

Race Comments from 2008 Quicksilver Run

Thanks to all who helped Paul put on such a great race! Everything was superb in all respects (last two miles were charming)! As the Rd for the Rockledge Rumble and member of the North Texas Trail Runners (NTTR) come on down to the Rumble 50K at beautiful lake Grapevine (10 minutes from DFW airport) November 8. Not the great course you all have (few are) but we brew a mean Mud and Guts Red Ale and about five other types of Micros and the course is scenic and challenging. Go to www.nttr.org and click on the Rumble. We'll return your wonderful hospitality and camaraderie! Thanks again to you all.

Tom Crull

Paul,

Just wanted to write and say thanks for all the hard work you put into QS this year. This was your first year as RD, correct? Awesome job!

When I think of an ultra, that's what I envision...an excellently marked course, great aid (both in supplies and great volunteers!!!), and what a spread at the finish line!

I had no idea what was in store when I signed up for this bugger. Eric Poole (50K'er) and I arrived early for the Friday check-in from our drive from Ashland, OR and decided to make the best of it. We decided to stretch our legs on the first three mile loop of the course...we were surprised at the hills you folks have in your neck of the woods. It certainly gave us fodder for dinner conversation that evening. I was glad to find that as the run on Saturday progressed that not all the course was as steep as that first three miles.

Definitely a race worth returning to!

Thanks again.

Regards,

Ian Torrence

Date: Mon, 12 May 2008 13:16:20 -0700

From: Dave Combs <combs@POBOX.COM>

Subject: Quicksilver 50K report from the back (long and generally self-absorbed ;-)

Last year I ran the Quicksilver 50K for the first time in 14 years (my first ultra overall in nine years after cancer in 1999 and a bone-marrow transplant in 2000), had a good time, went VERY slowly, and finished last. This year I was just a bit better trained, though only a bit (having had a stress fracture for four months, then a couple bouts of the flu in the winter), but at the urging of a trainer I work with, decided I should do the race again anyway. I figured to finish near last again, though from discussions with various folks, it appeared there might be several of us back there.

Conditions at the 6:00 a.m. start were perfect--felt like low 50's, no wind, clear. The horde of us

(someone mentioned 300+ between the 50K and 50 mile, though it didn't look quite that big to me) took off, and I settled in close to the back. After rolling downhill for a mile or so, the first steep uphill of several hundred feet of climb stretched out the field, reducing most to a walk. It felt good to jog down the other side, back to near the start. Then the single-track started--about six miles of up and down and up and down and up and down (you get the idea). None of the hills was long, but going at the speed I was, many of the uphills were just as easily walked as run. I fell in behind John and Terry Rhodes, and we were joined a bit later by Million-Mile Ultra leader Barbara Elia, a week after her finish at Miwok. Last year I was passed just before the 6 mile aid station by the leaders of the 25K that started a while after we did. This year was better, not getting passed until 15 minutes after the same station. I came out of the woods and headed uphill on the fire road toward the first encounter with the folks at the Dam Overlook aid station (9.7 miles). Just as I hit the dirt road that is the last 1/4 mile to the station, I saw one of the leaders going downhill past the same point, already at 19+ miles, a little after 2:15 into the race.

At the aid station John and Terry and Barb had just left as I showed up, and here came Lisa Demoney (ex-AR50 RD) and Trail Patty (365 Uses of Duct Tape) Wellington. Pat was going to drop, but decided to stay out there when I said she could just keep going and maybe drop at the next station if she still didn't feel right. I ran with Lisa for a while before she pulled ahead for good, and Pat and I ended up at the Capehorn aid station (14.5) together. We got into a pattern of my passing her on the walking uphill sections, with her catching up and taking the lead while I took longer through the aid stations. I started having blister issues on the balls of both feet coming into the 19-mile aid station at the Dam Overlook, so Pat pulled ahead by 100 yards or so. The margin was the same when we returned to the station (now 23.7) to begin the 2+-mile climb back to the high-point of the course. I pulled ahead again (this was MUCH better than last year, where at this point I was basically toast), but started to feel a bit woozy coming into the last aid station at Englishtown (27 miles). Pat pulled ahead yet again, this time never to be seen again. Fiveminutes in the aid station to get rehydrated (no peeing all day was not a good sign) and I finally could take off on the 2-mile downhill. At this point the blisters were making downhills difficult even to jog, so lots of walking was involved. In contrast to last year, I knew the last 700' hill (with 7 or 8 false summits) was coming, but somehow I still couldn't deal with it. It was a slow walk up, with occasional stops. I got to what I thought was the final summit (there's a steep downhill for 200-300 yards following, that looks just like the real downhill to the finish), only to find that yet another hill awaited, and that I was a) out of energy to climb, b) out of water, c) out of the last of several GUs I'd been rationing all day, and d) WAY overheated and dizzy. I decided it might be good to sit for a minute (taking the pressure off the blisters on the feet was wonderful ;-), then when even that didn't work, to just lie down on the side of the trail for a bit. After a minute or two of this, here came Lee and Wini Jebian (friends I've known for close to 20 years), bringing up the rear of the 50K runners. Though I told them they should just go ahead, they decided to bring me in with them (THANK YOU BOTH!) Wini just happened to have a full bottle of water (at least until about five seconds after she gave it to me. ;-). After a little stumbling around, I got going again and we had an uneventful few minutes down the last hill to the finish. The race rules don't allow ties, so Lee and Wini made me get ahead of them crossing the line. It probably should have been the other way around, since I owe the last mile of the race entirely to them. While the overall time (9:15) was still lousy by reasonable standards, I was quite happy to have taken an hour and three minutes off last year's death march. I'd hoped during the day to break 9:00 (Trail Patty came in at 8:55), but the last hill and the blisters did me in. At least it gives me another couple hours I can try to take off for next year!

