

Kurt Madden Reaches 200 Miles at Kansas 48-Hour

by Eric Steele (R.D.)

On Friday morning, I awoke to a misty morning and a forecast for heat, humidity, and showers all weekend long. The previous two days of race preparation had left me somewhat bungee-headed, to say the least, and I had to keep reminding myself that the Kansas UltraRunners' Society's second opportunity to perform was only a few hours away. As David Horton stated in the December '95 issue of *Ultrarunning*, "Regardless of how many months/weeks in advance you prepare, there always seems to be a million things that have to be done on race weekend." I certainly agree with Dave, especially considering our event was lasting the entire weekend!

My primary concern was if the seven dedicated volunteers (Randy "Elfman" Albrecht, Warren "Purple Flirp" Bushey, Rhonda Czechowski, Scott "Obi-Run-More-Kanobi" Demaree, Chad "Wicki" Flint, Marc "Virtual Boy" Friesen, Eric "Pup" Sharpe) and myself — all of whom were committed to the entire weekend, literally — could last the entire 48–52 hours without opening fire verbally or emotionally on each other. To rest this issue right now, I can only state: I was dumbfounded beyond my wildest imagination by the synergistic bonding of human spirit and soulful community formed by everyone participating in this event — volunteers, competitors, family, and friends — not to mention the empathetic, yet raucous, cheering section that embodied Camp Hiawatha's south side, from setup of the event to complete breakdown.

Our event was originally scheduled to be held on a 0.75-mile asphalt loop in a city park. However, due to an exorbitant amount of money the city was attempting to charge our nonprofit organization for use of the park facilities (of which we were not informed until the end of March), we began searching elsewhere, trusting in the "UltraForce." Within a couple of weeks, full deliverance of our predicament had been realized through the grace of The Salvation Army, which offered us use of Camp Hiawatha for a very nominal fee. A 0.5-mile asphalt loop around the camp was certified by Scott Demaree and normal race preparations continued.

Excluding the six speed bumps on the course, Camp Hiawatha is a wonderful place to hold a multi-day ultra, because runners can rent cabins at a reasonable rate right on the property, or set up a camper/tent if they do not wish to use the heated and air-conditioned bunkhouse. Additionally, the commercially equipped mess hall and dining

area had chefs, Purple Flirp and Pup, floating on "Cloud Dine" for most of the weekend. Hot spaghetti and meat sauce, Midwestern style chili, turkey/ham/chicken and cheese sandwiches, hot coffee/chocolate/bouillon/tea were available at all times from the "A" rated "Stone Soup Kitchen." Including all the additional stuff outside at the aid station, 24-hour competitor Robert Shimmel from Grosse Ile, Michigan, remarked that he loved the price of our 24-hour, all-you-can-eat buffet, and that the ultra itself was merely a secondary benefit!

Friday afternoon the humidity was at 90 percent and the temperature in the low 80s. As many Kansans know, this time of the year in Wichita can bring everything from vicious heat and humidity to torrential downpours and golf-ball-sized hail. This is, of course, assuming one makes it past the frequent 20–30 mph gusty winds and constant chance of tornadoes. Over the course of the weekend we witnessed virtually all types of weather, excluding tornadoes but including a Midwestern-style "hurricane" that blew through around 6:50 a.m. on Sunday morning.

Eight competitors from six different states and Canada toed the line as we started the inaugural 48-hour event at 8 p.m. sharp on Friday evening. Simon and Garfunkel pumped through the stereo system immediately after the runners took off, this being the first of many full-length rock 'n' roll/folk song CDs to be played over the course of our event. Glen Turner from Boulder, Colorado, jumped out to an early half-mile lead, closely trailed by Kurt Madden from El Cajon, California. A little past the 40-mile mark (approximately 6½ hours into the race) Kurt passed Glen and went up by a mile. The temperature and humidity finally began to drop some, and a much needed cool breeze caressed the competitors in the final hours of darkness the first night. By the 12-hour mark Kurt had opened up over a five-mile lead on Glen and was just shy of completing 71 miles. Meanwhile, an interesting dual for the third position was starting to surface

between Al Kroeger from Woodland Park, Colorado, and Bob Risser from Cameron, Missouri.

