

Rockin' With a Change in the Weather

by Phil Sheridan, R.D.

When we chose the date for the Rockin' K, there were several factors that weighed in, among them spring turkey hunting season, government leases on the grassland, and the weather. The first Saturday in April normally falls just before the pasture cattle leases and hunting season. A quick check of the weather history showed an average low of around 35 and a high around 62 degrees F. As we all know however, a mathematically average weather day in the real world may be mathematically improbable. As I did trail marking five days before the run I was worried about getting enough water and ice out to the runners. It was 80 degrees F, the wild plum bushes were in full bloom, and the ticks were out. There was some hope in the forecast however, showing lower temperatures for the weekend. Thursday, as I finished up the trail work, it was 30 degrees F, the snow was sticking to my glasses, I couldn't see 100 yards ahead, and the "no accumulation" was about five inches deep!

Friday brought a north wind and cold sunshine, and the sun and the warm ground knocked the snow depth down somewhat, although the wind did cause some drifting. Friday also brought a call from the parks department asking if we

were going to cancel the run, I assured them that snow and cold was not likely to deter many of the runners. Indeed, I was sure some would revel in the conditions. Saturday morning brought a record low of 19 degrees F, and a very nearly full turnout of entrants. In my pre-race briefing I told the marathon runners that almost every year the first runner back to



was 40 degrees F. I have to commend the runners for fine performances on a tough day. Snow, ice, mud, rocks, hills and the occasional waist-deep water crossings would certainly provide sufficient reason to not even get out of bed. I would also like to make special note of the volunteers that stood the cold all day handing out warm food and encouragement.

Rockin' K' 50 Mile Kanapolis State Park, Kansas April 7 Trails

1. Thomas McKenna, 27	8:50:42
2. Paul Schoenlaub, 47, MO	9:17:25
3. Bill Barthen, 31, WI	9:22:05
4. Andy Rodriguez, 28, CO	9:24:04
5. Eric Truhe, 32, CO	9:24:05
6. Marc Friesen, 32	9:25:46
7. Matt Becker, 33	9:40:43
8. Scott Eppelman, 40, TX	9:47:33
9. Paul Grimm, 38, CO	9:53:35
10. Kyle Amos, 31	9:54:08
11. Tony Clark, 29	10:00:08
12. <u>Theresa Wheeler</u> , 40	11:10:39
Randy Albrecht, 51	11:10:39
14. Dave Krishock, 47	11:10:46
15. Gerardo Ramirez, 34, TX	11:12:57
16. Ted Bidwell, 57, CO	11:25:19
17. Gary Henry, 50	12:11:25
18. Bart Fisher, 3.5	12:15:50
19. Dann Fisher, 43	12:15:51
20. Fred Hampel, 42, CO	12:15:52
21. Eddie Battitori, 43	12:32:47
22. Marv Bradley, 68, CO	12:34:27
23. Willie Lambert, 44	12:43:16
24. Brad Holzworth, 34, NE	12:52:10
Eric Steele, 41	12:52:10
26. <u>Angela Battitori</u> , 42	13:25:21



the turnaround is a 50-mile runner, and that is just wrong—the marathon leaders should be the first ones in. I then told the 50-mile runners that almost every runner that has ever started the second loop has completed it, but that only half of the 50-milers at the Rockin' K have ever started the second loop!

After those encouraging words I sent them down the trail. The runners started out on a somewhat frozen snow-crust surface with the occasional drift. As the day wore on the combination of warm ground and intermittent sunshine added mud to the mix. The 50-milers had an especially good variation of surface during the second loop: ice and snow in the protected areas, rock and mud in the unsheltered areas. The wind stayed out of the north all day and the recorded high

Photos by Rick and Kristi Mayo.