

Seminoff, Superbly "Paced" by Spence, Takes Wasatch

by John Medinger

The day before the race, Race Director John Grobden told me, "In Utah, rocks are living creatures and, like all living creatures, propagate their species." This would seem to explain a lot. While there are long stretches of fairly clean trail, and while there are not easily forgotten spectacular vistas of the Front Range of the Wasatch Mountains, the enduring memory of the Wasatch trail is one of rocks.

The race itself has matured. A decade ago, the book on Wasatch was that it was a brutal course, with poor trail markings and marginal aid. If you didn't know the way, you were likely to get seriously lost. This is no longer the case—and hasn't been for some time—but the original perception still persists. I found the trail well marked and easy to follow (if not always easy to run) and the aid more than adequate. The volunteers were eager and wonderfully supportive. Reflective of the race organizers' down-home personalities, the event takes on a laid-back, friendly demeanor. Getting to the finish is the main thing; the actual competition and finishing times seem to be even less important here than at most other 100-milers.

That is not to say that the competition wasn't keen. In fact, winner Tim Seminoff's two-and-a-half minute margin of victory over Tim Spence was the closest Wasatch

Cindy Spence



Tim Seminoff at the 51-mile checkpoint, Lambs Canyon, weighs his options.

ever and one of the closest finishes in any 100-miler.

Leland Barker led the race for most of the first half until Curt Bates passed him after Alexander Springs (mile 44). Bates led until Upper Bigwater (mile 60) when Seminoff caught up to him. They ran together until Desolation Lake (mile 65) and then Seminoff pulled ahead.

Spence was an hour behind Seminoff at the Brighton checkpoint (mile 74) but had closed the gap to about six minutes by Cascade Springs (mile 93). After scaling the nasty little steep uphill called "The Wall" a mile later, Seminoff noticed Spence's flashlight behind and took off for all he was worth. Spence was able to continue to close the gap, but Seminoff was up to the challenge and held him off for the narrow victory. Both were clocked at sub-7-minute pace on the gradual descent into Brighton.

At the awards ceremony, Seminoff called Spence "possibly the best pacer ever," noting that every time he looked back he could see Spence's flashlight and, "it seemed to be getting closer and closer." For his part, Spence said that he did not realize how visible his flashlight would be to Seminoff and, if he had to do it all over again, he would have turned off his light.

Deborah Wagner waged her own personal battle with the 24-hour barrier for much of the race. In the end, as is so often the case here, the course won, but Deborah finished by a comfortable margin over Suzannah Clutz for her second Wasatch win.

As usual in events of this type, there were a lot more stories on the trail than merely who won the race. Perhaps the most amazing was that of Laura Vaughan, a four-time winner, and the only woman in the 17-year history of the race to have broken 24 hours. On July 2, Laura gave birth to her first child, a son named Wildon. All during her pregnancy Laura told anyone who would listen that she would run Wasatch. And so she did, finishing the race in 34:42—a time that reflected the need to breast-feed her baby at the checkpoints—less than 10 weeks after giving birth. She said she did it to let her son know that his mom was "one rad woman," a description that none of us present would dare disagree with.

Dana Miller was feted at the awards ceremony for finishing the race for the tenth time. Rick Gates and Rob Volkenand both notched their twelfth finishes.

King Jordan, Allan Kaplan and Jim Magill all completed the Grand Slam by finishing their fourth 100-miler of the season here. The Grand Slam was even more difficult than usual this year because Leadville and Wasatch were only two weeks apart, instead of the normal three. Rick Gillespie,

continuing his quest to run more 100s in a year than has ever been done before, notched his ninth 100-mile finish of 1996. Angeles Crest and Arkansas still await.

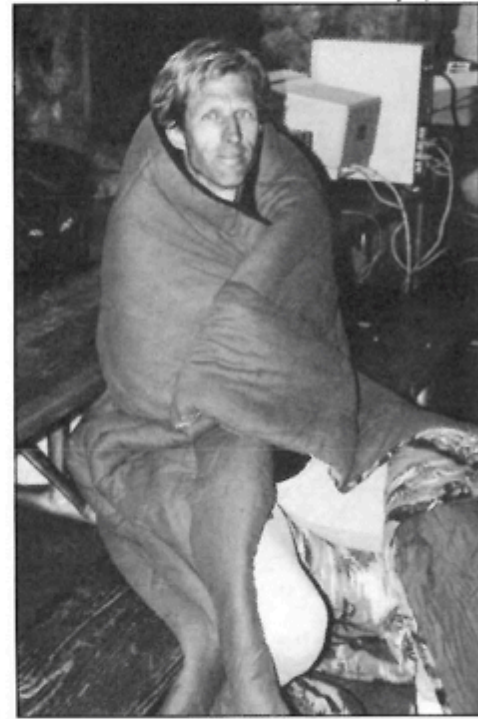
Wasatch is an event that has an exceedingly loyal following. Michael Ehrlich, who finished second overall at Leadville, and Leadville women's winner Martha Swatt both completed the course despite the short turnaround. Former winner Heikki Ingstrom had a rough day and took a long nap at Brighton, but still persevered to finish in a time that was almost 12 hours slower than his personal best on the course.