By late Saturday morning, a little under 15 hours into the event, the temperature (low 80s) and humidity (80%) began to take its toll on the runners once again. The closest match was for fifth place as Robert Horner from Atlanta, Texas, Barbara McLeod from Ontario, Canada, and Bennie Linkhart from Tucson, Arizona, were all within two miles of each other with Robert holding the lead (at 56 miles) by a half mile over Barbara. Bennie, however, was on an extended break and unfortunately would never return, due to sciatic nerve problems. He finished with 54 miles.

At the 24-hour mark, Kurt had increased his lead over Glen to 13.5 miles and had accumulated 123.5 miles. Bob had increased his lead over Al to 3.5 miles, accumulating 86.5 miles. Meanwhile, Barbara had passed Robert a little before the 16-hour mark and had since chalked up a two-mile lead, accumulating 79 miles.

Sixteen more competitors from five different states toed the line as we started the 24-hour event at 8 p.m. sharp on Saturday evening. The overall heat index was still high and the Conquest and water flowed like Niagara Falls as we went through nearly ten gallons of each in the next eight hours. In

Eric Steele



It's really over — Kurt Madden after reaching 200 miles.

the early stages of the race, Ric Lind from Chanute, Kansas, and Phil Sheridan from Ellsworth, Kansas, raced around the half-mile loop as if running a marathon. David Dinkel from Olathe, Kansas, and Rex Friend from Oklahoma City were hanging close.

By the six-hour mark, the women's field had a very interesting battle starting to shape up. Marilyn Lamm from Wichita held a two-mile lead over Donna Daus from Glenwood Springs, Colorado, and had accumulated a little over 32 miles. Lisa Allen from Parker, Colorado, (after taking a nasty fall or two on one of those damn speed bumps several hours earlier) continued chalking miles and hit 29 just shy of the six-hour mark.

Meanwhile, the Oklahoma trio consisting of Scott Castle from Altus, Earl Blewett from Stillwater and our friend Rex were all within a mile of each other with Scott and Rex at 33 miles and Earl trailing by a mile. Scott quickly went up, however, as Earl and Rex both opted for extended breaks. Meanwhile, Phil had continued skipping around the loop and had piled up 41 miles in a little over six hours.

The high humidity continued through the night until a little before 7 a.m. on Sunday morning (nearly 11 hours into the 24-hour event and 35 into the 48-hour) when the slight cool breeze we were experiencing out of the southeast suddenly changed to a vicious cold northwestern gale. At this moment ultravolunteer Wicki exclaimed: "We better batten down the hatches, we are about to get hit!" Purple Flirp and I (in a state of altered consciousness due to sleep deprivation) merely laughed and told Wicki to quit panicking. Don't toy with Mother Nature! It only took one more serious gust of wind and one glance into the sky at the low overhanging billowy clouds (so common with tornadoes in Kansas) to send me and several other volunteers running for rain gear and scrambling to get precious lapcounting sheets inside.

In a matter of 120 seconds (yes, 120 seconds) torrential rainfall was coming in at a horizontal angle. Tents, awnings, munchies, cups and the Lord only knows what else (including one lap counting sheet) were flying through the campground. The weather report later claimed that gusts of 40-60 mph blew through. I think they possibly underestimated. Anyway, welcome to Kansas, baby! The most comical moment in the very heart of the mini-hurricane was Wicki shouting: "There goes 100 bucks flying across the field!" as we briefly watched his dome tent go airborne immediately after his sister and three kids came bailing out in a "you-just-woke-me-up-what-in-the-hell-is-going-on-here" stupor. One 48-hour competitor, I believe Al Kroeger, who was on the course when the "mini-cane" hit, later told us how he hugged a tree and held on for dear life when the storm hit.

Most impressive was the quick recovery of all ultravolunteers. Within 20 minutes, nearly all rubble (broken tent poles,



Just like the runners, the volunteers had to keep going for 48 hours.

ripped awnings, munchies, cups, soaking wet running gear of all varieties) had been picked up. The aid station was restocked, including hot chicken bouillon and all stations/posts were covered. "Now if only we can find the one lapcounting sheet we are missing," Elfman exclaimed to me. A chill ran up my spine, as I knew finding a single lapcounting sheet out in the field and woods somewhere would truly be "a needle in the haystack" venture. What were we going to do, estimate laps? I think not! Elfman wandered out into the woods in search of the missing sheet, no doubt conjuring up some "elfin magic" all the while, as I began praying to Jesus & the Saints, Buddha, Muhammad, Buckwheat and any other spiritual guru my mind could recall.

