



David Theriot ran a steady pace throughout the day to win the 100-mile race, a little over an hour ahead of second place. [📷 Rick Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]



WHO KNEW THE EARTH COULD BE THIS FLAT?

BY NELSON JONES



Bethany Praska on her way to a second-place female finish, fourth overall, in the 50 mile.
[©Rick Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]

LET ME PREFACE THIS WITH A STATEMENT: The Prairie Spirit Trail is deceptively challenging. You may be driving from the high country of Colorado whilst dreaming of a new PR, or flying out from the Beast Coast with plans to dominate this “flat” and “non-technical” 100-mile course. Think again.

The 2018 edition kicked off with 60-70 runners idling around and chatting in the dark; then came the 10-second countdown; and before I knew it, we were shuffling into the darkness with the yips and yees of spectators fading behind us. The quick out-and-back right at the start allowed you to cheer on your fellow runners and see the folks that were taking the pace out quick. The rest of the course is simple: run 50 miles to Iola, turn around, and run back to Ottawa.

Settling into a reasonable pace took some time and intention; you cannot merely rely on the course to dictate your pace, but have to make yourself “walk early and often” to avoid an untimely blow-up. The flat course is so easy to cruise on... until it's not. I never thought I would find myself wanting – and even begging – for some climbs to walk.

The runners spread out quickly on the trail, leaving you to your own thoughts and plenty of time to soak up the beautiful views of small-town America on your own. From rural highways, to vast expanses of farmland, and unobstructed views of a straight path as far as the eye can see, this is a course that was as surprisingly beautiful as it was mentally taxing.

The “out-and-back” style of the course allowed for easy crew access and navigation. I had a last-minute change of plans as I had originally planned on showing up and racing solo. My father, wife and two family friends decided to come out and crew/pace a few days before the race and I believe they had as much (or more) fun than me exploring the small towns during the day.

The roughly seven miles between aid stations allowed me to have non-traditional pacers, and having my dad pace me from mile 86 to 93 in the middle of the night was a special experience I won't soon forget. Crossing the finish line was one of the most satisfying moments I've had in ultrarunning and reminded me of the important truth that “there are no easy 100s.”

Timer Guys put on a Grade-A race that checks a lot of boxes for me: low-key race environment, well-stocked aid stations, easy crew access (bring your friends and family) and volunteers that are beyond stoked. If you're looking for an early-season race to keep you motivated to train through the winter, keep the Prairie Spirit 100 on your map. You won't regret it. 🏃



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Prairie Spirit

Ottawa, KS // March 24

1.2* // 100 & 50 Miles, 50k

Elevation gain/loss: Flat | Both courses are out-and-backs on a flat rails-to-trails course, primarily on crushed limestone gravel, with small sections of asphalt when the trail passes through small towns. The trail is wide enough in most sections to comfortably run three abreast.

100 MILES

1	David Theriot, 43, OK	16:25:31
2	Rolf Schmidt, 45, AR	17:36:19
3	James Strahorn, 24, OK	18:07:15
4	Daniel Bucci, 35, WA	18:25:11
5	Chavet Breslin, 36, CO	18:36:31
6	Anastasia Hutching, 37, IL	19:28:02
7	Miguel Arellano, 37, KS	19:42:18
8	Jordan Schmidt, 23, MN	20:02:40
9	Nelson Jones, 27, CO	20:14:15
10	Robert Salazar, 31, IN	21:09:55
11	Joerg Lindemann, 42, MO	21:24:43
12	Lance West, 42, OK	21:47:43
13	Atsushi Kato, 56, JPN	21:52:31
14	Dean Kettner, 53, BC	21:55:02
15	Deb Eastman, 50, NE	22:00:57
16	Timmy Treon, 44, MO	22:24:21
17	Adam Kahle, 26, NE	22:38:25
18	Sabrina Seher, 39, WA	22:51:58
19	Stephen Rodgers, 50, CO	22:51:58
20	Christal Pauls, 50, KS	22:55:57
21	Tyler Emley, 44, IN	23:29:27
22	Tralaine Benefiel, 45, KS	23:30:15
23	Jeremy Harrison, 40, OK	23:39:00
24	Michael Bergen, 34, NE	23:45:37
25	Aaron Baldwin, 36, KS	23:45:40
26	Travis Bourret, 37, NE	23:45:40
27	Paul Corlew, 34, KS	23:57:43
28	Julie Seydel, 50, CO	24:02:15
29	Brett Fedor, 32, CO	24:23:53
30	William Sprouse, 48, KS	24:39:56
31	John Taylor, 56, MN	24:41:55
32	Bob Engel, 63, OH	24:42:33
33	Kathy Bratton, 57, OK	24:43:20
34	Kathy Errthum, 41, WI	24:50:41
35	Farhad Zarif, 48, KS	25:28:45
36	Chris Greer, 43, KS	25:33:16
37	Cheryl Kastl, 57, OK	26:33:08
38	Patricia Miller, 38, NY	26:38:19
39	Stephen Edwards, 41, CT	26:55:30
40	Gary Shaw, 33, MO	27:21:24
41	Kim Johnson, 53, TX	27:25:40
42	Steve Hoyer, 60, NE	27:26:35
43	Lisa Hargitt, 36, SC	27:38:42
44	Greg Gray, 47, NE	27:48:24
45	Rachel Baker, 39, MO	27:52:55
46	Alison Larsen, 44, NE	27:54:54
47	Alecia Ramsey, 36, OK	28:04:08
48	Ken Fattmann, 62, MO	28:04:30
49	Dennis Crosby, 71, OK	28:32:59
50	Gabrielle Karp, 46, FL	28:59:50
51	Christine Fischer, 47, OK	29:06:54

