

Rockin K Trail Runs: This is Kansas, Right?

by Phil Sheridan, R.D.

During the week leading up to the Rockin K Trail Run, the weather forecast was for partly cloudy with high temperatures in the mid 60s. It was looking like it would be a good day to run. By Thursday, two days before the race, as the last minute entries came in and filled the race, the forecast had changed to the mid 70s with a Kansas breeze of 18 miles per hour and gusting. It turned out we needed the wind, as highs on Saturday topped out at 82 degrees F. But this is Kansas, right? There's a saying in Kansas, "If you don't like the weather, just wait a few minutes." And change it did, as the 12-hour mark rolled around so did the wind, bringing clouds, lightning and rain.

The Rockin K Trail Runs are run on the three trail systems at Kanopolis State Park in the heart of Kansas, and Kansas is flat, right? So this race should be flat and fast, a personal best course. The first loop of 26.3 miles is the marathon; the 50-mile is a second modified loop of the marathon course, for 50.66 miles. Two of our runners said—as have others over the years, when leaving the airport in Wichita—that they were thinking this is pretty much what they expected of Kansas: flat prairies to run on. This is Kansas, right? As they were driving north on I-35, which runs between the Flint Hills and the Smoky Hills then steers them west into the Smoky Hill region of Kansas, they were starting to re-think what the race course might be like. By the time they reached the race headquarters at the Corral Shelter on top of a hill at the lake, they'd decided maybe this wouldn't be the flat prairie run they'd thought after all.

At the pre-race dinner, and again at the briefing at the starting line, the main topic was how many water bottles to carry. With the first water available at 7.47 miles, most of the 93 runners lined up at the start decided to carry at least two. Those that didn't would find out that this is Kansas, right? It can get very warm and dry. The lead pack of runners came into Gate Six, the manned aid station at 13.24 miles, just 1:45 into the race. The first-half dozen runners, including several of the 50-mile runners, drank fluids and headed out within sight of each other, to run the Big Bluff Loop, 4.87 miles of primitive trail that takes the runners up and down the river Bluff above the Smoky

Hill River, and then back to the Gate Six aid station at 18.11 miles. From Gate Six the second time, the runners would run back by the unmanned aid station at 19.80 miles and then to the Corral Shelter at 26.3 for the marathon finish or the 50-mile turnaround, where the 50-mile runners would head back out for another loop.

The heat of the day took its toll on the 50-mile field, as 19 runners decided that a marathon finish would suffice on this day. Paul Schoenlaub, a three-time 50-mile winner, won again this year in 9:19:05. Returning 50-mile winner Tammy Stone won the women's race and bettered her previous course record by more than 11 minutes, finishing in 10:01:16. Lisa Mikkelsen attended the Rockin K last year as the Invo-8 shoe representative; she decided she would run this year and finished second in 10:34:11. The final 50-mile finisher was Scott McPherson, who ran through the storm that blew in until the lightning got too close. He laid low in a hollow until the worst of the lightning had passed. The cowbells rang for the last time at 13:55:15 as he crossed the line.

Despite the heat, late starts, off-course runners, horseshoe awards being confiscated by airport authorities, a good old spring thunderstorm in Kansas, and with lots of ice, water, Conquest, and food, the Rockin K Trail Run was a great success, thanks to the runners and volunteers. But that is no surprise. This is Kansas, right?

Rockin K 50 Mile and Marathon

Kanopolis Park KS

April 18, 2006

Trails

50 Miles

1. Paul Schoenlaub, 46, MO	9:19:05
2. Matthew Becker, 32	9:22:34
3. Paul Grimm, 37, CO	9:45:59
4. Randy Albrecht, 50	9:53:22
5. Tammy Stone, 44, CO	10:01:16
6. Dan Kropatsch, 33, CO	10:17:04
7. Kyle Amos, 31	10:24:25
8. Lisa Mikkelsen, 40, MA	10:34:11
9. Stuart Johnson, 46	11:33:20
10. Paula Garland, 47, MA	13:18:31
11. Scott McPherson, 42, MO	13:55:15

