

FLATROCK 101

TOUGH TRAILS IN KANSAS

by Zach Adams

I think my system has finally managed to digest (or at least excrete) the overdose of epic energy that I consumed on April 27th and 28th 2013, at the Inaugural FlatRock 101K Ultra Trail Race. This race is a double out-and-back course that is covered in shifty rocks, steep climbs, craggy limestone overhangs, and even the occasional pile of horse dung. Located on the amazing Elk City Hiking trail near Independence, Kansas, it make runners feel more like they have been teleported to Arkansas or Colorado.

Spending some quality time with ultrarunners is always a good time, and the Friday evening pre-race spaghetti feed was no exception. Despite the soggy conditions, nervous anticipation buzzed in the air like electricity that couldn't find a path to ground. I love that buzz! Epic Ultras founder and RD, Eric Steele, gave us a great welcome, a handful of details regarding the race, and passed out some thanks to people involved.

The days leading up to this race consisted of cool temperatures and a significant amount of rain. I have completed the FlatRock 50K the last two years in a row (in late September) and have never seen a muddy spot on the trail, leading to personal delusions that the course had some sort of magical drainage system – in spite of the fact that it was still raining on race morning. After getting detailed race instructions, Eric set us off with a hearty “GO!” from our imaginary starting line right next to the shelter house. My plan was simple, just keep moving. Of course I had plans on nutrition and hydration, pace, and thoughts of cutoff times crossed my mind, but my primary goal was to just finish. Knowing this challenging course very well, it seemed a legitimate strategy.

The first 50K out-and-back went very well. I spent it slipping and sliding in the mud, forging water crossings, and talking to other runners. Between a few old friends and some new ones I met on the trail, I didn't spend much time running alone. Aid on the course was outstanding, the Epic Ultras Brigade manning the aid stations were as supportive as any runner could ask for and then some.

Once back at the start/finish I forced myself to focus on what I needed to do before setting back out, and do everything I could to not think about the remaining distance I would have to cover. I ate, re-lubed, restroomed, and boogied back out on the trail.

The second out-and-back I knew would include several hours of darkness, so my primary goal was to hit the final turnaround before dark.

My new friend and race partner, Michelle, and I hit the turnaround just before dark and well within cutoff. We picked up my pacer, Joell, with only 25K to go and more than 10 hours to do it. It was not a matter of if we'd finish, but when. We powered forward and eventually made it off the trail and to the half-mile stretch of road leading to the finish.

Although it was nearly 2:30 in the morning, the Epic Ultras finish line did not disappoint. A laser light show illuminated the fog, while cowbells, air-horns, and shouts filled the air. As we made our final approach to the massive inflatable Epic Ultras finish arch, Race Director, Eric Steele, was there, cheering and smiling. He treated Michelle and me as if we had won the race. In my own mind, I absolutely did. Nearly 21 hours after that “GO!” I was an official finisher of the Inaugural FlatRock 101K Trail Run and had a beautiful buckle to prove it. ■



Kimberly Spielman from Newton, Kansas, pushes to the finish in 17:25:42

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101 KM

1. Brian Ortell, 46, IA	12:07:59	10. Grace Lin, 32, NJ	15:16:35	19. Deb Johnson, 53	17:05:25	Genevieve Spivey, 36	19:59:22
2. Joshua Pool, 33	13:09:25	11. Scott Hill, 34	15:26:45	20. Paul Rejda, 37, OK	17:13:11	28. Michele McGrew, 34, OK	20:42:56
3. Paul Schoenlaub, 53, MO	13:34:47	12. Michael Mora, 37	15:41:31	21. Kimberly Spielman, 37	17:25:42	Zach Adams, 35	20:42:56
4. Ronald Lapoint, 31	13:41:31	13. Reggie Bollinger, 35, NE	15:47:53	22. Dennis Haig, 53	17:55:52	30. Adam Monaghan, 30	20:53:03
5. Cole Starkey, 28, OK	14:01:46	14. Zach Jones, 31	16:08:39	23. Arnold Begay, 50, OK	18:28:38	31. Dave Renfro, 42, AR	22:43:54
6. Randy Ellis, 61, OK	14:35:04	15. Sean Randle, 45, AK	16:20:20	24. Jimmy Brown, 43, NE	18:38:35	32. Pali Richardson, 29	23:01:06
7. Kevin Kwilinski, 44, IL	14:40:40	16. Colleen Voeks, 39	16:29:36	25. Bryan Warren, 42, OK	19:56:52	33. Dennis Crosby, 66, OK	23:04:10
8. Candi Paulin, 32	15:16:35	17. Theresa Wheeler, 46	16:35:56	26. Tammy Winn, 44, OK	19:56:52	34. Ken Childress, 53, OK	23:47:34
		18. Stuart Johnson, 53	17:05:25	27. Nicole Parkhurst, 32, MO	19:59:22		