

A Litmus Test BY LARISSA UREDI
of Endurance



**CACTUS ROULETTE
ENDURANCE EVENT
LAWRENCE, KS //
JANUARY 27**

 **3,3' // 24 HOURS,
12 HOURS (DAY/NIGHT),
6 HOURS**

Elevation gain:
1.9 mile loop 150 feet
2.6 mile loop 239 feet
3.6 mile loop 253 feet

Three different loops
ranging from 1.9 to 3.6
miles. Prior to each loop,
runners will spin a roulette
wheel to determine which
loop they run next.

Women's 24-hour champion
Skylar Allen on the Bunker
Hill loop.

 RICK MAYO / MILE 90
PHOTOGRAPHY



Author Larissa Uredi spins the roulette wheel in her mushroom blanket.

📷 RICK MAYO / MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY



Once I get going, I love a good winter run. For the third January in a row, I found myself at the start line of Cactus Roulette. At the stroke of noon and “Go!” I shed my warm blanket for a day of unpredictable running.

Three years ago, I had never run more than 10 miles on trails, but I found myself intrigued by the idea

of running a duration event like Cactus Roulette. The laps are short, runners are well supported and there’s no DNF. I signed up and ran my longest distance that first year, and was hooked.

This unique event brings together a supportive community of runners to face the challenge of the trails at Clinton Lake State Park in Lawrence,



Kansas. Spin a roulette wheel, get one of three color-coded loops, run that loop and repeat. At the completion of each loop, runners earn a poker chip imprinted with the mileage they just ran. Whenever a runner “cashes out,” they get their final finisher chip to top off their stack.

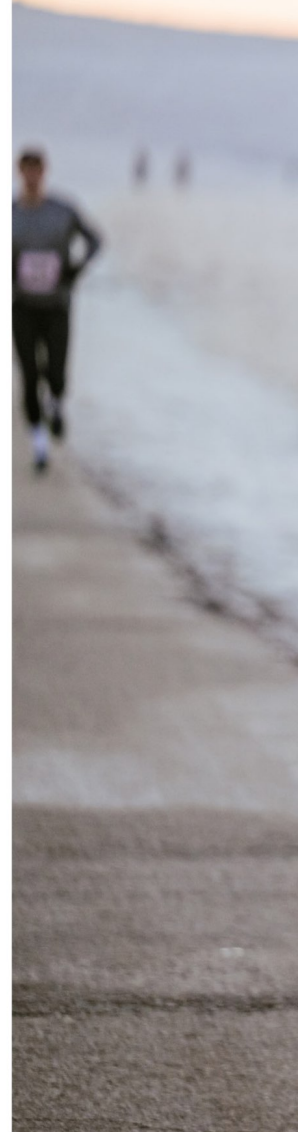
The event’s beauty lies in its unpredictability. Will my next

spin be the character-building 1.9-mile loop on the windy Bunker Hill, or will it be the 3.6-mile Swim Beach on technical trail with views of frozen whitecaps peeking through the brown winter foliage? Or maybe I’ll get lucky and roll the 2.6-mile Cactus Ridge—a chunky, technical trail with stunning views (especially at sunrise).

While the trails are challenging, the hardest part about Cactus Roulette is the warm, inviting High Roller’s Lounge at base camp. It’s a test of one’s will to leave the comfort of the heated tent for another loop out in the elements. The buffet inside is filled with rotating menu items, and the carrot ginger soup is magic. While it’s tempting to stay, the amazing

Joe Joyner, third overall in the 24-hour event, climbs the Swim Beach stairs.

📷 RICK MAYO / MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY



volunteers make it all worthwhile to keep moving. They ensure we're fed, hydrated and pumped up.

Results from this year's event are impressive. Besides myself, there are 16 committed runners who have participated all three years. Among the various durations, 94% of the 24-hour racers achieved an ultramarathon distance, 60% in the 12-hour Owl (starting at noon), 82% in the 12-hour Lark (starting at midnight), and 23%

in the 6-hour race. A standout achievement was by Cody Jones, who set a new 6-hour course record at 41.5 miles.

Cactus Roulette is more than a race—it's a litmus test of endurance and grit. Despite a chaotic seven months and minimal training, I've proven to myself that I have a solid 20 miles in me and that my dream of a 50k is within reach.

What I love most about Cactus is its inclusivity. It doesn't matter if you're a

seasoned ultrarunner or a first-timer, there are no expectations other than to give it your all and have fun. The culture here is "Show up as you are, run some laps, eat some food and stay for a while. The tent is warm and there's a burger and a beer waiting for you right over there." ▲

ABOVE LEFT: Bryant Kurtz shows signs of a tangle with the Cactus Ridge Trail in the 12-hour Owl event.

📷 RICK MAYO / MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY

ABOVE RIGHT: Terri White ticked off 28.1 miles in her 6-hour run.