Marathon

1. Heath Larson, 22	3:49:40
2. Mark Pohlman, 34	3:55:14
3. Jess McNeely, 36	4:02:45
4. Mark Crisman, 42, MD	4:08:16
5. Thomas McKenna, 26	4:10:10
6. Caleb Chatfield, 26	4:39:06
7. Suzie Scheer, 42	4:46:08
8. Troy Harding, 42	4:46:38

9. Brian Novak, 25, IN	4:52:28
10. Dave Krishock, 46	5:04:13
11. Gary Black, 20, CO	5:05:56
12. Tom Brown, 49	5:10:28
13. Bill Smith Jr, 58, MO	5:15:19
14. Sandra Powell, 46, NM	5:16:27
15. Melanie Galyon, 41	5:22:16
16. Jackie Jackson, MO	5:22:06
17. Greg Burger, 39	5:24:36
18. Shane Jones, 31	5:28:28
19. Theresa Wheeler, 39	5:30:28
20. Joel Sartwell, 46, MO	5:36:58
21. Cindy Torres, 46, IL	5:38:05
22. Deborah Webster, 46	5:42:00
23. Kenneth Richardson, 52, MO	5:52:00
24. Julie Toft, 45	5:52:31
Dan Winston, 45	5:52:31
26. Frank Dayton, 42	5:56:18
27. Mark Koester, 26	5:58:28
Ignatius Rodriguez, 28	5:58:28
29. Andy Bowman, 42	6:01:48
30. Kimberly Spielman, 30, MT	6:06:23
31. Craig Watson, 48, LA	6:07:15
32. Don Carley, 58, NE	6:07:50
33. Angie Indra, 31	6:08:31
Debra Oden, 40	6:08:31
35. Christopher King, 41	6:15:25
36. Mark McConnell, 43, FL	6:25:54
37. Jonette Killmar, 40	6:31:54
38. Dick Paige, 56	6:33:30
39. John Peppiatt, 46	6:41:17
Leah Peppiatt, 19	6:41:17
41. C.E. Goudeau, 52, LA	6:42:44
42. Jim Myers, 58	6:48:19
43. Michael Hennessy, 57, FL	6:52:24
44. Walter Garland, 52, MA	6:55:00
45. Dick Powell, 63, NM	6:57:00
46. Eugene Bruckert, 70, IL	6:57:20
47. Bill Shirk, 60	7:04:30
48. Paula Keltner, 33, MO	7:08:34
49. Anne Watts, 50, CO	7:10:04
50. James Stamper, 34	7:11:28
51. Mark Oppel, 28	7:12:48
52. Scott Bishop, 34	7:19:33
53. Vickie McDonald, 53, AR	7:37:49
54. Rich Golden, 59, OK	7:45:12
55. Taylor LeBlanc, 31	7:48:20
56. Anton Kaarma, 24	7:48:29
57. Dave Black, 55, CO	7:50:57
58. Steve Breeding, 57	7:59:03
59. Ron Lindquist, 58, NE	8:03:52
60. Steve Bishop, 57	8:18:59
61. Nels Bentson, 61, OK	9:50:24
62. Annie King, 46, GA	10:57:20
63. Eugene DeFronzo, 70, CT	11:32:15

Marathon (Dropped down from 50-mile)

1. Jason Ostrum, 29, CO	3:55:14
2. Bill Barthen, 30, IA	4:16:20
3. Cindy Stonesmith, 42, CO	4:45:30
4. Todd Livingston, 34, NE	5:24:10
5. Willie Lambert, 43	5:33:45
6. Raul Flores,	5:42:23
7. Ben Holmes, 49	5:42:30
8. Bart Fisher, 25	5:44:52
Dann Fisher, 42	5:44:52
10. Fred Hampel, 41, CO	5:44:53
11. Mark Jacquez, 27	5:48:15
12. Gary Henry, 49	5:49:35
13. Marc Friesen, 31	5:55:55
14. Johnny Spriggs, 51, OK	6:16:54
15. Cheri Bashor, 52, CO	6:21:22
16. Matt Watts, 49, CO	6:27:32
17. Earl Blewett, OK	6:40:45
18. Bonnie Riley, 53, MN	7:11:28
19. Steve Lower, 55	7:37:35