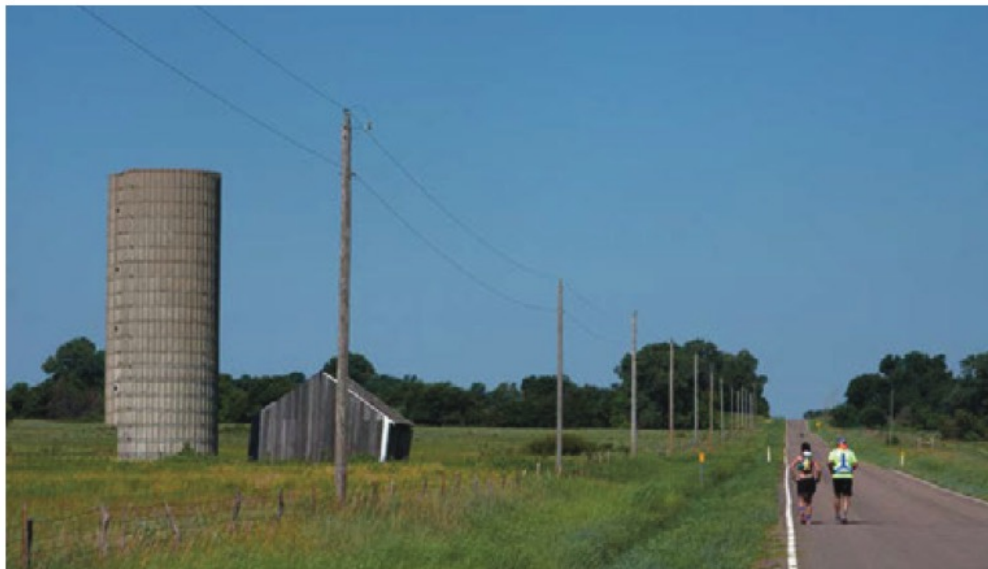




Slaying the Badger

BY HEATHER RICKERL



The morning of the Honey Badger 100 Mile road race was similar to that of any other race. I met up with my fellow ultrarunner friends at the start line and tried to calm the nervous butterflies in my stomach. I started the race with a plan to take it very slow in the heat, drink lots of water and have a successful finish.

The first 15 miles were very uneventful on the Kansas hills, if that's what you'd call them, and I enjoyed the cool morning. It was mile 20 that hit me like a brick wall. To a Colorado girl, the humidity made the air thick as gravy. The temperature was increasing and wearing me – and my uneasy stomach – down. I used my minimal crew stops as morale boosters for my journey ahead, and a lifeline call to my husband for some much needed encouragement to remind me that I'm tough as nails.

After 30 miles on the same straight road, I finally took a left. A change of direction was so exciting, until I caught the strong, hot, head winds that I had in store for the next 13 miles. It felt like somebody turned a furnace on with the blower on high! The wind and heat were drying out my cooling towels before I could reach my crew every mile or two.

I found that brick wall again around mile 40. This time my stomach revolted with no warning. Fed up with sickness and people babying me, I convinced myself to get back on the road. I started the countdown for mile 53. Reaching mile 53 meant that I could sit down, check my feet, hopefully eat and most exciting of all: pick up my pacer. Getting through the first 50 miles during the hot day meant the sunset and cooler temperatures were to come! I took my next left at about mile 52 to put me on the home stretch. My small crew, pacer, race staff and others were there welcoming me. I believe for the first time in hours, I had a smile on my face. My pacer and I continued on the monotonous journey.

After 80 miles and 24 hours on my feet, running, walking or staggering became an interesting adventure. Trees looked like animals, cars were scary and houses were exciting to see. Daylight came and gave us a burst of energy, but it also meant the heat was back, so we pushed forward as quickly as possible.

Eva Capparello, Greg Gray and a typical view from the 100-mile road course through Kingman County, Kansas. [John Knepper]

During the last 10 miles, we had some Kansas cows and two lost kittens pacing us. We didn't feel right leaving the kittens, so my pacer rescued them and our crew returned the kittens back to their home. Finally came the best part: the finish line. I have never been so happy to pick up my pace and cross a finish line. I had slain the Honey Badger 100 Mile in 29:36:55, which completed my second leg of the Kansas Grand Slam of Ultrarunning. This journey is to be continued... 🏃

Honey Badger

Kingman, KS // July 9

🏃 1,1* // 100 Miles

Elevation gain: Unknown | The course is a 92.9-mile asphalt loop with an additional seven miles added in combination at the start and finish to make the full 100. The entire course is asphalt county roads with very little cant and minimal vehicular traffic.