No less remarkable is the persistence of Nick Bassett. Five times he has attacked this course in a determined effort to break 24 hours and be received into the Exalted Order of the Crimson Cheetah. Five times he finished, but the course denied him the sub-24 hour finish he so coveted. This year was different. He ran intelligently, didn't fade in the nighttime hours and pushed through to break 24 hours by a comfortable margin.

Several indelible impressions remain. Running along the ridge tops after Sessions Lift-Off with a panorama of the Great Salt Lake on our right and the spectacular Emigration Canyon below on our left. The fiery red of the maples on the opposite slope, surrounded by aspens that were just starting to yellow. The serenity of the trail in the late evening at the aptly named Desolation Lake. The seemingly never-ending climb up Catherine's Pass in the middle of the night. The enormity of the natural amphitheater cascading down the hill after Pole Line Pass. A spectacular (second) sunrise with the soft morning light illuminating Mt. Timpanogos across the canyon.

But back to rocks. Course designer Irv Nielsen apparently likes 'em. Irv is given no

Cindy Spence



When all is said and run, Tim Spence ponders how he could have gone 2:34 faster.

title by the race organization except for "Prince of Rocks." At great effort and considerable expense, he has fashioned a new trail on the back side of Catherine's Pass that, somehow, is even rockier than the old one. Wasatch required that each runner perform eight hours of trail maintenance in order to run the race this year. We sort of figured that, with 1,200 hours of work on the trail, there shouldn't be any rocks anywhere. But then John Grobbsen informed us of the propagating nature of living rocks, and though it seems improbable, he must have been right.

Wasatch Front 100 Mile Endurance Run

East Layton, Utah
Mountainous trails
Sept. 7, 1996

1. Tim Seminoff,38	22:00:27
2. Tim Spence,40	22:03:02
3. Curt Bates,38	22:33:39
4. Leland Barker,38	22:44:06
5. Dana Miller, ID	23:24:17
6. Nick Bassett,51,WY	23:25:05
6. Mark Lisak,39,CO	23:25:05
8. Michael Tilden	23:45:52
9. Dean Karnazes,CA	24:41:57
10. Brandon Sybrowsky,25	24:58:28
11. Thomas Burke,30	25:34:07
12. Randy Isler,39,NM	25:46:25
13. Deborah Wagner,46	25:54:33

14. Phil Armstrong,37	26:38:52
15. Derek Blaylock,27	26:50:23
16. <u>Suzannah Clutz</u> ,30	26:50:30
17. Stephen Briley,31	26:51:13
18. Bob Henderson,50	26:53:18
19. Bruce Hoff,33,CA	27:08:39
20. Gordon Hardman,45,CO	27:09:38
21. Rick Gates,39	27:25:48
22. Troy Olson,33	27:26:33
23. Michael Mitchell,37	27:27:40
24. Dan Landry,44,NM	27:29:41
25. <u>Linda Lee</u> ,40,CA	27:42:45
26. Michael Ehrlich,33,CO	27:57:26
27. <u>Pamela Reed</u> ,35,AZ	28:02:22
28. Karl Meltzer,28	28:26:59
29. Mike Price,46	28:48:51
30. Robert Kloepper,34	28:57:12
John Ray,35	28:57:12
32. Chris Avery,33,AZ	29:10:18
33. Randy Stillman,46,OR	29:13:56
Frank Hanson,38,ID	29:13:56
35. Stephen Mitchell,40,CO	29:20:16
36. <u>Kellie Sheehan</u> ,33,CA	29:22:17
37. Rick May,48	29:22:31
38. Philip Lowry,30	29:28:08
39. Ted Heal,49	29:36:42
40. Craig Wilson,47,ME	29:40:00
41. <u>Jeanne Urioste</u> ,44,NV	29:46:58
42. <u>Jeri Simms-Masters</u> ,39	29:52:41
43. <u>Lise Sorenson</u> ,38	30:21:13
44. Chris Campbell,35	30:21:35
45. William Maples,32	30:29:59
46. Jeff Mailloux,36,ID	30:49:45
47. Klaus-Dieter Muttke,42,GER	30:53:38
48. Drew Somerfeldt,44,CAN	31:05:35
49. Michael Suter,49,CA	31:07:19
50. Kerry Collings,47	31:17:14
51. John Medinger,45,CA	31:35:06
52. King Jordan,53,DC	31:45:24