I wandered a few hundred feet further north of Elfman and my prayers were answered, for there, lying wadded up in the grass (several hundred feet from the lapcounting table) was the lapcounting sheet. Luck, hell no! Deliverance, you bet! Chalk another one up for the faithful! Thankfully, we had been using pencil to record laps, so even though the sheet was thoroughly soaked, the numbers were still easily readable and Elfman quickly transcribed the figures over to a dry sheet. A few minutes later (after sleeping through the entire adventure), Obi-Run came out of the bunkhouse rubbing his eyes in disbelief, and later stated what was going through his mind at the time: "I wondered why you guys and everybody else had taken their tents/awnings down so early in the morning."

The grace under pressure and quick action demonstrated by all volunteers had the entire emergency wrapped up in less than an hour and the ultra moved on, everyone involved strengthened by the experience. With the "mini-cane" came a drop in temperature and humidity. Indeed, the

weather during the last twelve hours of the race(s) turned out to be the coolest (cloudy, low 50s and breezy) we had all weekend.

By 8 a.m., with only 12 hours to go in both events, 48-hour leader, Kurt Madden, had completed 153 miles and had a 12-mile lead on Glen Turner. Al Kroeger had put up nearly a 15-mile lead on Bob Risser through the night and had accumulated 111.5 miles. Barbara McLeod was just shy of 100 miles with 98.5 and Robert Horner (our oldest competitor in the 48-hour at 63) had piled up 77.5.

Meanwhile, back on the 24-hour ranch, speedster Phil Sheridan had jammed up 60 miles in 9:26 and decided he was done. This was Phil's second ultra and his goal was sixty miles, which he accomplished in a very impressive time. Look for Phil to do some serious damage in future 100-km road ultras. Marilyn Lamm was in the overall lead of those still going at the 12-hour mark, having chalked up 57 miles with Rex Friend holding the second position, 2.5 miles behind. Scott Castle occupied the third position with 52 miles. Donna Daus and Lisa Allen both hit the 50-mile mark in a little over 12 hours.

By 2 p.m., with six hours to go in both events, 48-hour leader Kurt Madden had broken the U.S. 48-hour 40-44 age division record of 172 miles. Kurt reached 176 miles in a little under 42 hours and kept on chugging, mumbling something about hula girls and hot tubs.

In the 24-hour event Scott Castle had long since passed Marilyn Lamm and posted up nearly a nine-mile lead, reaching 81 miles in 17:59. Marilyn was currently treating all spectators to a lesson in "true ultra grit" as she had slowed considerably over the past several hours, but refused to leave the course. Rex Friend had accumulated 77.5 miles in 17:52 and then opted for an hour nap.

The last half hour found the rock group Boston's "Boston" CD cranking at MD (maximum decibels) and lapcounters shouting mileage totals back to the runners. More than one spectator commented on how the runners' steps would pick up just a slight bit when they approached the lapcounting/cheering section, especially in the last 30 minutes of the race.

Encouraged/cheered runners equal ultra accomplishments, as 48-hour leader, Kurt Madden, went on to smash the U.S. 40-44 age division record by 28 miles, hitting the 200-mile mark in 47:49, thus earning the KUS Hiawatha Achievement Award (200 miles in 48 hours). Glen Turner showed incredible fortitude as he hung in there to finish 187 miles in 47:57, thus earning the KUS Atchison Achievement Award (300 kilometers in 48 hours). Barbara McLeod chewed up asphalt nearly until the end, racking up 137.5 miles in 47:28 to finish fourth overall and women's champion.

In the 24-hour event, Scott Castle maintained his lead and finished 103 miles in 23:38; not far behind was Rex Friend, who dug deep into his "endurance-well" and found he had the strength to finish 100 miles in 23:57. Both earned the KUS Abilene Achievement Award (100 miles in 24 hours). Marilyn Lamm was the top woman with 84.5 miles.

Special thanks to all KUS volunteers and/or members (full and part-time). Sincere thanks to all of our competitors for giving our organization another opportunity to demonstrate ultra "KUSomer Care," served up fresh from America's Heartland! Additionally, the moral support and good humor of the spectators (primarily friends and family of the competitors) deserves deep thanks, as it is many times the unseen spiritual glue that holds everyone together in events of this duration.