As always, the post-race feast was just awesome. There were grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, chips, steak or ribs, pie, various cakes, and best of all, strawberry shortcake and ice cream. I'm sure there was a ton of other stuff I didn't even see. There was beer, soda, various types of water, basically whatever you might want to eat or drink at a picnic. There were tables with awnings and chairs for everybody to sit around, get out of the sun a bit, and generally just eat, drink and be merry for a few hours. It's probably the best post-race event I've ever seen. And being right next to the finish line,

each runner was cheered as they came across the last 30 yards of trail and turned left to go through the finish chute.

All in all, a great day in the hills, and I really look forward to doing it again next year.

To RD Paul Fick and all the tremendous volunteers everywhere on the course and at the start/finish--THANK YOU! You made my day!

Cheers,
Dave

Thanks for a great race.

I ended up picking up the number on Friday and I had a great time on Saturday.

I'll run again next year!

Toshi Hosaka/保坂寿一
Corporate Planning Coordinator

CC: ULTRA@LISTSERV.DARTMOUTH.EDU

> From: runalong@mac.com

> Subject: Quicksilver 50M report

> Date: Sun, 11 May 2008 19:33:45 -0700

> To: chihpingfu@YAHOO.COM

>

> Every race ought to have a special something and the special
> something at the Quicksilver is the finish line spread. They even
> haul a full-size refrigerator freezer in to keep the ice cream and
> popsicles and other goodies cold. I wasn't much for eating when I
> finished so someone else can spell out the full menu for you, but the
> popsicles and strawberry shortcake (with whipping cream!) sure were
> tasty and the menu ran several pages.

>

> My daughter came down with me (we had been at my dad's home in San
> Diego and drove to Sacramento Friday, unloaded a bunch of dad's old
> furniture at my other daughter's second floor apartment, then drove
> 2.5 hours to SJ) and we slept in the Almaden Neighborhood Church
> (same denomination as I belong to) Friday night. Tried to sleep
> anyway. We got in late and folks started moving about and making
> noise around 4.

>

> We showed up at the start at 5:30, and Mikaela helped out with the
> start-finish area. I realized I hadn't really prepared much for this
> race; guess I sort of took it for granted after HURT and Diablo. I'd
> only been averaging about 25 miles a week since April 1 (plus Diablo)

> and didn't know anything about the course (I was thinking it was
> something like 6000' elevation gain, actually 8500). The prior
> years' finish times looked fairly fast (though a higher than average
> dnf rate) so it can't be too bad, right?

>

> I talked to Suzanna Bon (who would win the women's race in about
> 7:45) and Jim Winne and Rick Gaston (who would finish 10th) and a few
> others as we awaited the moment.

>

> I was going to start out at an 11mpm pace, but it felt a little fast
> and I wanted to be sure I could finish so I dropped back to 12. On
> the one single-track section I caught my foot on a root while running
> fast downhill and could have ended my race (and maybe my face!) right
> there but caught myself barely. As I continued I noticed that the
> temp was pleasant (but it was early) and the poison oak was lush and
> thick- I'll find out in a couple days if it got me.