53. <u>Suzanne Williams</u> ,42,CA	31:49:37
54. James Barbera,32	32:11:12
55. John Diroll,39	32:17:38
56. <u>Chris Unrein</u> ,41,ID	32:24:38
57. Richard Gillespie,50,CA	32:28:47
58. <u>Tonya Mauldin</u> ,49,CA	32:31:35
59. Paul Alsop,54	32:32:52
60. Allan Kaplan,41,CA	32:34:16
61. Don Platt,45,CO	32:40:41
62. Jim Magill,49,CA	32:53:04
63. Fred Denys,50	33:01:58
64. Mike Byrnes,43	33:04:59
65. <u>Colleen Ford</u> ,34	33:09:15
66. James McGregor,53	33:13:21
66. <u>Cynthia Daniels</u> ,47	33:13:21
68. <u>Mary Workman</u> ,35	33:17:41
69. <u>Kim Olsen</u> ,42	33:18:41
70. Matthew Janney,41,OR	33:22:30
<u>Martha Swatt</u> ,44,WY	33:23:38
71. Wendell Robison,44,WY	33:23:38
73. Michael Thomas,34,CO	33:28:30
74. <u>Joan Risse</u> ,47,CA	33:38:57
75. Robert Solorio,49,CA	33:44:03
76. Michael Dunn,38	33:57:49
Hikki Ingstrom,38	33:57:49
78. Carson Black,55	34:32:43
Kerry Strauss,45	34:32:43
80. <u>Laura Vaughan</u> ,30,CA	34:42:01
81. Rob Volkenand,65,OR	34:42:42
82. Karl Ryser, Jr.,41	34:44:55
83. Paul Schmidt,44,CA	34:53:18
Marc Collman,39	34:53:18
85. <u>Laural Jean Staton</u> ,43	34:55:20
86. <u>Maria Lopez</u> ,30	34:57:42
87. <u>Holly Quintana</u> ,30	35:02:48
88. Todd Leigh,CA,54	35:04:31
89. Chuck Haraway,48,CO	35:13:53
90. Grizz Randall,52	35:16:21
91. <u>Nicol Vaterlaus</u> ,28	35:23:03
92. Fred Riemer,48	35:48:31

146 starters

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Who said it's all rocks, rocks, and more rocks at Wasatch? John Medinger and Rob Volkenand are joined by the core of the distaff Wasatch entrants prior to an aid station.



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Pacer Previews Wasatch, Concludes: "Be Prepared"

By Stan Jensen

It's 1:38 p.m. on Monday and I'm standing at the trail head of Purissima Creek Redwoods, getting ready to start an easy run of nine miles. It seems like an appropriate way to celebrate the fact that 24 hours ago I finished pacing my friend Joan Risse to her 33:38:57 finish at Wasatch Front, ending my 49-mile run with 24,700' of elevation change in just over 19:21. A couple of months ago Joan signed up for Kettle Moraine and I volunteered to be her pacer, but she wasn't able to go, so when she told me that she'd entered Wasatch, I naturally offered again to be her pacer. Little did I know what I was in for, but we'd run our first 100 miler, Angeles Crest, together last year and it seemed like the right thing to do, especially since I planned (note the past tense) on running Wasatch in '98. On Thursday I met up with Joan, Rick Gillespie, and his pacer Kathy Hamilton.

The race briefing is where I got my first taste of how different Wasatch is from other 100 mile races. It's very low-key and informal. R.D. John Grobbs declined to introduce the "celebrities," saying that all the runners were special. He said that runners could have more than one pacer at a time, but at remote aid stations like Desolation Lake "... only one of your pacers can be fed..." He ended the briefing with a drawing for prizes, including shoes and several products from Ultimate Direction.

