





KANSAS *is* FLAT

BY JAY MOONEY

KANSAS CITY, KS //
FEBRUARY 22

 3,3' // 50K

Elevation gain:
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.

Kaci Lickteig (first female) poses with her mom Lori Leonard (fifth female) at the 50K finish line.

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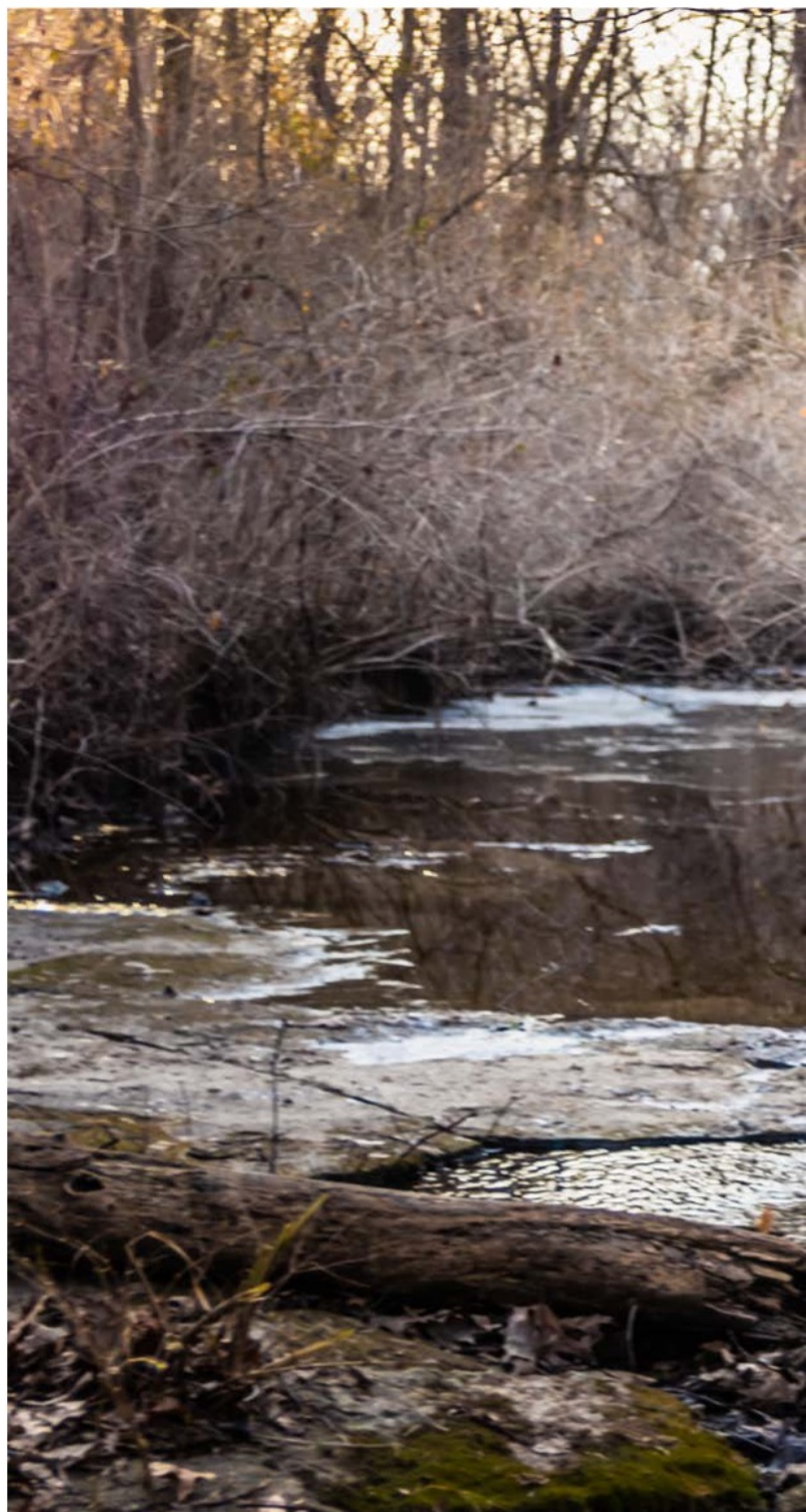
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THE PSYCHO WYCO RUN TOTO RUN

50K is held on the unforgiving trails circling Wyandotte County Lake near Kansas City. The terrain and winter weather conspire to make “Psycho” one of the most challenging 50k races you’ll ever run.

