

## FLATROCK

# DRAMA AT "THE ROCK"

by Eric Steele, RD

In the 18 years we have been holding our race, FlatRock, I have witnessed some incredible acts of raw gutsiness, unrelenting fortitude, and the indomitable human spirit in action – first-hand, up close and real. After all, it's the primary reason I am so in love with our sport and have devoted nearly two decades of my life to not only its development here in the Midwest, but also to my own career "in the game" as an ultrarunner. However, what I witnessed and was ever-so-fortunate to be a part of on Saturday, September 28th at our 19th annual FlatRock 50K and 25K, has left me in utter awe and nearly speechless once again.

A beautiful week prior to race morning ended about 15 minutes before the start of the 50K, when a steady rain started that would last for the next six hours, followed by a beautiful af-

ternoon/evening and subsequent week. Course conditions gradually decayed as reports coming in from runners told of ankle-deep, pudding-like mud in many spots on the trail; rocks on the course, that are usually to be avoided, were now blessings to most runners attempting to get a little relief and momentary traction on a most muddy, mucky trail. As ultras go though, "the tougher the conditions, the sweeter one's sense of accomplishment," holds true for those 93 brave souls who finished the 50K.

Sixth place finisher, Zach Adams, stated in his race report that the finish line, where we had five finishers come in with just a couple minutes to the cutoff (extended by one hour due to the conditions), and only 19 seconds to spare for the last finisher, "... was way more like a rock concert then an ultramarathon finish line!"

Indeed it was. The emotional energy in the air was palpable.

Aaron Norman ran his fifth consecutive FlatRock 50K and went sub-five hours to join a very small group of individuals (for the second time) who can claim sub-five at "The Rock." Most important, Aaron was the overall winner after chasing the title in previous years and not quite cashing in. He is also now halfway to being knighted into the infamous FlatRock Hall of Pain. Mindy Coolman showed up for the first time ever at The Rock and promptly left no doubt that she had the right badass stuff to become a Legend of The Rock by crushing the women's 50K course record – set in 2000 – by nearly seven minutes, and claiming the women's 50K champion title. ■



RICK MAYO, MILE 50 PHOTOGRAPHY

Aaron Norman on his way to a sub-five-hour first-place finish



RICK MAYO, MILE 50 PHOTOGRAPHY

Dennis Haig navigates the mud on his way to his 19th consecutive FlatRock finish



RICK MAYO, MILE 50 PHOTOGRAPHY

Steve Baker scrambles up through the "Devil's Butt Crack," a narrow rock passage about 1.5 miles from the finish line