>

> The first half of the course felt easy enough, the climbs weren't
> that tough and most of the course was on well-maintained fire roads
> and the views were consistently panoramic. I didn't start to feel
> any tiredness or stiffness until a little on the big climb at the
> middle of the race, noted I was on pace for a 9:44 finish, a little
> slower than I hoped but probably as good as I could expect on my
> meager training. But since I was at the top of the course, meaning
> more downhill than uphill ahead, and based on my thinking that there
> was only 6000' climbing I figured the second half must be pretty
> easy, so I thought I'd see if I could pick it up and go for a sub 9.
> Not much chance in my current shape, but there's only one way to find
> out.

>

> The "downhill" run to the start-finish at mile 31.5 was tougher than
> expected, steeper than what we'd seen previously, and with some very
> steep uphill sections thrown in for variety, but at the bottom I told
> my daughter I was feeling good, and I was. That lasted about a half
> mile further. Climbing back up I found myself slowing way down and
> by the time I got to the Wood Road section I was barely functional.
> This is an 8 mile out and back, 4 each way, the flattest segment of
> the course, and going out all I could do was 15 minute miles. Though
> the uphill sections were only a very slight grade, my leg muscles had
> seemingly reached the point of muscle failure and my overall energy
> was near-zilch. Too little training, not enough sleep for a couple
> days, and I seemed to have outrun my ability for the day. A section
> that should have taken 45 minutes took a full hour. I'd been going
> slow, now I was glacial. At this rate even a sub-10 was now a pipe
> dream.

>

> And it was getting hot. One of the veteran aid station captains said
> this was the first year she'd been hot, rather than chilly. As the
> old song says, "Summertime... and the stomach gets queasy". I hear
> there were a lot of drops. At the Wood Road turnaround I let myself
> fly down the hill (I can do downhills with no energy and both legs
> tied behind my back) and to my surprise the downhill kept going and
> going and going. And when I got to the uphills and flats I found my

- > energy was back. I did the last 8.5 miles (about 6 downhill and 2.5
- > uphill) in 85 minutes. I know about highs and lows that comes and
- > goes, but this was probably my best resurrection ever in a race. I
- > finished in 9:33 and even took third in my age group ("geezers"), an
- > achievement that only occurs quadrennially or so.
- >
- > A most excellent event, I wish it wasn't so far away! Results should
- > be up on the Quicksilver site tonight or tomorrow, but Graham Cooper
- > shaved a few more minutes off his old course record. I think he does
- > that every year.
- >
- > gotta run,
- > mark
- > <http://ultrapastor.blogspot.com>
- >

Mr. Fick,

I just wanted to give you a quick thank you for an excellently managed race. Your event was only my second ultra and I enjoyed every minute. The course was challenging and scenic, the volunteers were supportive, the aid stations were well stocked, and the post-race BBQ was a hit. Someday I will come back and try out the 50 mile.

Thanks again,

Nate Bowen (2nd place in the 50k)

Paul and team,

Paul, I just wanted to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the superb event that you and your great team of volunteers did on Saturday. It has been four years since I did the race and it was a great experience from all aspects – but mostly from the great support from the volunteers. I also fully realize that there is a vast amount of volunteer effort that goes into putting on such an event, prior to race day, and for that too I am deeply indebted. Thanks again Paul for taking on the major role of Race Director and pulling it together for all.

It was particularly great to see so many folks helping out, that I had not seen before. Magnus on the burgers for eight hours after running the 25K, Niklas, Tony and Marcie, Keith and his son, Laura, Sarah, Karen, Donna's friend, Sheila, etc... Guys this is so great, and I don't mean to leave anyone out, and if I have, forgive me as there are just too many to mention by name. Some of the volunteers have not run Quicksilver in the past, but there is always the future, and I believe everyone can do an event – if they want to, as you have heard me say many times.

In my mind this is an event for the runners, and it was great to see many "acts of kindness" on the course that perhaps some of the volunteers would not see. I was given "Tums" by another runner to help hold things in place as I was getting a little "unsettled" at one time heading up to English Camp in the heat, and he was in the same age group (thanks Tom K!). I heard that two of our volunteers, went some distance to help a runner who was de-hydrated and give a water bottle (Thanks Laura and Sarah). I caught up with this runner later and gave him half a bottle on Woods Road . That runner finished and asked me to pass on his gratitude to all who helped him – he will be back, you made a difference in his life. Runners fell, people stopped and made sure they where OK before proceeding or informed the next aid station. There were lots of words of encouragement, from volunteers. and other runners. This is what makes these events so special to me – and again thanks to all. It could not be done without your support.

We are all different in many ways, we are all pulled in so many directions with life, but we all get something positive out of such an event, whether it is running; volunteering to see what it is like with perhaps an eye to doing it in the future or giving back to something that you enjoy so that others may have the same experiences etc...

Sincerely, and thanks for the great memories.