Remember, Kansas is flat. How then, do the three 10.35-mile loops around the lake have an elevation profile that totals not in the hundreds, but thousands of feet? Those thousands of feet are usually covered in deep snow, freezing slush, thick ice, shoe-sucking mud or some other ridiculous combination of the above. More cage fight than trail run, there’s never an easy day at Psycho. It’s wonderfully horrible. Throw in some of the best volunteers in our sport, a standout race director, local trail scene, some great swag, a nearly two-decade race history, free photos by Mile 90 Photography, and a couple hundred like-minded adventurers to run with, and the Kansas City Trail Nerds have a classic race on their hands.

Running it on a whim, it was my first race of any distance back in 2007 and served as an epic introduction to the ultra world. I’ve been fortunate enough (and healthy enough at the right time) to



TOP LEFT: Rob Koch climbs the last bit of the hill to the rhythmic beating of the drums by Todd Chandler (right) and Marvin Mastin (left).  JOHN KNEPPER | MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY

LEFT: Author Jay Mooney finishes his 14th straight Psycho Wyco Run Toto Run.  RICK MAYO | MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY

make it back for 13 straight years. In a way, it’s become an annual litmus test to see where I stand at the start of a new trail running season. I lined up on February 22 for the 14th of such tests.

Normally well below freezing, winter took a break for the 2020 edition with a forecast in the 60s. It may have created a false sense of ease as I entertained thoughts of a

course PR. Race Director “Bad Ben” Holmes gathered all of the runners together for his usual words of encouragement (or was it discouragement?), then it was into the woods on a rocky bridle trail. Despite the forecast, it was still cold enough that the ground was solid. Knowing that it would turn to mud, I tried to keep a faster-than-normal pace and was able to knock out a quick



Alex Wright from Lincoln, Nebraska, hurdles a water crossing early in the race.
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first loop. Going out fast early is usually bad advice, but it would prove to be the right call today.

The second loop felt like a different course as the rising temps revealed the infamous Psycho Wyco mud. It took the same effort as the first loop, only 20 minutes slower. Rolling into the start/finish area at 20.7 miles, the clock was farther ahead than I'd

hoped, but I was still feeling pretty decent. A course PR was off the table, but I felt good about the effort. I threw down some calories and set off one more time.

Another aspect of a classic trail race are the notable features along a course that become part of the race lore. Names like Rucky Chucky, Whitney Portal and Hope Pass conjure certain images about

iconic races. For those familiar with Psycho, it's names like Wyandotte Triangle, Misery Ridge, Fester's Wander and the Three Sisters. Each loop requires ticking these daunting places off the list.

By the third time through, trail conditions had dramatically deteriorated. The usual runnable sections were becoming a shoe-sucking slog and the steep climbs were

getting difficult to hike. Rarely do I use the ropes on Misery Ridge, but the third loop had me wishing I could clip in with a jumar. Ticking things off a list was going to take time.

Helping along the way are the volunteers. One of the best-supported races you will ever run, there are four parties... er, I mean, aid stations: the Wyandotte Triangle with their Fireball



whiskey-costumed mascot and bartender, the top of the Damn Dam, Shelter #10, where the local “Wyco Wolfpack” runners tend to congregate and the start/finish area with the DJ and beer. Don’t let the party atmosphere fool you – these volunteers know their stuff. Many are seasoned ultrarunners and are serious about what they do. They just have a ton of fun doing it.

Slogging through the mud at a barely running pace, I made it through the last aid station at Shelter 10. These dudes always manage to get me fired up by reminding me another Psycho finish is near. You need to get fired up here because the Three Sisters loom large on the final section.

