



Breaking the Four-Hour Barrier... Again

BY KRISTI MAYO

In 12 years, fewer than 5% of the finishes at Psycho Wyco Run Toto Run 50k have been under five hours. And only one person—Scott Gall of Cedar Falls, IA—has broken the four-hour barrier. And now he's done it twice.

In 2013, Gall was the first to go under four hours when he cruised to a 3:59:07 finish. In 2015, he was back to chase down sub-four, and he caught it, along with a new course record, in 3:54:09.

"I really died the last lap in 2013, so I planned to relax the first two laps this year and really try to stay steady late in the race," said Gall. "The first two laps felt smooth and without too much effort. The course just seemed to flow and offer fast pacing. As the effort started to drain me a bit, I knew I had to relax and maintain as much as I could, or else the final two- or three-mile push to the finish would get really ugly. It still got ugly—but I was able to hold on without totally crashing."

What makes a sub-five-hour finish so difficult on the Psycho Wyco Run Toto Run course?

Maybe it's the unpredictable Midwestern winter weather: warm at the beginning of the week, cold at the end, or vice versa. The freeze-thaw cycle, rain, snow... The very nature of February in eastern Kansas almost guarantees muddy, snowy or icy trails. And if mud or precipitation isn't the problem, then it was muddy earlier in the week and now



Scott Gall cruises the 200-foot descent of Fall Down Hill on his way to breaking his own course record. (© Rick Mayo/Mile 90 Photography)

it's frozen and runners must endure choppy, ankle-twisting, frozen foot and hoof prints on the bridle-trail sections.

If a runner doesn't mind the terrain, there's still the 3,600 feet of elevation gain for the total 50k distance to consider.

Certainly, the Three Hills section raises the challenge. The three big climbs in the last 2.8 miles of the loop course are sometimes also called the "Three Sisters" which is a polite derivation of the usual misogynistic term of endearment used by many a runner (of any gender) who has been reduced here to a hands-on-knees, slumped-shouldered bonk.

Or perhaps the difficulty lies in the 10-mile-loop format. Just as a runner catches his breath from the Three Hills section, the raucous and welcoming environment of the start/finish aid station appears: cowbells

and smiles, a DJ's music pumping into the woods, steaming-hot chili and ice-cold craft beer. Leaving that place just to go back into the muddy, snowy or ankle-twisting terrain proves too much of a mental challenge for 30-40% of the runners each year.

But it's exactly that kind of challenge that keeps Gall and other runners coming back. "I love that it's a very challenging course with plenty of elevation change, varying degrees of single-track trail with smooth dirt, rocks and roots, and steep climbs and descents, and that it's not too far away for someone in the Midwest," said Gall. "I also like the time of year, as it allows you to get a gauge on your early fitness going into the spring and summer racing season. Plus, the people, volunteers and racers are always way cool." 🏃

Psycho Wyco

Kansas City, KS // February 14

🏃 3.2* // 50k

Elevation gain/loss: 4,098 feet/4,098 feet | The course is three 10.35-mile loops consisting of short, rolling hills with technical single-track and bridle trail containing lots of rocks and roots.

1	Scott Gall, 40	3:54:09
2	Jason Zakaras, 32	4:35:29
3	Will Malcolm, 29	5:01:06
4	Mark Carey, 43	5:02:40
5	Douglas Ambler, 44	5:10:37
6	Brady Poskin, 29	5:18:22
7	Adam Rood, 34	5:24:15
8	Jason Chase, 32	5:27:14
9	Ezra Houle, 33	5:28:57
10	Brad Suthoff, 37	5:31:19
11	Timothy Garvey, 48	5:32:45
12	John Kohler, 34	5:39:58
13	Zach Bailor, 26	5:41:34
14	Jason Yuhasz, 37	5:42:45
15	Tray Vedock, 46	5:48:03

16	Larry Long, 46	5:48:04
17	Ryan Ficco, 32	5:51:20
18	Uncle A Dog, 40	5:51:36
19	Stephanie Cundith, 40	5:52:06
20	Tyler Irvine, 26	5:55:25
21	Kelly Cool, 33	5:55:58
22	Richard Barnett, 41	5:57:37
23	Mike Sutherland, 49	5:59:02
24	David O'Bryan, 51	5:59:05
25	Russell Wenz, 36	6:02:10
26	Jill Becker, 27	6:14:27
27	Stephen Sides, 43	6:18:02
28	Matt McClasky, 32	6:18:46
29	Rob Owens, 38	6:24:22
30	Darin Brunin, 30	6:24:44
31	Daron Pratt, 45	6:25:09
32	Dann Fisher, 51	6:28:04
33	Matt Quijas, 29	6:29:17
34	Darvish Shadravan, 46	6:31:23
35	Steven Schmid, 44	6:31:37
36	Yvonne Delongchamp, 43	6:31:37
37	Timothy Hazlett, 50	6:34:07
38	Kate Leis, 38	6:36:17
39	Jeff McFarlane, 39	6:36:51

40	Sanya Lenahan, 39	6:37:35
41	Tom Kutilek, 26	6:38:16
42	Annette Toomer, 26	6:38:16
43	Donald Wright Jr., 20	6:39:45
44	Wael Sammur, 52	6:39:45
45	Carl Edwards, 56	6:44:18
46	Mark Koester, 34	6:45:09
47	Dave Krishock, 55	6:47:09
48	Amanda Zook, 34	6:55:43
49	Scott Riedinger, 30	6:55:44
50	Greg Albertson, 53	7:00:11
51	Jay Mooney, 39	7:01:40
52	Jeanne McCurnin, 59	7:04:29
53	Jeanne Sellars, 40	7:05:54
54	Alissa Sebastian, 44	7:10:33
55	D.J. Deyermund, 47	7:19:45
56	Joseph Bafaro, 44	7:21:10
57	Julie Cohara, 42	7:24:12
58	Chris Cohara, 42	7:24:12
59	Adam Skeens, 21	7:25:59
60	Maria Barton, 49	7:27:18
61	Charles Fredricks, 40	7:29:03
62	Gerry Hollis, 46	7:35:45
63	Dennis Cannell, 56	7:38:30

64	Ann Benson, 47	7:40:43
65	Ted Kuether, 34	7:46:00
66	Jeffrey Alger, 44	7:46:54
67	Laura Rippel, 34	7:47:04
68	Brandy Holey, 36	7:49:07
69	John Stewart, 52	7:53:53
70	Tim Mullican, 54	7:56:12
71	David Knifley, 23	8:07:40
72	Josh Mcvey, 36	8:14:13
73	Don Ledford, 52	8:16:57
74	Randall Gannon, 61	8:18:15
75	Sophia Wharton, 44	8:32:32
76	Kennedy Cragle, 26	8:32:33
77	Erica Carper, 43	8:40:56
78	Reina Probert, 51	8:49:04
79	Daniel Dalton, 48	8:59:35
80	Diana Liska, 39	9:19:31

* See page 34 for key