Joan was a nervous wreck. The alarm went off at 4 a.m. Saturday and we reached the Fernwood Picnic Ground 30 minutes later. Runners were milling about in the dark and we wished Joan "good luck" and took a few flash pictures. At five the crowd surged up the hill to Chinscraper.

Kathy and I went back to the motel to leave Joan and Rick's luggage, since we'd all be there again on Sunday night. We then drove to the Big Mountain aid station (mile 36.3), arriving around 11 a.m. It was windy there and we left the shelter of the car for only a few minutes to check the chart showing all the runners' in/out times at the previous four aid stations. Without compromising the runners' safety, the Wasatch organizers really go out of their way to make things easier for the crews and pacers.

The lead runner came through just after noon and we could see runners approaching a few minutes before they came down the hill. Rick came through around 2:30 p.m., looking OK, and left soon thereafter. We were cheering John Medinger's arrival when I committed a cardinal sin: I missed seeing Joan arrive. Fortunately the aid station personnel took care of her and she was "discov-

ered" by us within a few minutes. I still feel bad about that, since I know how great it is to have your friends/crew call your name as you arrive. She had been pushing her pace (she was 23 minutes slower than the 30:00 pace), so we tried to get her to slow down and take it easy, but it didn't seem to sink in. She was somewhat disoriented, looked hot and tired, and I was worried how she'd be in another four hours. Off she went.

We left about 30 minutes later and drove the few miles to Lamb's Canyon, arriving around 4 p.m. We loafed around for an hour or so, watching runners come through, and helping out those we knew. Boy, is it hard waiting for your turn to actually run! Rick finally arrived around 6 o'clock. He looked wasted and said that he'd run out of water. Kathy filled his bottles and the two of them took off a few minutes later. A half hour later Joan arrived, bleeding from one of three falls she'd had so far. She, too, looked pretty well tuckered out, but it was almost 7 p.m. and she had run 51 miles. After a leg massage, a turkey and cheese sandwich and some first aid, we grabbed our warm clothes and flashlights and my part of the adventure began!

From Lamb's Canyon, the course runs under the freeway (Hwy. 80) and about two miles up a paved road, alongside a stream. Joan was feeling a little better, now that she had food, company, and was getting out of the heat. We started the climb up the trail to Bear Bottom Pass and then I saw that Joan was having trouble breathing. She needed to stop every few minutes, wheeze a bit, then start up again. I was concerned, but I knew she'd tell me if it was getting worse. The good news is that she kept drinking and stopped to pee at least every 30 minutes (I did too). We ran in the twilight under a crescent moon until just after 9 o'clock then switched on our lights to make sure we'd see the ribbons (there were always enough ribbons or glow sticks so that you'd be sure you were on track). As we went up the three-mile road to Big Water (mile 59.6), the temperature dropped noticeably. We reached the aid station around 10:15; I grabbed the drop bag and Joan went into the rest room to change into tights. Well, by the time she came out she was slightly hypothermic and so we wrapped her in a blanket and gave her Ramen soup and coffee until she was better. She'd warned me that the next section was very cold in '95 at Scotts Peak, so I had several layers on and carried some more with me. We'd spent 38 minutes there, but it was unavoidable.

From Big Water we climbed yet another hill and eventually reached Dog Lake, which she knew from a training run. Soon thereafter we crested a small rise and came

upon a heartwarming sight: a campfire! It was now 12:57 a.m. and we'd reached Desolation Lake (mile 65.1). I wish I could see that area in daylight, because it seemed like a great place to camp, fish and hike for a few days. We warmed ourselves by the fire, drank soup, and then reluctantly pushed on. As we climbed to the main Wasatch Range ridge (9,900'), we could look back down and see the campfire, a string of flashlights (like the scene in Butch Cassidy), and the lights of Salt Lake City to the west and Park City to the east. I felt like I was on top of the world. Stopping every few climbing minutes for an oxygen break, we continued to move along. It wasn't too cold or windy, and soon we left the single track trail and hit a jeep road. One more ridge and there was Scott's Peak (mile 69.3) with another friendly group of volunteers stuck in the middle of nowhere in the middle of a cold night. They were great!