Aid stations were well-supplied with the usual ultra fare and supportive volunteers such as “Fireball” Jay Antle. RICK MAYO | MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY

After the first eight miles of a loop, you think you’ve got it in the bag. You don’t. Psycho makes you earn it with three serious hills called the “Three Sisters.” If you can run from Shelter 10 to the finish, congratulations, you’re a badass. At the top of the third sister were Super Dave Osborn cosplayers using drums to “beat” us up the hill. With the drums mimicking my heart-beat, it was only a few hundred more yards to the finish where Bad Ben was waiting with a medal and some beer.

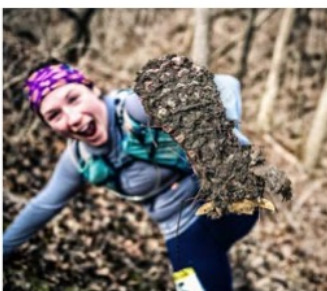
Overall, it was a solid day. Even with a horrendous third loop, the fast start had saved the day and salvaged a respectable time (my sixth-fastest of the 14 finishes). If you are looking for your own trail running litmus test, get signed up for the next Psycho Wyco 50K and remember, Kansas is flat. ▀

Psycho Wyco Run Toto Run

Kansas City, KS // February 22 50K

1	Kallin Khan, 23, OR	3:40:38
2	Charlie Paul, 30, IA	4:00:59
3	Terry Fenske, 25, KS	4:08:20
4	Cody Jones, 35, KS	4:09:32
5	Brady Poskin, 34, MO	4:15:06
6	AJ Haney, 21, KS	4:25:20
7	Benjamin Drexler, 31, MN	4:25:32
8	Michael Prentice, 37, MO	4:25:54
9	Tim Peterman, 44, KS	4:26:34
10	Cory Logsdon, 32, NE	4:27:26
11	Lance Cundy, 29, MN	4:27:34
12	Ross Salinas, 39, IA	4:30:09
13	Rob Hays, 53, KS	4:40:55
14	Nate Canton, 40, IA	4:43:04
15	Todd Nott, 55, NE	4:46:34
16	Kaci Lickteig, 33, NE	4:47:16
17	Spencer Rushton, 27, MO	4:51:59
18	Matt Comi, 27, KS	4:56:11
19	Brian Wandzilak, 39, NE	4:58:49
20	Joe Lahart, 41, IA	5:01:06
21	Mark Thompson, 42, IA	5:04:01
22	Kevin Sell, 33, MN	5:05:18
23	Cole Gardiner, 26, KS	5:13:08
24	Dustin Horner, 38, KS	5:13:48
25	Andrew Schinck, 29, KS	5:14:30
26	Joe Cooper, 34, MO	5:15:00
27	Rob Koch, 55, MO	5:23:05
28	Scott Ramey, 37, NE	5:26:48
29	Chris Bollinger, 38, KS	5:31:29
30	Matthew Hadley, 24, KS	5:32:08
31	Kyle Clouston, 34, NE	5:37:22
32	Chris Bernard, 29, MN	5:38:42
33	Dennis Heaton, 35, MO	5:39:28
34	Adam Kost, 25, NE	5:39:54
35	Brad Hansen, 36, IA	5:46:10
36	Matthew De Ruyter, 27, MO	5:51:49
37	Chad Wooderson, 45, MO	5:51:52
38	Pete Dawson, 35, MO	5:53:06
39	Clinton Straughen, 35, KS	5:54:31

