

FLATROCK

KANSAS' FIRST TRAIL ULTRA COMES OF AGE

by Kristi Mayo

A few days after finishing FlatRock, I remembered the video camera. My husband, Rick Mayo – serving as race photographer – had set up the camera on a tripod near the end of the 50K route.

I plugged the camera into the computer and uploaded the video. The footage shows a rocky path through the woods; limestone slabs sprinkled with jagged chunks of rock, bordered by sheer, moss-covered walls of the same rock. Every now and then, a runner enters the frame. Some are moving quickly over the terrain. Others shuffle and stumble. But all wear the same unmistakable look of desperation.

FlatRock, Kansas' first trail ultra, came of age in 2012. To celebrate its 18th running, newcomers stood shoulder to shoulder with veterans at race headquarters below the dam at Elk City Reservoir near Independence to get last-minute instructions from founding race director Eric Steele. His advice, "Don't try to look at the scen-

ery while you're running. Because if you look up, you're going down."

The 50K field left the starting line under overcast skies and temperatures around 60 degrees. After a brief jaunt on pavement, we headed uphill into the oak and cedar forest and got a quick introduction to the technical nature of the trail. Each footfall must be carefully negotiated.

While the frequent climbs and descents are relatively short, they usually consist of rudimentary staircases laid out by nature, often requiring the use of hands to scramble up or drop down from one level to the next. The course is well marked with blue blazes painted on rocks and trees, but requires constant alertness, as it is easy to wander down rocky drainages that closely resemble the trail. Like a needy child, the trail demands your constant attention—and after a few hours, the expected physical fatigue couples with mental fatigue to create one of the best challenges ultrarunning can offer.

In the first 17 years, only 17 people had finished the FlatRock 50K under five hours. This year, four men—Ronald Lapoint (overall winner, 4:47:17), Zach Bailer, Don Solberg, and Bryan Kelpé—added to that total in near-perfect conditions with cloudy skies for much of the race, moderate temperatures, and a dry trail. Jennifer Schmidt (19th overall, 6:25:38) took the women's race, followed by Ashley Austin and Tammy Winn.

Back at race headquarters, finishers lingered to enjoy excellent chili and the camaraderie of this Midwestern ultrarunning community. I posted myself near the finish line with blissfully exhausted legs and cheered with others as the final runners came home from a day on the trail. Their reward: a nicely designed belt buckle. This was the first year belt buckles were offered to 50K finishers, and they were so popular that Steele intends to add this to the list of traditions that have become part of the unique flavor and vibe that define FlatRock. ■



Blue blazes mark the way for Brandi and Edgar Martinez



Jim Phillips keeps his cool over rocky footing



Racing past moss-covered rock walls, Scott Hill finishes 15th

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50 KM

1. Ronald LaPoint, 31	4:47:17	15. Scott Hill, 33	6:12:33	30. Jim Phillips, 41, MO	6:51:31	45. Scott Foster, 36	7:13:06
2. Zach Bailer, 23	4:53:33	16. Aaron Ochoa, 38, OK	6:13:17	31. John Craig, 41	6:52:06	46. Emily Nelson, 30, MO	7:20:54
3. Don Solberg, 43, CO	4:56:04	17. Nick Polito, 43, TX	6:21:41	32. Dustin Birdsong, 30	6:52:28	47. Ricardo Alvarez, 37	7:21:04
4. Bryan Kelpé, 34, MO	4:56:37	18. Troy Williams, 43	6:24:22	33. David Dawson, 38	6:52:46	48. Elden Galano, 54	7:24:04
5. Aaron Norman, 31, MO	5:07:21	19. Jennifer Schmidt, 43	6:25:38	34. Jeff Degarmo, 40, OK	6:53:27	49. Chris Smith, 31, OK	7:24:50
6. Paul Schoenlaub, 53, MO	5:18:35	20. David Salavitch, 49, MO	6:26:46	35. Justin Chockley, 29	6:55:50	50. Debra Norman, 52, MO	7:28:23
7. Dan Kuhlman, 58	5:22:45	21. Ashley Austin, 30	6:29:08	36. Kristi Mayo, 33, MO	6:56:42	51. Zach Adams, 35	7:30:58
8. Douglas Ambler, 42, MO	5:26:24	22. Dennis Haig, 52	6:36:26	37. Eric Axtell, 40	6:58:27	52. Jim Megerson, 46	7:48:57
9. Adam Taylor, 28	5:27:41	23. Randy Phelps, 51	6:42:09	38. Kimberly Spielman, 37	7:01:05	Deborah Webster, 52	7:48:57
10. Matthew Becker, 38	5:46:24	24. Andy Bowman, 49	6:42:44	39. Sophia Wharton, 42	7:05:02	54. Kaylee Wheeler, 20, NE	7:49:32
11. Anthony Lounsbury, 34, OK	5:50:37	25. Tammy Winn, 43, OK	6:44:15	40. Leslie Gallagher, 38	7:05:02	55. Heather Berner, 42	7:51:53
12. Chris Martin, 33	5:51:02	26. Joshua Bourbonnais, 31, OK	6:44:54	41. Luke Hoskam, 32, MO	7:09:02	56. Adam Monaghan, 29	7:52:45
13. George Myers, 41	5:52:44	27. Bret Reimer, 23	6:45:19	42. Earl Blewett, 48, OK	7:10:30	57. Patrick Allen, 57	7:58:14
14. Steve Siegele, 51	6:08:24	28. Stormy Phillips, 31, OK	6:45:51	43. Tim Neely, 39	7:13:00	58. Erica Carper, 40	8:05:33
		29. Russell Bennett, 40, OK	6:47:00	44. Scott Connerley, 24, IA	7:13:03	59. Brian Brooks, 39	8:06:25



RICK MAYO

Kristi Mayo takes fourth woman in 6:56

Kim Boucher, 39	8:06:25	76. Mark Myers, 41, MO	8:49:49
61. Jenny Fritz, 37, MO	8:09:58	77. Ron Marsh, 48	8:49:52
62. Richard Smith, 54, OK	8:15:43	78. Bill Barnett, 58	8:50:16
63. Candi Paulin, 31	8:16:24	79. Edward Battitori, 48	8:53:38
64. Amber Tyree, 43	8:18:01	80. Cassie McDaniel, 39	8:54:45
65. Leah Hyman, 26	8:20:07	81. Jason Dinkel, 37	8:55:48
66. Cory Stacey, 30, OK	8:28:38	82. Jason Jacobs, 37	8:56:10
Nikki Stacey, 41, OK	8:28:38	83. Jacques Drouin, 52	8:56:16
68. Deb McTaggart, 33	8:28:46	84. Jeremy Newman, 30	8:57:56
69. Sean Hamlin, 38	8:28:52	85. Ben Schears, 31	8:58:32
Sean Borst, 26	8:28:52	86. Jordan Breeding, 19	9:03:05
71. Raul Martinez, 30, TX	8:36:27	87. Jerime Carpenter, 33	9:09:06
72. Brandi Martinez, 40, TX	8:39:35	88. Melissa Bruce, 33	9:13:38
73. Edgar Martinez, 34, TX	8:39:37	89. Joseph Galloway, 55, IA	9:38:05
74. Ken Childress, 53, OK	8:44:56	90. Jim Perry, 63, OK	10:01:00
75. Barry Smith, 45	8:45:51		



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