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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

Cactus Roulette Endurance Event

Lawrence, KS // January 27

3.3' // 24 HOURS, 12 HOURS (DAY/NIGHT), 6 HOURS

24 HOURS

1	Jackson Witter, 25, NE	97.2
2	Skylar Allen, 28, MN	84.1
3	Joe Joyner, 61, MO	79.6
4	David Mullins, 38, KS	75.7
5	Hunter Munns, 59, KS	65.1
6	Aaron Nathan, 35, KS	63.3
7	Zach Slayton, 35, KS	57.7
8	Barney Riesbeck, 70, OH	52.7
9	Alan Joyner, 39	51.3
10	Drew Hingtgen, 36, MO	51.1
11	Lucas Filer, 24, MO	50.5
12	Cory Logsdon, 36, NE	36.7
13	Nell Bessinger, 48, KS	32.7
14	John Fritchey, 51, KS	28.1
15	Josh Mcvey, 45, KS	27.2
16	Aaron Parker, 41, KS	24

12 HOURS

1	Calvin Duvall, 23, MO	50.7
2	Justin Modrell, 38, KS	49.3

3	Phillip Dimartino, 36, MO	46.2
4	Suzie Stephensen, 40, KS	42.4
5	Billy Welch, 49, KS	36.2
6	Nick Foster, 40, MO	34.8
7	Cara Combs, 40, KS	31.9
8	Jay Antle, 55, KS	30.8
9	Maryann Peak, 32, KS	27.2
10	Trudi Chavez, 46, KS	19.5
11	Dezert Armer, 45, KS	12.3

12 HOURS

1	Kathy Errthum, 47, WI	44.6
2	Damon Mar, 39, KS	43.9
3	Shari Hicks, 50, KS	40.3
4	Aron Moriarty, 53, KS	39.8
5	Abigail Milian, 33, MO	39
6	Jd Masuhud, 47, MO	37.2
7	Scott Kimmell, 60, MO	37.1
8	Ashleigh Todd, 39, MO	36
9	Bob Wooten, 45, KS	35.9
10	Karin Velez, 50, MO	35.8
11	Jim Witter, 64, NE	35.5
12	Scott Hepburn, 44, NC	31.7
13	Paul Orth, 42, KS	31.5
14	Ted Kuether, 43, KS	30.8
15	Bryant Kurtz, 32, MO	30.5
16	Keith Krieger, 69, MO	26.1
17	David Lingerfelt, 43, MO	26.1
18	Sydney Sorkin, 51, KS	24.3
19	Taylor Budd, 30, OH	21.7

20	Larissa Uredi, 41, MO	20.9
21	David Barnes, 38, KS	20.4
22	Becca Bridgman, 31, KS	20.2
23	Scott Stith, 41, MO	19.8
24	Eric Deeter, 66, KS	18.9
25	Kevin Smith, 45, MO	17.2

6 HOURS

1	Cody Jones, 39, KS	41.5
2	Aria Sheldon, 21, KS	31.7
3	Ben Marr, 49, MO	31.2
4	Scott Lillis, 50, KS	29.1
5	Tyler Hammer, 35, MO	28.9
6	Terri White, 33, KS	28.1
7	Shaye Haver, 33, KS	26.9
8	Jason Powell, 36, KS	26.9
9	Leia Anderson, 40, KS	26.5
10	Makenna Harris, 21, KS	26.2
11	Claire Keegan, 26, MO	25.7
12	Dustine Hemphill, 47, MO	25.4
13	Michael Miley, 59, KS	25.3
14	Christopher Hutchings, 37, KS	25
15	Doug Baldwin, 58, MO	23.6
16	Jonathon Bell, 38, MO	23.6
17	Wesley Baker, 47, KS	23.3
18	Amanda Cross, 36, KS	22.9
19	Brian Duvall, 54, MO	22.4
20	Jason Silvers, 53, KS	22.4
21	Rachael Collins, 28, AZ	22.2
22	Trent Davis, 16, MO	21.8

23	Lindsey Heineken, 38, KS	21
24	Lisa Joiner, 51, KS	21
25	Meghan Fraley, 39, MO	20
26	Jackie Hanzok, 33, KS	20
27	Joel Cancel, 43, KS	20
28	Yvette Cancel, 43, KS	20
29	Diane Sudlow, 63, KS	18.8
30	Gilbert Hernandez, 36, KS	17.2
31	Ana Lozano, 40, KS	17.2
32	Christine Bell, 38, MO	16.4
33	Melissa Hartzell, 46, KS	16.2
34	Clint Bond, 48, KS	15.5
35	Keanna Gross, 32, KS	15.3
36	Rilla Rinaldi, 45, MO	14.5
37	Bonnie Walker, 47, KS	13.6
38	Adam West, 43, KS	11.4
39	Elise Eldridge, 34, KS	11.4
40	Hollie Davis, 50, KS	10
41	Chadwick Meyers, 48, KS	10
42	Kim Bultsma, 48, NE	9.3
43	Nicole Yedlinsky, 48, KS	8.1
44	Theresa Tollett, 62, KS	3.6