40	Roger Doyle, 44, IA	5:57:01
41	Mindy Coolman, 38, NE	5:58:51
42	Scott Reed, 36, MO	6:04:54
43	Michael Foley, 39, NE	6:08:08
44	Barrett Kroll, 38, KS	6:08:18
45	Uncle A Dog, 45, MO	6:09:57
46	Nate Welsh, 34, KS	6:13:18
47	Roger Grylls, 46, CA	6:13:25
48	Michael Kirby, 40, MO	6:14:43
49	Zachary Riley, 35, NE	6:20:29
50	Miguel Ordorica, 48, NE	6:21:18
51	Abigail Rolblecki, 34, MO	6:22:31
52	Jeremy Day, 40, MO	6:24:05
53	Ashley Venema, 30, MO	6:25:43
54	Ken Ewers, 47, MO	6:26:08
55	Dave Ballard, 51, NE	6:27:42
56	Lori Leonard, 58, NE	6:27:54
57	Juan Carlos Motta, 46, MN	6:32:06
58	Thomas Pastore, 56, CA	6:37:15
59	Steve Hoffman, 53, KS	6:41:30
60	Carolyn Stone, 23, IA	6:41:36
61	James Laughlin, 46, IA	6:47:26
62	Mark Heit, 57, MO	6:48:53
63	Don Irwin, 33, KS	6:52:58
64	Evan Park, 20, KS	6:53:17
65	Luke Graham, 37, CO	6:53:59
66	Melissa Bailey, 40, KS	6:54:35
67	Michael Triplett, 36, MN	6:56:50
68	Gilbert Hernandez, 32, KS	6:58:47
69	Jered Collins, 35, KS	6:58:54



70	Michael Miley, 55, KS	7:00:51
71	Peter Young, 31, MO	7:01:34
72	Arlen Morrison, 30, KS	7:09:19
73	Allan Benjamin, 64, MO	7:18:19
74	Bob Billings, 54, KS	7:18:41
75	Jay Mooney, 44, KS	7:21:17
76	Weston Moody, 34, KS	7:22:41
77	Chris Garcia, 34, MO	7:26:00
78	Virginia Balitski, 39, CA	7:35:43
79	Adeline Hohman, 36, NE	7:41:12
80	Laurel Hill, 29, MO	7:41:14
81	Matt Cross, 38, KS	7:41:22
82	Jennie Terflinger, 38, KS	7:41:27
83	Patrick Lehnher, 53, MN	7:46:26
84	Kevin Ronnenkamp, 42, NE	7:46:55
85	Nathan Decaro, 42, MO	7:48:14
86	Michael Tabone, 41, KS	7:50:01
87	Toni Valley, 36, FL	7:51:43
88	Jillian Wiggington, 36, IN	7:52:26
89	Paul Snider, 37, KS	8:06:20
90	Beth Guley, 46, KS	8:10:06
91	Matt Kimsey, 46, MO	8:10:58
92	Shanon Luke, 26, MO	8:16:18
93	Erica Carper, 48, MO	8:17:05
94	Megan Manion, 42, KS	8:19:12
95	Erin Rodenhausen, 24, MO	8:22:26
96	Chad Brade, 30, MO	8:33:03
97	Cheryl Rauh, 34, KS	8:33:37
98	Hannah Vanlaanen, 33, KS	8:33:38
99	Jon Kill, 57, KS	8:33:57
100	Norie Rich, 38, NE	8:34:09
101	Michelle Holm, 46, NE	8:34:48
102	Karen Conrad, 38, NE	8:35:47

Laurel Hill of Columbia, Missouri, models the effects of trail conditions on her shoes.

RICK MAYO | MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY

ELEVATION & SURFACE

4, 4 So, what does that little symbol mean? The first number is the elevation profile, the second is the quality of the surface. Both are on a 1 – 5 scale, with 5 being the most difficult.

ELEVATION PROFILE

- 1 Flat or nearly flat
- 2 Rolling; total climb up to 50' per mile (2,500' in 50 miles)
- 3 Hilly; total climb between 50'-150' per mile (2,500'–7,500' in 50 miles)
- 4 Very hilly; total climb between 150'-250' per mile (7,500'–12,500' in 50 miles)
- 5 Mountainous; total climb more than 250' per mile

SURFACE

- 1 Paved or very smooth
- 2 Mostly groomed trail or dirt roads
- 3 Trail or dirt road with some rocks, roots and/or ruts
- 4 Trail or dirt road with substantial rocks, roots and/or ruts
- 5 Very rough trail