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE:

Brian Hsia of New York, New York, and Morgan Mahn of Kansas City, Missouri, near the 7-mile mark in the 50-mile race. [©Kristi Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]

Evan Malone of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, at the finish of a sixth-place overall 50-mile effort.

[©Kristi Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]

Pete Madsen of Bella Vista, Arkansas, and family celebrate his 50k finish. [©Rick Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]

Gary Shaw (center) of Half Way, Missouri, has an emotional first-100 finish. [©Kristi Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]

52 Kristina Clifton, 42, KS 29:46:30

50 MILES

1	Jenna Mutz, 37, MO	6:47:09
2	Daniel Gibson, 27, KS	7:45:35
3	Brian Hsia, 36, NY	8:14:07
4	Bethany Praska, 28, IA	8:15:33
5	Jake Bostwick, 28, OK	8:30:02
6	Evan Malone, 40, AL	8:30:03
7	Andie Bennett, 39, SD	8:45:42
8	Jimmy Brown, 48, NE	8:56:26
9	Tiffany Reed, 54, MO	8:59:04
10	Pete Walter, 32, MO	9:09:11
11	Jacob Jacquinot, 31, KS	9:09:14
12	Crystal Foust, 28, NE	9:10:28
13	Tim Mahler, 57, IL	9:23:38
14	Tim Bewley, 56, CO	9:26:54
15	Morgan Mahn, 23, MO	9:29:12
16	Brandon Sornberger, 40, CA	9:39:46
17	Ron Bogart, 49, MO	9:40:33
18	Anita Fromm, 46, CO	9:41:23
19	Wes Bradshaw, 39, CO	9:46:34
20	Chris Martin, 39, KS	10:31:51
21	Jordan Couturier, 34, KS	10:39:45
22	David Reddel, 52, NE	10:41:11
23	Melissa Bailey, 38, KS	10:58:34
24	Lorna Frieder, 47, CA	11:04:14
25	Katherine Fogelber, 45, TX	11:07:02
26	Leeland Bergeron, 29, KS	11:08:12
27	Jeffrey Bergeron, 38, KS	11:08:12
28	Larry Chase, 61, MO	11:13:53
29	George Longa, 47, KS	11:16:11
30	Jacob Huff, 36, KS	11:16:14
31	Arnold Wilson, 54, MO	12:06:30
32	Todd Burgess, 49, CO	12:19:19
33	Michael Haviland, 76, GA	12:26:19
34	Drina Haviland, 69, GA	13:38:54
35	Nancy Bauer, 56, SD	13:42:31
36	Jennifer Cavazos, 41, KS	14:06:19
37	Henry Rueden, 68, WI	14:44:36
38	Josh Mcvey, 39, KS	14:44:36
39	Keith Conant, 48, MO	17:05:11
40	Witek Bus, 45, KS	17:05:11
41	Susan Smith, 63, KS	17:18:07
42	Dawn Harris, 44, KS	20:46:36