We left in a few minutes and soon reached the paved road. About two miles of this brought us into "downtown" Brighton and then another uphill to the Brighton Lodge (mile 73.7). For the first time we were able to be indoors and avail ourselves of real plumbing! We saw lots of bodies curled in sleeping bags and it was a temptation to stay inside where it was warm and we could get driven back, but Joan popped back inside to ask, "Which way do we go?" It was a good thing we kept the extra clothes, because it was real cold climbing toward the summit. We finally made it to the top of Catherine's Pass (10,480') and at last

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Tim Spence puts the hurt on Brandon Sybrowsky; Brandon hung on for 10th.

had a downhill section to run, even if it was steep and rocky. We switched off our lights, loosened our jackets and soon reached the Ant Knolls (mile 78.5) at 7:04 a.m.

After a cup of coffee we went up another hilly section through aspens, enjoying the sunrise that allowed us to see scenery for the first time in over ten hours and feel the revival that always comes (briefly) when the night running ends. We saw a few trailers and shepherders, then came down a hill and reached Pole Line Pass (mile 82.0) at 8:30 a.m., just in time for breakfast, and it tasted great. We changed into shorts and T-shirts again and left the burden of flashlights, batteries and heavy clothes in our drop bags. It was great to be running "light" again.

I'd been warned that this "6-mile"

section would take forever and it did: 121 minutes! Part of it was the climb to the last real pass on the course, part was the frequent stops, and maybe we were just tired and slow, but when Joan reached the downhill section, she took off like a scared rabbit and I had trouble staying with her. We passed several people going downhill and I was sure she'd trip and fall, but although she dislodged part of the mountain, she managed to stay out of the dirt. We reached the bottom and ran into Mill Canyon (mile 87.8) at 10:50 a.m. She thought we weren't going to make the cut-offs and that's why she was pushing so hard, but I told her we had six hours to cover less than 13 miles, so she slowed down a little when we took off on the next stretch.

We had left the mountain country and now were on a stretch that she called The Maze, which consisted of a path through thigh-high weeds, marked only by ribbons. There wasn't even a deer trail, just a place where the weeds had been beaten down by the runners. In another mile or so, we reached the stream, waded through the ankle-deep cool water, then we turned left up the road. It was hot by then and the road was dusty. We staggered into Cascade Springs (mile 92.7) at 12:26 p.m., drank Coke, ate a melted chocolate bar, filled the bottles one last time and headed out.

We reached the top of the last hill and then jogged and walked down the dirt/gravel road, weaving in one canyon and out the other, wondering when it would end. Cars, jeeps and motorcycles kept going by in clouds of dust and Joan had to be told not to let them hit her (I think she was looking for any way to get a ride). At last we reached "civilization": a paved road again. We turned left and started the old "let's run to the next telephone pole" trick. A mile north, jog to the right, run a bit, left at the corner, run a bit more, turn right, etc. (I felt like I was a tourist as I read from my race booklet). We made it to Main Street, saw the church and turned the corner to run across the finish line to the cheers of the crowd! Joan was the 74th finisher and 17th woman in 33:38:57!

The rest was near-perfect. We washed up, drank sodas, had a massage, lay on the grass and watched and cheered the next 18 finishers who arrived in the remaining two hours. They had a great banquet, followed by a real nice awards ceremony (King Jordan got his Grand Slam trophy), then we grabbed our drop bags and took a shuttle to Lambs Canyon, where we rescued our rental car, which I drove back to the motel. We unpacked our drop bags, rinsed the water bottles and dropped into bed by 9, after being up for 40 hours! The next day I took Rick to the airport for an early flight, then Joan, Kathy and I took a brief Jacuzzi plunge (wish we'd done it the night before). I took the ladies to the airport for their flight (where they met another WF runner limping along curbside), then I turned in the rental car, caught my flight, retrieved my car and drove straight to the trail, because I had that uncontrollable urge to run on trails again.

Several people asked me, "What did you think?" and, "So, when are you going to enter?" My answer was, "I'm going to tear up my application and wait until I'm better prepared." I've managed to finish Angeles Crest and Western States on less training than I should have, but even the last 49 miles of Wasatch wore me out and I am deeply impressed by anyone who finishes it. I think Joan Risse is an amazing runner and I'm very happy that she let me be a part of her success. The Wasatch Front is an extremely well organized event and, if you're prepared, will be an adventure you'll always cherish. I recommend it and will be back as crew, pacer and (someday) runner.

LYNN JENNINGS

- on being ready

"When I was younger, the only thing on my mind was performing better than anyone else on the team. That is, every guy on the team. There was no girls' team back then, so it was just me and the boys. The competition was tough and coming in last all the time wasn't easy.

"What that experience did for me though, was make me prepare better than anyone else on the boys' team. That meant having the right shoes, the best mind-set and making a commitment to nutrition.

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