1	Wyatt Hockmeyer, 35, OK	24:56:30
2	William Sprouse, 47, KS	24:58:19
3	Aaron Vokoun, 41, OK	27:29:12
4	Heather Blake, 37, OK	27:29:15
5	Caleb Lareau, 23, OK	28:55:00
6	Greg Gray, 45, NE	29:26:07
7	Heather Rickerl, 39, CO	29:36:55
8	Lynna Gilstrap, 66, OK	31:17:11
9	Colby Deweese, 22, OK	31:25:14
10	Polly Choate, 45, OK	31:55:05

*See page 46 for key

The Crazy Within

BY POLLY CHOATE

Oh Honey Badger
Honey Badger
What have I done
You sounded so sweet
Like a fun little run
But now you're upon me
Just four days away
While the temperature
keeps climbing
To the Gods of Nature, I pray
Let this weekend be mild
A bit overcast in the skies
A cool gentle breeze
Ahhh...that would be so nice
For 100 miles is challenge
enough
And to top it off, pavement too
So why throw in the heat
Sun, humidity and skies blue
Maybe it's a little crazy
For the fifteen on the list
Questioning our sanity
But damn...it's so hard to resist
A dementedly tough race
During the hot summer time
No shade around us
Just a ball of fire up in the sky
The time is upon us
Ready or not
The training time is done
Mind games our only thought
So as we gather our gear
And make our final plan
We meditate on the journey
That is upon each (wo)man
As this weekend approaches
To everyone back at home
Positive energy is appreciated
While in Kansas, we roam
So bring on the beast
As we toe the line
Step by step getting closer
To saying... the buckle is mine

Lynna Gilstrap enduring the Kansas heat on Saturday morning during Honey Badger 100 Mile.

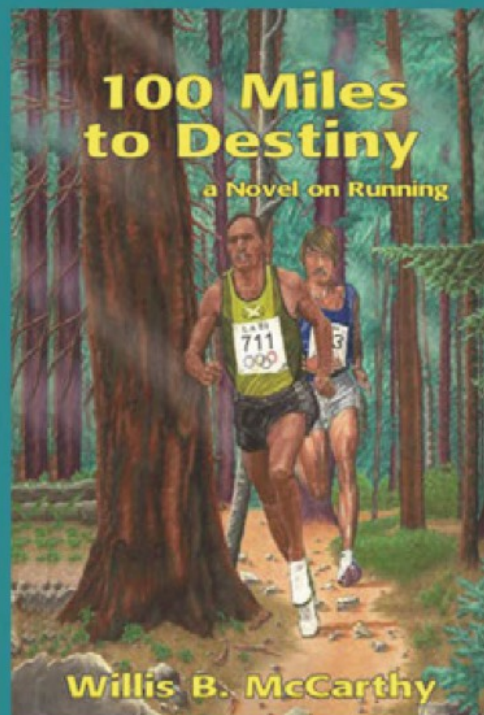
[John Knepper]

Blisters and Elephant Feet

BY LYNNA GILSTRAP

Oh Honey Badger,
Honey Badger
what did I do?
did our spirits, our bodies
just have to conquer you?
I was assigned number
thirteen
seriously, thirteen?
what a lucky way to begin
two grueling days, I mean
Kansas was true
flat, treeless, and bone dry
no shade at all
no clouds in the sky
At ninety-five degrees
a breeze was provided
still tummies and feet
in protest united
The crews held the fate
of each runner toeing
the line
Pushing food, water,
strength
rejecting the whine
Competitors all we were
though wanting success
for each

our crews sharing
their knowledge
for all to achieve
As night took over
the sunny hot day
a few of our friends
in silence drove away
Blisters increased from
sand and heat
we walked when we could
no longer run,
and still when we could
no longer walk
The sandman was kind
letting us move through
the night
Then a new day gave
promise
the finish in sight
For finishing is not
from physical might
It is from wanting that
100 mile buckle
to finally be mine!



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