

Flat Rock 50 Km

Elk City, Kansas
Hiking trails

September 28, 1996

1. Phil Sheridan,39	5:11:12!
2. Dennis Haig,36	5:43:53
3. Terry Moon,32	5:48:56
4. Matt Bickhard,34	6:11:34
5. Rex Friend,41,OK	6:11:39
6. Wes Monteith,45,TX	6:24:44
7. Dave Noltensmeyer,47	6:34:30
8. Jordan Clay,35	6:40:44
9. Gary Burns,31	6:56:32
10. John Hargrove,52,OK	6:58:34
11. Thomas Lasater,39	7:01:52
12. Dale Channcl,56	7:19:25
13. Myron Leinwetter,41	7:19:25
14. David Dinkel,47	7:22:22
15. Jim Perry,47,OK	7:38:19
16. Jodee Avignon,49,OK	7:39:31
17. Theresa Wheeler,29	7:40:09
18. Bob Sample,40	7:42:23
19. Andrew Colee,50,FL	7:49:08
20. Eugene Pearson,34	8:03:42
21. Mike Cave,45	8:04:29
22. Randy Smith,33	8:11:10
23. Rosemary Marston,48,MO	9:45:30
24. Mark Foster,42	9:50:17
26 starters	

Twenty-six individuals from five states started the second annual Flat Rock 50 Km. We had hoped for a few more participants this year. We soon came to realize however, that our race cap of 125 runners (as published in the *UltraRunning* race calendar) was a pretty lofty goal for the second year of the event, especially considering the exquisitely hellish nature of the trail.

Last year we categorized our future projections of race participants as follows: 1) More local marathoners in the greater Wichita running community looking to step up to ultras; 2) Many of the "Mountain Masochists" from the East, like Dave Horton, Courtney Campbell, and Eric Clifton (just to name a few); 3) Some of the altitude ultrarunners from Colorado who would undoubtedly find our little trail run in Kansas a mere "jog through the park" after finishing such grueling ultras as Hardrock, Leadville, Collegiate Peaks, Mosquito Marathon, etc.

We increased the first category by over 300%, of which virtually all were first timers. The last two categories . . . well, evidently these individuals possibly believe the Flat Rock is just not enough of a challenge for them. After all, it took this year's winner Phil Sheridan, from Ellsworth, Kansas, only 5:11:12 to finish the race and set a new course record by over thirty minutes. No biggy, as this was over twice as long as his 2:34:06, 151st place finish at Boston's 100th Anniversary Marathon back in April. Let's not forget the fact that he has won the Wichita Marathon the past four consecutive years.

Phil must have just been slacking on the last five miles, or maybe, just maybe, the Flat Rock is rewriting the "old rule of thumb" regarding trail runs which states: add one to one and a half minutes to your average minutes per mile (mpm) in a road race to determine your trail pace and/or

finish time. The norm quickly developing over the past two years on this course is to double (at a minimum) the old rule of thumb in determining your mpm/finish time at the Flat Rock. And to think—runners haven't even had to deal with inclement weather the last two years.

Flat Rock veteran Dennis Haig, from Wichita, Kansas ran a PR in 5:43:53 to finish second overall and better his time from last year by nearly an hour. Dennis was overjoyed with his accomplishment and rightfully so, as his finishing time was only one second away from last year's winning time. Shortly following Dennis was Terry Moon, another Wichitan, finishing in 5:48:56. Terry's PR on the Pikes Peak Marathon is a little over five hours and I do believe the course surprised him. However, while talking to Terry after the race, it ap-



Theresa Wheeler is dwarfed by the cliffs, but not by the competition—she was first.

peared he was already plotting his tactical strategy for next year's event. Rex Friend from Oklahoma City, only five weeks after finishing the Leadville 100, finished in 6:11:39 to become the men's masters champ.

Theresa Wheeler, from Wichita, finished in 7:40:09 to become the overall women's winner. Returning women's masters champ Rosemary Marston, from St. Joseph, Missouri, returned to defend her title, finishing in 9:45:30. Two-hundred-fifteen pound heavyweight Mark Foster,

another Wichitan, refused to be denied as he finished in 9:50:30 (kicking rocks out of his way the entire time) to wrap up the second annual Flat Rock 50 Km.

Mildly put, all courageous souls who have conquered, or attempted to conquer the Flat Rock (some of whom have completed the course twice now) are "worthy ultrarunners" in the truest sense, even though several of them had no idea what they were getting into, or what they would have to get out of. Most impressive was the fact that 11 of our 24 finishers had never completed an ultra before. Furthermore, the highly energetic and devoted volunteers, many of whom have served diligently through the entirety of all KUS events, once again demonstrated they had the "right stuff" by maintaining an empathetic and helpful, yet humorous and cheerful attitude at all times.

Eric Steele (R.D.)

Phil Sheridan Adds

The Flatrock 50 Km is an out-and-back on a trail that runs along the "scenic" limestone bluffs on the north side of Elk City State Lake in southeast Kansas. I use the word "scenic" facetiously. The R.D.'s chosen motto for the course is, "If you look up, you're going down." This proved true to many of the runners, including myself, as on the two occasions that I chose to run and check the surroundings, I went down! This course is rock paved the entire length of the trail. As this was my second trail ultra it redefined the words "rocky trail." The rock ranged from gravel to boulder size. There were virtually no sections that were clear. Much of the rock was loose, and every foot fall was an adventure in balance control. When I see these words used in any R.D.'s trail description I will be under no illusions as to what is meant.

The run is sponsored by the Kansas Ultra Runners Society. Eric Steele, Marc Friesen and the Purple Flirp put on an excellent pre-run pasta feed followed by post-run chili. It is very well organized, with well stocked and staffed aid stations every three miles or so. The trail was well marked, with many markers at ground level (you didn't have to look up often). Many finishers came in wearing a little blood and mud, but an especially gutsy finish was recorded by David Dinkle. Dave broke two toes on the second 25 km when he kicked a rock! If you want an especially challenging run, and are tired of easy trails, this is the one for you. After running this course, falling hard twice and spraining my ankle I am still ready to do it again next year!

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