

Course Records Fall at Cool Wasatch 100

It was supposed to be the hottest running of the Wasatch Front Endurance Run's seven year history. Weatherman predicted clear skies with temperatures in the 90s. Fifty-seven participants were dreading oven conditions in Hardscrabble Canyon and on Bald Mountain.

But, as it turned out, the weathermen missed their forecast, and nobody was complaining. Saturday dawned cool and cloudy, which contributed to fast times from a stronger than usual field.

Dana Miller was back to defend his title after a summer of hard training. Rob Volkenand was also considered a threat after his second place finish in '85, but Miller's real concern came from Wasatch novice Chuck Jones. Two years earlier Chuck had asked about entering Wasatch but had not made it out. This year he made it, but with much updated credentials: a Western States win and a second at Leadville, both this past summer. He barely made it by the end of the pre-race meeting on Friday after a long 700-mile motorcycle ride from Nevada City, California.

For the women the favorite

was three-time winner Laurie Staton-Carter. She had trained hard and was bitten by the buckle-mania bug. Becky Nielsen and Cheryl Hart insisted they would be content to run their own pace and Karen Clement claimed she wasn't as fit as when she buckled at WS a few years ago.

Also present was Tom Green of Maryland, out to attempt the final leg of the Grand Slam of Ultrarunning. Tom had made it through Old Dominion and WS all right, but had suffered through Leadville with sore legs and was very concerned about surviving Wasatch. During the pre-race meeting his nervousness was evident as he avoided the Grand Slam trophy table. He was putting quite a bit of pressure on himself.

On race day Miller's mood was strictly business. Chuck Jones appeared to be more casual, but his relaxed manner was shortlived. Dana set a fast pace up the ridge toward Francis Peak in order to shake his competition early; he didn't want to share his valuable course knowledge over the first 35 miles. Miller's strategy didn't work as Jones stuck to him like a fly to flypaper. Bob Ashe also

went out with the leaders but dropped back in Hardscrabble because "the pace was too insane."

At Affleck Park Jones stopped to eat and change socks while Dana continued to Big Mountain. Miller's strategy worked this time as he gained a 10-minute lead and some much needed breathing room. By Lambs Canyon his lead had increased to 24 minutes. He was in and out of the checkpoint in less than two minutes and all appeared to be going well.

Millcreek Canyon turned out to be the turning point. Miller's lead had shortened to 11 minutes and his enthusiasm was beginning to fade. It was difficult for Dana to force a smile when he commented that "the race isn't fun any more." Even his crew, made up of students from a high school cross country team, could tell that their coach was starting to hate it. Chuck Jones's attitude at Millcreek was lighthearted and physically he appeared fresh. Some would say it was all a front to psych out Miller's crew who were standing by. Yet he joked with aid personnel and his relaxed manner exuded confidence as he ran off in pursuit of the leader.

Within six miles Jones overtook Miller, and he continued to run strongly, opening up a 34 minute lead. Dana had experienced a low point after being passed, but soon felt more relaxed as the pursuer. By American Fork Canyon he had cut the lead to 21



Veteran trail runners Odin Christensen (Nevada) and Karen Clement (Oregon) finished the tough Wasatch course. Also successful was Norman Klein (WS100 co-director), seeing what his race's competition is like.

minutes and spent less than a minute at the checkpoint.

Chuck retained his lead on the four-mile uphill stretch of road to Pole Line and he never let up. The only question in his mind was whether he could break 20 hours. He alternated easy running with six-minute per mile bursts on the downhills. But 20 hours was not to be, and Chuck was more than content with his course record 20:39.

Meanwhile the women's race had evolved into more of a contest than expected. Laurie Staton-Carter had a comfortable 20-minute lead over Becky Nielsen through Hard-scrabble, but that had diminished to only one minute by the time she reached Big Mountain. And Cheryl Hart was only 14 minutes behind the leaders in spite of her cautious pace in her first 100-miler.

Laurie and Becky stayed within a minute of each other to Lambs Canyon. There had never been a closer contest at Wasatch than this one. As in the men's race, Millcreek Canyon was a turning point. Nielsen moved ahead, opening up a 38-minute lead at Brighton. But this wasn't enough to dampen Laurie's spirits. With 5 miles to go only 10 minutes separated the two and Laurie, known for her strong finishes, put on a final surge. But Becky too put on a burst of speed, to finish 20 minutes ahead of Staton-Carter. Nielsen had knocked more than 3 hours off the course record! Staton-Carter's runnerup time of 29:20 earned her a belt buckle.

Fast times were the rule of the day. All four women broke the previous course record and Tom Green was pleased to have earned his Grand Slam. At the awards banquet five runners were ceremoniously inducted into the Royal Order of the Crimson Cheetah, an organization that honors runners who have officially broken 24 hours at Wasatch.

