

HAWK HUNDRED

HATCHING THE HAWK

by Chris Wristen

Eleven runners huddled for a photo, exchanged nervous smiles and made a few last-minute preparations. Then, at 6:00 a.m. sharp, history was made as they disappeared into the darkness of the woods.

The inaugural Hawk Hundred 100-Mile Trail Run – the first organized 100-mile trail run in Lawrence history – was under way at Clinton State Park.

Darkness gave way to light within the first hour, revealing the obstacles the runners would tackle for four 23-mile loops, followed by an eight-mile out-and-back to the finish line while trying to beat the 32-hour time limit.

Open only to runners with at least one 100-mile finish to their credit during the past two years due to the minimal aid format, the 11 – nine men and two women – took on a course that's heavy on rocks and roots, mixed with some smooth dirt stretches and lots of ups and downs.

"I think the rockiness of the trails and the constant small ups and downs wears on you," said Coleen Voeks, a six-time 100-mile finisher and the Hawk Hundred women's champion. "There are no un-runable hills, so you aren't sure what you should be running and what you should be walking, and that will wear you down after a few loops. The night will slow you

down even more if you don't want to trip and fall all the time."

Those weren't the only obstacles.

"I won't forget almost stepping on a Copperhead during the first loop, my pacer shooing a skunk down the trail in the middle of the night and the little boy with the gun," Voeks recalled, referencing an encounter with a father and son with a BB gun and bow and arrow in the woods. "They were all extremely memorable moments that made me laugh – and be grateful that no one got hurt."

Norman DeCelles opened up a comfortable lead during the first 12 miles and continued to cruise at a steady clip to the tune of a 3:26 first loop. Temperatures surged into the 80s as the race wore on, and humidity thickened and turned the woods into a sauna.

On pace for a sub-19 finish after three loops, DeCelles felt the effects of the humidity and

mileage. His brisk pace slowed to a slog for the final 31 miles.

"As a Lawrence native who could probably run the trails with my eyes closed, my expectation was that I would finish or pass out trying," DeCelles said. "Turns out I'd pass out a few times in the last 14 miles but finish anyway."

DeCelles emerged from the woods shortly after 5:00 a.m. and crossed the finish line in 23:53:00 – more than five hours ahead of the next runner. Six more joined him in donning buckles, none more hard-earned than the one Debbie Webster received. Already battling a sprained ankle before the race, an IT band flared up early and threatened to cost her a finish. Webster battled on, pushed the pace during the final eight miles and finished with 24 minutes to spare.

With that, the inaugural Hawk Hundred was history. Eleven started, seven finished. A Lawrence original has been hatched. ■



Coleen Voeks (l) and Debbie Webster stick together early in the race

HAWK HUNDRED

LAWRENCE, KANSAS
SEPTEMBER 10 | ▲ 1,3

1. Norman Decelles, 27	23:15:30
2. Elden Galano, 53	28:36:00
3. Robert Murphy, 53, NE	29:19:41
4. Coleen Voeks, 38	29:23:06
5. Gary Henry, 55	29:49:47
6. Kevin Guest, 42, MO	30:28:02
7. Deborah Webster	31:36:11

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*"I was very impressed with your event. The course was great. Most of all... the support - before, during, and after the event. Great job!!" - Robert Orcutt
2010 50-mile Champion*

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