## FLATROCK | INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS | SEPTEMBER 28 | ▲ 2,3

### 50 KM

|                               |         |                             |         |                              |         |                             |          |
|-------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. Aaron Norman, 32, MO       | 4:49:15 | 24. Sam Blackard, 34        | 7:19:04 | 48. Steve Baker, 43          | 8:25:35 | 72. Krystal Brown, 48, OK   | 9:44:49  |
| 2. Don Solberg, 44, CO        | 5:02:26 | Scott Hill, 34              | 7:19:04 | 49. Jonathon Goering, 38     | 8:25:59 | 73. Dallas Daley, 25, TX    | 9:49:04  |
| 3. Ronald Lapoint, 32         | 5:37:46 | 26. Mike Edwards, 47        | 7:23:11 | Kristen McCune, 23           | 8:25:59 | 74. David Grant, 28         | 10:00:59 |
| 4. Mindy Coolman, 31, IA      | 5:42:57 | 27. Ricardo Alvarez, 38     | 7:33:40 | Michael Hunter, 38           | 8:44:20 | 75. Ken Childress, 54, OK   | 10:01:40 |
| 5. Travis McWhorter, 27, NM   | 5:46:17 | 28. Bryan Fairchild, 33, IN | 7:33:42 | 52. Francisco Arellano, 35   | 8:47:17 | 76. Sean Hamlin, 39         | 10:02:42 |
| 6. Zach Adams, 36             | 6:03:27 | 29. Marcus Needham, 31      | 7:35:40 | 53. Alissa Sebastian, 43, MO | 8:47:18 | 77. Patrick Allen, 58       | 10:03:53 |
| 7. Matthew Greathouse, 35, NE | 6:05:24 | 30. Debra Norman, 53, MO    | 7:40:08 | 54. Kathryn Lein, 49, OR     | 8:57:48 | 78. Jeremy Newman, 31       | 10:04:06 |
| 8. Jess McNeely, 44           | 6:13:53 | 31. Chris Martin, 34        | 7:41:43 | 55. Ann Benson, 45           | 8:58:18 | 79. Reina Probert, 50, MO   | 10:04:14 |
| 9. Troy Williams, 44          | 6:16:12 | 32. Blair Baldwin, 45, SC   | 7:44:21 | 56. Matthew Battiston, 46    | 9:04:37 | 80. Joell Chockley, 44      | 10:04:19 |
| 10. Paul Schoenlaub, 54, MO   | 6:21:23 | 33. David Salavitch, 50, MO | 7:45:44 | 57. Kurt Richardson, 53      | 9:05:20 | 81. Jason Dinkel, 38        | 10:08:08 |
| 11. Chris Perry, 37           | 6:22:00 | 34. Michael Miley, 49       | 7:45:51 | 58. Sonya Lingvai, 41        | 9:05:44 | 82. Adam Monaghan, 30       | 10:09:28 |
| 12. Joshua Watson, 35         | 6:22:59 | 35. Dennis Haig, 53         | 7:50:26 | 59. Mark Myers, 42, MO       | 9:08:36 | 83. Amy Seeber, 46          | 10:35:33 |
| 13. Jim Phillips, 42, MO      | 6:23:25 | 36. Gerry Hollis, 45        | 7:51:18 | 60. Richard Smith, 55, OK    | 9:10:12 | 84. Megan Swett, 32         | 10:44:34 |
| 14. Candi Paulin, 32          | 6:24:39 | 37. Kimberly Spielman, 38   | 7:52:41 | 61. Tammy Winn, 44, OK       | 9:10:12 | 85. Barry Smith, 46         | 10:44:44 |
| 15. Bobby Smith, 47           | 6:36:09 | 38. Andy Bowman, 50         | 7:55:36 | Paul Rejda, 38, OK           | 9:18:19 | 86. Joseph Galloway, 56, IA | 10:51:34 |
| 16. Earl Blewett, 49, OK      | 6:48:23 | 39. Randy Phelps, 52        | 7:56:16 | 63. John Peppiatt, 54        | 9:28:12 | 87. Carson Galloway, 23, IA | 10:51:34 |
| 17. Eric Massanari, 45        | 6:50:00 | Winston Kenton, 52          | 7:56:16 | 64. Thomas Skinner, 67, GA   | 9:28:39 | 88. Bill Barnett, 59        | 10:55:37 |
| 18. John Craig, 42            | 6:53:13 | 41. Russell Bennett, 41, OK | 7:56:59 | 65. Chris Smith, 32, OK      | 9:30:52 | 89. Ben Schears, 32         | 10:58:11 |
| 19. Kevin Otoole, 33, MO      | 6:54:48 | 42. Chris Umscheid, 37, MO  | 8:03:37 | 66. Joseph Devoe, 31         | 9:36:38 | 90. Heather Newman, 32      | 10:58:48 |
| 20. Dave Everhart, 36         | 6:54:49 | 43. Dave Meeth, 50          | 8:10:55 | 67. Tom Rogers, 42, MO       | 9:37:57 | 91. Melissa Bruce, 34       | 10:59:08 |
| Bryan Warren, 42, OK          | 6:54:49 | 44. Chris Tillery, 42       | 8:14:38 | 68. Paul Wohletz, 37, MO     | 9:40:13 | 92. Heather Lake, 44, IN    | 10:59:14 |
| 22. Michael Mora, 38          | 7:00:34 | 45. April Reed, 39          | 8:14:42 | 69. Chris Crockett, 43       | 9:41:44 | 93. Ryan Schwatken, 37      | 10:59:41 |
| 23. Jeff Elbert, 44, OK       | 7:07:39 | 46. Stephanie Holzwart, 36  | 8:19:52 | 70. Jen Ogden, 36, NM        | 9:41:46 |                             |          |
|                               |         | Jeff Hiss, 43               | 8:19:52 | 71. Justin Chockley, 30      |         |                             |          |