

PRAIRIE SPIRIT

EPIC ADVENTURE IN HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

by Eric Steele, RD

Wow, what an epic adventure our inaugural Prairie Spirit Trail 100 and 50-mile ultra races turned out to be. None of us could have ever predicted or fully prepared for the magnitude of ultra-experience due to the "blizzard of the millennium" that hit in the middle of our race.

As many of you know, our sport is all about pushing it, taking it to the limit...and then beyond, being stretched mentally, physically and spiritually. I can sincerely state that I was stretched to the max at our inaugural event, as an RD, in ways I have never been before, and I'm sure everyone else involved was, too. I am very grateful to have been a part of it. What I witnessed from runners and staff during the race was nothing short of miraculous and pushed my belief in the overall drive and capacity of the human spirit to an entirely new level.

In spite of all the chaos and challenges that Mother Nature threw our way, which made things really scary for a time, I am super elated to have been a part of it and was beyond impressed by how nearly all individuals handled themselves under extreme conditions. And even though certain things did not quite turn out the way some of us had planned, there will be a next time – count on it.

ZACH ADAMS ADDS:

The weather was getting worse by the second. Stronger winds, colder temps, heavier snow, and less tree cover combined with my dropping core temperature were giving me serious doubts... The logistical concerns of 50- and 100-mile races with nearly 150 combined participants are immense under even

the greatest of weather conditions. Race Director Eric Steele was facing weather conditions which could only be described as horrendous. As a hardcore ultrarunner himself, he understood the heartbreak it would cause to stop a runner who physically could continue. I did not envy his situation in the slightest. Ultimately, it came down to a question of safety, so when the Park Rangers informed him Sunday morning, shortly after 5:00 a.m., that they could no longer access the trail, he knew it was done and had to pull the plug. If a rescue was needed and could not be made, a runner could die. I appreciate that Eric kept the 100-mile race going as long as possible given the circumstances, and I truly feel that if there was any way to safely let the runners keep going, he would have. ■



RICK MAYO

Zach Adams early in the 100



April Calaway of Wichita, Kansas finishes first female and third overall in the 50-mile race



KRISTI MAYO

100-mile runner with the wind at his back

PRAIRIE SPIRIT | OTTAWA, KANSAS | MARCH 23 | ▲ 2,2

100 MILES

1. Brandon Purdeu, 25, OK 16:09:10
2. Randy Ellis, 61, OK 23:07:40
3. John Nobles, 28, OK 23:24:36
4. Rene Villalobos, 54, TX 23:44:02
5. Jason Ryan, 38, WA 24:57:33

50 MILES

1. Thomas Aten, 27, OK 6:58:24
2. Eric Buckley, 49, MO 7:10:10
3. April Calaway, 34 7:36:30
4. Fernando Martinez, 36 7:55:20
5. Andrew Tracey, 52, NE 8:16:27
6. Robert Towne, 60, WA 8:17:35
7. Erik Iliff, 33 8:29:02
8. Michael McKenna, 42, IL 8:32:06

9. Kodi Panzer, 31 8:36:05
10. Joshua Hyatt, 27, MO 8:54:40
11. Ernesto Mendoza, 29 8:55:46
12. Carlos Rodriguez, 47 9:03:55
13. Joshua Watson, 34 9:10:53
14. Danny Miller, 32, MO 9:11:22
15. Cody Cunningham, 26, MO 9:41:35
16. Rob Scherff, 47, MO 9:54:19
17. Eric Axtell, 40 9:57:20
18. Adam Dolezal, 37 10:19:58
19. Kimberly Spielman, 37 10:28:05
20. Tj Ernst, 34, NE 10:29:26
21. David Newman, 52, AR 10:48:23
22. Clay Zapletal, 51 11:15:18
23. Adele Jordan, 30 11:16:04
24. Brian Smith, 49 11:18:29

25. Amber Tyree, 43 11:18:31
26. Erin Dickerson, 32, OK 11:23:37
27. Kimberly Dizona, 25, OK 11:23:40
28. Joshua Bourbonnais, 31, OK 11:23:45
29. Kelly Pfannenstiel, 50 11:31:16
30. Michael Pfannenstiel, 47 11:31:16
31. David Bennett, 52 11:31:38
32. Kristin Hoch, 41 11:35:02
33. Paul Endacott, 48 11:36:42
34. Rocky Randall, 35 11:47:47
35. Karen Gall, 53, MN 11:57:08
36. Shannon Puphal, 36, TX 12:31:01
37. Haley Siggers, 31, LA 12:31:01
38. Benjamin Snider, 19 12:36:39
39. Amy Seeber, 46 12:46:33
40. Jason Beck, 34, IL 12:46:44

41. Harry Good, 62, MD 13:01:00
42. Kimber Green, 46, NE 13:05:16
43. Susan Dobson, 43, NE 13:05:16
44. Carol Eaton, 55, AL 13:25:56
45. Caroline Glenn, 55, OK 13:30:38
46. Billy Weaver, 39 13:49:17
47. John Meredith, 42, TX 13:51:20
48. Robert Dewar, 67, MO 13:54:27
49. Stephanie Davenport, 30, MO 13:54:27
50. John Schneider, 49 14:03:55
51. Joseph Galloway, 55, IA 14:06:00
52. Larry Kelley, 46, IA 14:16:53
53. Seema Sonnad, 50, PA 14:19:16
54. Roman Broyles, 42, OK 15:15:51
55. Robert Michaels, 52, OK 15:15:51