail storm and run into Fred Pilon of Ultrarunning. Learning of my condition, he offers me his hat and jacket (we had started out in sunshine) knowing I'd be slow back to the trailhead.
- 6) Fred also graciously shares his motel with us, offering much help with the trail based on his experiences of last year.
- 7) During the run itself, Rob and I were indeed one runner, except that he took on the pacing chores, totally (I was the caboose) He even carried a radio in the later dark hours just so we'd have some pleasant distraction. In a few places Rob would get to checkpoints before me, only to wait up!
- 8) We were on an easy 30 hour pace throughout, beautifully consistent and mostly on course. (A Side Note: Steve Baugh, the race director and all his helpers did an absolutely outstanding job. This is a Quality event)
- 9) In an unbelievably crazy section of the course known as Hardscrabble we were to follow up this creek making 19 crossings. I counted. We made 28!! Through the generous help of a local entrant, Brett Grandy we managed to stay wet footed and on course.
- 10) After we reached Catherine Pass, at 10,480' and mile 78 or so we descended into the ^{Ab}byss of Dry Fork Canyon. Here things fell apart for us, as we wandered up and down, over and about sheer dropoffs and loose boulders for about 2 hours. LOST. Having hoped to get to the American Fork checkpoint (82.5 mi) before dawn, we now saw the sun rising and we were still lost.

Help arrived, and promise of a way out was offered. Rob checked his watch (he doesn't DNF) I sat down demoralized and exhausted. I wanted to Quit. I had already quit mentally! As I sat there Rob and the guide took off. I was filled with mixed emotions. I was mad at the race, I was mad at myself - for having gotten lost and now having to face my own weakness (hard to swallow at the end of a 100 miler) And I was angry with Rob - for not succumbing to my depression, for being strong and still positive, for dismissing me so easily and taking off.

Joys and Sorrows
The Wasatch Front 100 Mile Endurance Run

Well hell, I got up reluctantly and followed. But this was no longer our careful even pacing. It was kamikaze, go for it, breakneck speed. I felt a perverse sense of impending doom. Either I would take a spectacular fall and be carried out in a body bag, or perhaps reach depletion many miles from the finish and wander aimlessly thereafter - or even make it to the finish line intact only to do 30 hours and 1 second. In a weird way I wanted to prove Rob wrong - we couldn't make it, I thought, we'll Die - you just wait and see, I thought.

American Fork at 82.5 miles and Rob strips off all the nighttime clothes leaving packs, food and maps. He was single minded to push for it all. In an attempt to add to the punishment I declared we must run the next 3 miles (all uphill) before the remaining 14 miles descent (all now dirt road) I'm now in a self destructive mood. I must admit something snapped inside me. I've never run that way before and I don't particularly like being that way. It made me an isolated individual, no longer US running the way I idealized this run to be. Eventually I find myself ahead somewhat, but I can hear Rob's water bottle sloshing behind. I know I'll see him on the downhill. I decide to push, push and push on down, all the while expecting disaster. Emotions of my previous sickness surface. Thoughts of other disappointing finishes this year haunt me while having to admit my frailty at having wanted to quit only a short while ago. And still the malevolent thought of proving Rob wrong, of thrashing myself for all I was worth, only to say I told you so. All of these are not very flattering self realizations to make.

Rob was indeed right! Even regardless of the time. You can give it your all. You can go for it if capable. (Perhaps more important in how one does it rather than the result) Well I did make it under 30 hours after all and there's the irony and the bittersweet of this run. Rob did not! There was only one turn on this road to go off course. The man who helped me get well, got me there, leaded me on - eventually wandered in - many miles over the planned 100 miles only to be officially DNF lost at 90 miles. We haven't talked much since the run, but I owe him everything. We should have been together.

Note:

Rene' sent me all the splits but I don't have room for them in here. Results were:

1 Robert Landis	22:04:18
2 Ben Dewell	22:50:47
3 Gary Cross	26:06:42
4 Charles Furgerson	26:27:00
5 Rene' Casteran	28:50:24
9 Laurie Stayton-Carter	32:02:05

41 Starters 21 Finishers