Footnote: We feel that performance awards recognizing the achievement of specific distances in each of our time events will offer extra incentive for runners to hang in there. Even if winning the race is beyond the reach of many of our competitors, they will still receive special attention for achieving certain milestones. We picked two such goals for the 24 hour: 100 miles and 200

kilometers. For the 48 hour we chose 150 miles, 300 kilometers, and 200 miles. Since these distances are often difficult to visualize, we named them after cities and towns in Kansas that the runner could reach on foot by running these distances starting here in Wichita. The Abilene Award, for example, is presented to all runners who reach 100 miles in 24 hours, which is the approximate road mileage needed to reach Abilene from Wichita. Our list of performance awards follows: Abilene (100 miles), Topeka (200 kilometers), Dodge City (150 miles), Atchison (300 kilometers), and Hiawatha (200 miles).

Scott Demaree adds:

This was to be my return to 48-hour competition after nearly a seven-year absence. However, two weeks before the race I encountered the most feared symptom of overtraining: I caught a cold that lingered much longer than normal. Consequently, I had to withdraw three days before the event, bitterly disappointed.

Sometimes what seems like disaster turns out to have some positive aspects. In this case, being unable to compete allowed me to experience this type of race from a completely new perspective. This was the first race longer than 12 hours I had helped with, and I really enjoyed it, despite finishing the weekend in extreme sleep deprivation! It's easy to see how the ultrarunners among the volunteers can empathize with the competitors; after all, we've all gone through this kind of suffering before. But many of the race workers here don't even run, much less run ultras. Yet they empathize just as strongly.

Empathy leads to enthusiasm, which then feeds back to benefit the runners. I think this is the key to putting on high-quality ultras that people will keep coming back to. Certainly, empathy and enthusiasm will never be found lacking at any KUS event. So come and get it, all you 24- and 48-hour competitors. We're here to stay. You won't find a better organized race anywhere with such a focus on the runner having a positive experience. And our location makes us a natural crossroads for runners to test themselves against the best from many regions.

With so few 48-hour events available, this may be the closest we'll get to a national championship. We are planning several improvements to next year's race. It will be scheduled for late April or early May.

Kansas UltraRunners' Society 24 & 48 Hour

Wichita, Kan.

May 3-5, 1996

0.5-mile loop, paved, flat

48 hours (with 24-hr splits)

1. Kurt Madden, 40, CA (123.5)	200.0 mi
2. Glen Turner, 36, CO (110)	187.0
3. Bob Risser, 55, MO (86.5)	137.5
4. Barbara McLeod, 58, CAN (79)	127.5
5. Al Kroeger, 36, CO (83)	126.0
6. Robert Horner, 63, TX (77)	114.0
7. Bennie Linkhart, 65, AZ (49.5)	54.0
8. Craig McIlvain, 46 (43.5)	50.0

24 hours

1. Scott Castle, 41, OK	103.0
2. Rex Friend, 41, OK	100.0
3. Marilyn Lamm, 41	84.5
4. Donna Daus, 35, CO	80.0
5. David Dinkel, 47	76.5
6. Robert Shimmel, 66, MI	75.0
7. Dennis Haig, 36	70.0
8. Phil Sheridan, 39	60.0
9. Randy Smith, 32	54.0
10. Lisa Allen, 32, CO	53.5
11. Ross Waltzer, 74, OK	52.5
12. Sara Risser, 55, MO	50.0
13. Ric Lind, 33	50.0
14. Earl Blewett, 31, OK	40.0
15. David Giger, 35, IL	35.0
16. Angela Redfern, 19	31.1

Topsfield 6 Hour Run

Topsfield, Mass.

May 12, 1996

0.5-mile loop, flat, mostly grass

1. Bob Carosso	47.00 miles !
2. Rob Martin	42.00
3. Gary Freedman	40.50
4. Mike Olivera	34.00
John Horvath	34.00
6. Richard Busa	33.00
Jean Gerstein	33.00
8. Peg Ryan	32.50
Christy Cosgrove	32.50
10. Vicki Blais	32.00
Roger Martell	32.00
Mark Longwell	32.00
Pete Bonnacors	32.00
14. Dan Jones	31.50
15. Anthony Fabrizio	31.00
16. Lain Coryell	30.00
17. Rich Leboeuf	28.50
18. Kathleen Kelley	27.00
Ron Trippett	27.00
James Gilford	27.00

! = course record

It was Mother's Day, and as usual, it was Mother Nature who got everyone's attention and showed the runners who's the boss. At first, we were treated to cool, wet, and humid weather, in stark contrast to the hot, sunny, shadeless human barbecue that was last year's race. The sporadic drizzle, rain, and downpours also helped us to avoid

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