Jim Magill

Paul,

I meant to search you out after the race to congratulate you on your first year as RD but after the race I was very distracted and in a stupor. I almost put chocolate cake on my burger when what I wanted was pasta salad. The finish was a blur but I remembered every part of that course, racing from AS to AS. This was my second year, better than the last and I hope to have an even better year next year. Thanks.

Rick Gaston

I would also like to say a great big "Thank you!" to all the volunteers out there yesterday.

You made it a great experience for all us runners, during the race and at the BBQ after.

Thank you again!

mike mahon

Yesterday, I had honor and pleasure to join the record number and the depth of runners (300+) for my fifth time at Quicksilver race (1 x 50K + 4 x 50M). I took

some photo along the run. Feel Free to check

<http://picasaweb.google.com/ultrailrunner/080510Quicksilver25K50K50M>

Thanks Paul Fick for your wonderful job as the first year Quicksilver RD, and, of course, all volunteer to make this flawless event. Every aid station is like our home with heartfelt assistance. The chef and kitchen at the finish produced the best food with great service. I always complimented the Quicksilver Burger (TM), but we even had strawberry ice cream dessert this year. I just can not find any words in my limited vocabulary better than "perfect".

Sorry for my bad memory, but by keep coming back Quicksilver every year, I promise I'll call out everyone's name besides "Thank you", which I did not think enough to show my appreciation!

Chihping Fu
Ultrarunning Family Man
<http://ultrafamilyman.blogspot.com>

My sentiments exactly ;-) It was nice to be in such august company for it (at least four other faster runners who did the same).

On 5/11/08 2:47 PM, "Sean Lang" <slangjudoka@gmail.com> wrote:

I share the same sentiments as Rajeev. The only issue that I had was that the finish line BBQ was so inviting that it made me switch my distance from 50 mile to 50k :) Again, it was a great race and thanks for all of your efforts.

Sean

On Sun, May 11, 2008 at 2:06 PM, Rajeev Patel <rajeevtherunner@yahoo.com> wrote:

Folks,

I guess I received this e-mail because I joined the Yahoo group this morning. I am not going to let this opportunity go waste!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for a fantastic race yesterday. It is YOU volunteers who make the race happen. Your work starts before the race and continues hours and days after it ends.

It was so much fun to run/walk into an aid station and see your smiling faces and ever helpful hands. You all truly made a hot, hot day very bearable.

Until next year.

Regards.
Rajeev

I share the same sentiments as Rajeev. The only issue that I had was that the finish line BBQ was so inviting that it made me switch my distance from 50 mile to 50k :) Again, it was a great race and thanks for all of your efforts.

Sean

Paul,

Thank you for a superb race. Quicksilver has a special place in my heart. The QS50K was my first ultra 3 years ago and I have run the race every year since. I DNFed 2 years ago (stopped at the 50K point) in the 2006 QS50M. My stuff is not urgent. Take your time. Please thank all the volunteers on my behalf. They were simply superb. Smiles on every face I saw!!

Regards.
Rajeev

Hi Mark,

Thanks for all the work you put into Quicksilver, and what an honor that you gave me bib #1 (!). If Florencia hadn't of shown up, I mighta earned it. I've just read a couple of blogs and see that there were birthdays in the 50mile and 25k as well, but I'm not so sure that they got as lovely a treatment as myself! The striders were really good to me, too.

Well, Cristina the French woman, due to turn 50 on Tuesday, gave me a run for my money! She got ahead of me after Capehorn, as did 2 other women that I decided not to care about because they had on black numbers. Yet I remained slightly frustrated for much of the race, having only caught one of them before Dam overlook #2, and she passed me again at Dam #3. So I don't know how I did it, because usually those hills at the end kill me, but I turned it up after Englishcamp and passed the 3 women (good thing, one was just posing as a 50 miler) and I passed approximately 5 men. It was excellent! That was probably the funnest race of my life yesterday, now that I think about it. I kept thinking, even when I was behind, that I felt good, and that if I could beat 5 1/2 hours, it would be a great accomplishment, making it a post-40 50k PR.

So, Mark, thank you, I've always loved Quicksilver, but now I love it even more. By the way, the plaques are nicer now. Too bad I have to wait 5-6 years each time for QS to fall on my birthday, but that will give me more chances to help out by participating in the Striders' AS on some of the other years. If getting Saturdays off wasn't at such a premium in my field, I'd have been there even more in the past. Here's to hoping for many more great days for the Quicksilver Races!

Your friend,
Lina

Thanks for a fantastic race! Perfectly organized, a great (and challenging) course and a wonderful day overall.
Thanks!
Matt Foehr