

BECAUSE CLAIR HUXTABLE SAID SO

BY AMY SEEBER



Ashley Shaw and Shari Hicks work together through the first half of the race. (© Rick May/Mike Or Photography)



IT'S 5:55 A.M. and I'm sitting in a pickup at the start line trying to stay warm. One of my crew members, Brandi Lane, hops in and asks how I'm feeling. "Scared to death," I answer.

This isn't my first or even second attempt at 100 miles. This is number three. I know the pain cave is coming. It's defeated me before. Why on earth do I think this time will be different?

"You've trained for this," my crew answers. "You know this course inside and out. This is your year."

I get out and take my place at the start. Race director Elden Galano starts us off and we head south on asphalt for a half mile before turning east on gravel. It's cool and foggy, but there's not a lot of wind. At first, I run easily enjoying the company of friends, but soon it becomes apparent that we run at different speeds and we separate to run our own races.

The first six miles of this 50-mile out-and-back course are pretty flat, until we drop down Battle Creek Hill to the first aid station. I fill up my backpack with food and fluids, and grab my trekking poles. The first set of Kansas "mountains" is coming and the trekking poles will help me keep my pace up as I climb over the hills. The road is rough with recent rains, and a water crossing soaks my shoes and socks early on.

The section after the Lapland Aid Station is a last-minute re-route due to flooding on the east branch of the Fall River. There are plenty of hills here, but the road is in much better shape than what we have just run through. At mile 25, I meet my crew at the Teterville Aid Station. It is a quick and efficient stop – but not fast enough. It gives my crew time to note that I have not eaten all my food, nor have I had enough water. This causes Brandi to go full "Clair Huxtable" on me. I receive a lecture on eating and drinking now, or else she will force it on me later. When "Clair" tells you to eat and drink, you damn well better do it.

I set off on the next segment determined to do as she said, so I put on my music and go to work. This is a 12-mile segment without seeing crew, up on a ridgeline with incredible views, and no one to talk to but cows. I'm eating and drinking and running, and my stomach is getting increasingly distended – as if everything consumed is just sitting there, not going anywhere. But thoughts of "Clair" are frightening me, so I keep eating and drinking until I finally take a big swallow of banana-mango-kale baby food and promptly vomit the entire contents of my stomach onto the road.

Vomiting helps, however, and I make it two more miles into the aid station to my wonderful crew. While getting a little TLC (but no real sympathy from "Clair"), another runner walks by telling her crew she doesn't want to "effing" be here anymore. I realize my attitude is still good and I really don't want to be anywhere else other than right there at the race. Time to move down the road.

Just past the 50-mile turnaround aid station, I am still trying to run the flats and downs and walk the ups – but my brain is playing tricks on me. Sections that are downhill look like uphill, and I stubbornly refuse to run them with my pacer. I still try to eat because "Clair" is waiting at the next aid station.

As the night progresses, what had been gentle rolling hills on the way out now appear to be a never-ending uphill in the pitch dark. All I can see in my headlamp is mist and endless uphill.



My final pacer is Brandi, "Clair Huxtable," herself. There will be no nonsense on this section. Ginger snaps are to be eaten, drinks are to be taken in and I hear the phrase, "You can walk and throw up at the same time," more than once.

Dawn finds us within 10 miles of the finish line. There is great joy in knowing we are that close. By now, however, the mist has turned into a steady rain and the wind has picked up from the north. I have a jacket on, but it isn't

LEFT: Erich Singer runs through the early-morning fog. [📷 Rick Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]

ABOVE: Race report author, Amy Seeber, celebrates a 100-mile finish. [📷 Kristi Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]



ADD
SOME HOP
TO YOUR STEP

 **injinji**

waterproof and I am soaked. A water crossing at mile 91 and no spare shoes or socks make for very soggy conditions. It is a long, cold 10 miles. With two miles left to go, the course turns north and we are going straight into a headwind. I tuck in close behind Brandi, using her as a windbreak. I am so close to her that I manage to stab her in the right Achilles tendon with my trekking pole. Fortunately, she wasn't maimed and proceeded to get me back into town. As we enter the town of Cassoday my son, Jay, meets me with a quarter of a mile to go.

And the finish line. Oh, the finish line! What a glorious sight to see after 29 hours, 10 minutes, and 54 seconds! There at the finish line were all my friends who came up on a rainy Sunday morning to watch me. Each and every one of you know how to make someone feel loved. And I love you all right back. 🏃

Farhad Zarif is treated to a mind-blowing sunset, even by Heartland 100 standards. [📷 Rick Mayo/Mile 90 Photography]

Heartland

Cassoday, KS // October 13

🏃 3,3* // 100 Miles

100 miles | Elevation gain: 6,000 feet | A 50-mile out-and-back course of rolling hills on backcountry gravel roads with less than one mile of paved surface. Much of the course meanders through open range with stunning views of the vast expanse of the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie.

1	Paul Schoenlaub, 59, MO	18:09:03
2	Matthew Becker, 44, KS	18:23:26
3	Hans Van Zanten, 44, MO	18:33:04
4	Gerardo Ramirez, 46, TX	19:19:13
5	Stephen Foster, 49, MO	19:39:54
6	Roger Bieberle, 52, KS	19:58:38
7	Phil Atkinson, 46, WY	20:34:56
8	Shaun Barnes, 47, WI	21:19:38
9	Jaclyn Long, 36, KS	21:29:26
10	Rickety Cricket, 52, CO	21:44:06
11	Eugene Saghi, 60, CO	21:45:35
12	Jeremy Harrison, 40, OK	21:53:26
13	Daniel Benz, 48, MO	21:57:25
14	Erich Singer, 39, KS	22:21:02
15	Michael Coutu, 31, TX	22:26:55
16	Rene Villalobos, 59, TX	22:38:04
17	Ashley Shaw, 35, KS	23:00:40
18	Chris Greer, 43, KS	23:19:24
19	Ken Chappell, 50, MO	24:07:04
20	Dennis Haig, 58, KS	24:52:15
21	Matthew Watts, 62, CO	25:28:53
22	Timmy Treon, 45, MO	25:57:36
23	Scott Berthel, 53, TX	25:57:44
24	Arnold Begay, 55, OK	26:07:00
25	Ben Stanton, 39, IA	26:19:03
26	Mike Harris, 39, MO	26:44:00
27	Jeff Grabbe, 47, KS	26:52:57
28	Brian Scantlin, 44, KS	26:53:23
29	Randy Ellis, 66, OK	26:53:44
30	Krystle Dalke, 36, KS	27:11:33
31	Lance West, 43, OK	27:29:40
32	Karl Jensen, 69, BC	27:39:03
33	William Sprouse, 49, KS	27:46:06
34	Krystal Brown, 53, OK	27:59:32
35	Kimmy Riley, 57, AR	28:03:15
36	Shari Hicks, 45, KS	28:15:44
37	Brent Larson, 64, MN	28:19:12
38	Vincent Swendsen, 56, NC	28:19:16
39	Bryan Carpenter, 45, OK	28:30:25
40	Torrey Wilson, 28, NE	28:36:31
41	Dennis Wilson, 60, NE	28:36:33
42	Jana Graham, 57, OK	29:00:58
43	Mike Rives, 57, OK	29:00:58
44	Amy Seeber, 51, KS	29:10:54
45	Ryan Schwatken, 42, KS	29:13:23
46	Kirk Ecton, 46, KS	29:17:28
47	Farhad Zarif, 48, KS	29:34:04
48	Natalia Harrison, 38, TX	29:37:32
49	Eunsup Kim, 65, TX	29:57:08

*See page 37 for key



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