Steve Baugh

Red Fisher adds:

The steps came very slowly. A pace of 10 minute miles sent my pulse racing to 150 beats per minute. Apparently the elevation of 9,650 feet plus the previous 76 miles had combined to weaken me considerably. The frequent dizzy spells and fuzzy vision made staying on this Utah trail at night much more difficult. Two people appeared out of the darkness, at 3:05 a.m., and they evaluated my condition. After I stopped and took a wide stance against a small aspen to steady myself, I explained in slowed speech and slurred words how I was 9,650 feet above my hometown. The man then used several multi-syllabic words to describe altitude sickness and pulmonary edema. I used most of my concentration to focus on his face, trying to be polite and not pass out as



Top Wasatchers Becky Nielsen and Chuck Jones.

he talked. After more talk amid obvious concern for my safety, he and his girlfriend went down the hill. At that point, with 23 miles of Utah Rockies in front of me and in 40° cold and threatening rain, I left them to continue up towards Katharine Pass, elevation 10,480 feet. The race continued as I hammered up the trail, passing rocks and trees as if they were standing still.

Twenty-two hours into a 100-miler is a good time for reflection. How did we get here and why on earth did we enter? After four straight finishes at Western States, talk with other Wasatch veterans convinced me to try this Utah 100-miler. The race has a colorful and sobering history and a course description that can be summed up in a word: TOUGH. The race gains 23,510 feet and loses 22,770 feet as it takes runners on the spine of this range from near Ogden to the south. John Robinson and I had arrived early to preview some of the course, and we joked about getting our money back after getting sore necks from looking up at the course from 8,000 feet.

After gaining the summit I had several downhill miles. Clarity and confidence returned as I ran down into the Dry Fork Canyon checkpoint. I was serenaded by my crew with a surprisingly good vocal rendition of "Happy Trails to You" as they escorted me through a section of trail that was difficult to follow. After thrashing through weeds for a mile or two we came to a road. I think the road was built by helicopter-lifting a D-8 bulldozer up to 9500 feet, pointing it downhill, lowering the blade to the ground, and disconnecting the brakes. Running down

a hill this long and steep in the dark and after 24 hours of running is a particular pain that not many runners have experienced.

A mile later I was stumbling down Dry Fork Canyon when I saw a pair of flashlights coming from behind. One belonged to Mark Clement. Mark and I go way back. His were the first eyewitness accounts I had ever heard of the fearful 100-miler in California. My meeting him was the single most influential point in my six-year ultra career. We've trained and raced thousands of miles together and I've experienced his triumphs and disappointments more than any other runner. The two quick hugs he gave me in Dry Fork Canyon early that morning spoke volumes. After asking if I was okay he disappeared down that steep dirt road. Seeing Mark in such good shape and spirits as he raced down that hill towards the performance he had worked for and earned made it worth it for me to have run this far.

In the words of a veteran of the Wasatch 100, "The rewards gained are at a level with the effort, and the effort is extreme."

Wasatch Front 100 Mile Endurance Run

East Layton, Utah Sept. 6-7, 1986
23,510' climb, 22,770' descent

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Chuck Jones, 27, CA | 20:39:35! |
| 2. Dana Miller, 35 | 21:32:43 |
| 3. Odin Christensen, 38, NV | 23:19:53 |
| George Ricks, 35 | 23:19:53 |
| 5. Rob Volkenand, 55, OR | 23:50:52 |
| 6. Robert Ash, 31 | 26:16:34 |
| 7. Rolly Portelance, 43, ON | 26:24:23 |
| 8. Tom Green, 35, MD | 26:43:16 |
| 9. John Robinson, 20, OR | 26:55:40 |
| 10. Mark Clement, 46, OR | 27:20:04 |
| 11. William Nelsen, 43 | 27:20:45 |
| 12. Red Fisher, 33, OR | 28:03:06 |
| 13. Vince Pedroia, 40, CA | 28:14:36 |
| 14. Charles Allen, 36 | 28:23:25 |
| 15. Richard Randall, 42 | 28:29:41 |
| 16. Becky Nielsen, 38 | 29:00:15! |
| 17. Joseph Hayes, 37 | 29:12:01 |
| 18. Fred Denys, 40 | 29:15:06 |
| 19. Wellington Henderson, 54, CA | 29:18:13 |
| 20. Laurie Staton-Carter, 33 | 29:20:09 |
| 21. John Thompson, 32 | 29:55:51 |
| 22. O. R. Petersen, 49, CO | 30:47:05 |
| 23. Chris Campbell, 25 | 30:49:04 |
| 24. Jerry Blinn, 39, CA | 31:20:42 |
| 25. Cheryl Hart, 36 | 31:25:28 |
| 26. Reilly McDevitt, 45 | 31:47:13 |
| 27. Frank Hanson, 28, ID | 31:48:49 |
| 28. Karen Clement, 45, OR | 31:52:46 |
| 29. Paul Alsop, 44, CA | 32:23:07 |
| Norman Klein, 48, CA | 32:23:07 |
| 31. Fred Riemer, 38 | 33:37:29 |
| 32. Don Adolf, 49, IL | 33:48:08 |
| Mike Price, 36, GA | 33:48:08 |
| 34. Stanley Crane, 47 | 33:52:07 |
| 35. Pete Coffin, 41 | 35:19:47 |
| 36. Ken Lane, 43 | 35:32:15 |
| 37. Bob Pence, 45 | 35:45:31 |
| 57 starters | ! = course record |