50K

1	Scott Schrader, 33, KS	3:30:53
2	Maksym Chepeliev, 28, IN	3:35:00
3	Nathan Sicher, 36, MO	3:41:49
4	Mark Imasa, 39, MI	3:55:57
5	John Kohler, 37, KS	3:57:38
6	Jacob Brown, 17, NE	4:18:25
7	Troy Cupp, 46, KS	4:25:48
8	Stephanie Cundith, 43, KS	4:32:38
9	Thomas Cohee, 39, NE	4:36:01
10	Trey Bowman, 24, KS	4:52:06
11	Zach Bailor, 29, KS	4:52:53
12	June Klotz, 52, KS	4:55:11
13	Judi Hayashi, 55, KS	5:02:20
14	Pete Madsen, 30, AR	5:06:57
15	Kyle Spring, 30, KS	5:09:18
16	Ruth Taylor, 32, MO	5:09:43
17	Mike Pfannenstiel, 52, KS	5:10:49
18	Chad Brower, 46, SD	5:10:53
19	Matt Turner, 39, MO	5:11:36
20	Jennie Terflinger, 36, KS	5:12:46
21	Kelsey Miller, 30, KS	5:12:46
22	Robert Myer, 46, NE	5:14:06
23	Drew Johnson, 22, KS	5:17:49
24	Tanner Johnson, 24, KS	5:17:51
25	David Wiley, 49, KS	5:26:50
26	Timothy Metcalf, 48, MO	5:27:42
27	Ashley Mullins, 35, KS	5:30:32
28	Edwin Laursen, 50, KS	5:32:45
29	Jonathan Flores, 30, OH	5:35:15
30	Michael Bruchhaus, 37, KS	5:38:06
31	Emily Rusiecki, 42, NE	5:39:38
32	Allison Oberg, 26, NE	5:47:32
33	Michael Brandhorst, 40, OK	5:49:45
34	Aron Moriarty, 47, KS	5:57:43
35	Steven Wagner, 49, MO	5:57:45
36	Karen Flynn, 53, CA	5:59:31
37	Brandon Plate, 17, OK	5:59:31
38	Keith Roberts, 41, IL	5:59:33
39	Tracy Perant, 54, CA	5:59:38
40	Jody Stutzman, 33, NE	5:59:51
41	Marcus Thornton, 31, MO	6:03:42
42	Elizabeth Krape, 54, KS	6:05:45
43	Daniel Delino, 49, CA	6:07:11
44	Vince Taege, 43, IA	6:20:47
45	Christine Harrison, 59, CA	6:23:39
46	Kristin Hoch, 46, KS	6:37:24
47	Dale Flory, 43, KS	6:41:52
48	Theresa Bowser, 54, KS	6:46:22

49	Kelly Pfannenstiel, 55, KS	6:46:56
50	Deborah Burkhardt Cotch, 52, OK	6:46:56
51	Janet Holland, 56, OK	6:46:56
52	John Crum, 44, KS	6:51:41
53	Chelsea Kempton, 27, OK	6:53:08
54	Bonnie Rutel, 41, OK	6:53:08
55	Christy Krieger, 34, NE	6:55:20
56	Carrie Alexander, 36, OH	6:56:39
57	Sean Evans, 43, KS	6:58:14
58	Jason Flores, 45, KS	6:59:25
59	Lynna Gilstrap, 67, OK	6:59:28
60	Lori Moriarty, 45, KS	7:02:28
61	Michael Kindred, 45, MO	7:03:33
62	Penny Terwelp, 49, KS	7:05:25
63	Michelle Oliver, 49, KS	7:05:56
64	Anne Watts, 62, CO	7:06:34
65	Janice O'Grady, 69, CO	7:11:12
66	Stephanie Fogleson, 47, KS	7:14:30
67	Melissa Katzer, 36, KS	7:16:04
68	Amy Seeber, 51, KS	7:16:37

69	Rosie Saiz, 28, KS	7:23:02
70	Katrina Jones, 46, MO	7:25:02
71	Gary Jones, 56, MO	7:25:04
72	Erin Evans, 44, KS	7:26:55
73	Gary Smith, 45, KS	7:26:56
74	Doug Robinett, 42, KS	7:40:51
75	Stanley Butterfield, 65, KS	7:42:43
76	Tim Austin, 58, KS	7:42:44
77	Dorothy Moman, 37, OK	7:45:51
78	Rebecca James, 44, OK	7:51:49
79	Sierra Marcus, 36, OK	7:51:51
80	Chris Rodatz, 72, FL	7:52:04
81	Lisa Martinez, 36, OK	9:07:14
82	Dustin Holthaus, 36, KS	9:07:21
83	Jason Bement, 39, OK	9:07:29
84	Sandra Agee, 47, KS	9:10:45
85	Deb Oldfield, 65, MI	9:46:24
86	Amy Stewart, 43, KS	9:50:27
87	April Love, 39, KS	9:50:28

*See page 48 for key

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