

Race Report:

Psycho Wyco Run Toto Run 50K Trail Race

Also known as "Holy Shit!"

The first thing I have to say is:

This was the toughest race I've ever run in my life! Period!

I ran this 50K last year as my first ultra. It's hard to put into words just how difficult this course is---if you haven't run on it you just don't believe it. You don't believe 15,000 feet of elevation change over 31 miles---that's 500feet EVERY MILE! The trail was ice-covered in most places---thank God I Screwed my Shoes or I wouldn't have made it. I saw people in plain ol' road shoes who were getting nowhere fast. About 16 degrees at the start---warmed up fairly well during the race, and record attendance! 65 finishers in the 50K alone.

I started the morning with stomach problems that never really went away. 4 trips to the bathroom before I even left the house made me a little worried about how I would handle the day. I had been having problems with the IT Band on my left leg but my wife really loosened it up with a killer massage the day before. It hurt to the touch (ouch!!!) but not a twinge during the race. After saying hi to a few fellow runners we gathered at the start. RD Ben Holmes gave us a few directions regarding not falling on our collective asses and we were off!

50K. 3 loops.

Loop 1

I stayed well to the back and was surprised how well the screwed shoes did on the icy trail. In MOST places, the icy conditions were a non-factor for me. My stomach felt horrible, I drank lots, passed a few

people even, and was feeling like complete dog shit halfway through the loop. I couldn't believe how horrible I felt. I was pretty sure I was gonna drop at the end of the loop. Even the Amos Family Aid Station couldn't lift my spirits and I trudged the last couple miles to DNF at the start-finish.

When I saw Ben at the start/finish he gave me a very enthusiastic welcome and asked how I was feeling. I smiled and said GREAT! Then I said, "That's what you're supposed to do right? Smile and say GREAT!" He agreed. I wanted so badly to tell him, to tell anyone how horrible I felt. I wanted someone to know I felt like dog shit and didn't want to go on. But I promised myself before I ran my 50 miler that I would try to NEVER externalize the negative---always smile---always be positive. One of the Trial Nerds grabbed my bottle from me and re-filled it. I grabbed a PBJ sandwich and then for some reason walked out of the aid station and started loop 2. What the hell? Wasn't I gonna drop? Crap! I've gotta run another loop.

Note: Last year Caleb, the eventual winner lapped me about a mile into this loop. This year I managed to make it much farther into the loop before he lapped me on his way to a course-record finish. In-freakin-credible. He had blood running down one leg, I told him it looked like he took a spill and off he went! Great race, Caleb!

Loop 2

I decided that for loop 2 I would concentrate on "staying focused to the task at hand" I was going to walk every uphill (I ran all but the worst on the first loop) and take it very easy on the flats and downhills. My goal for loop 2 was to not give up too much time and finish with SOMETHING---ANYTHING in the tank if I decided to try loop 3. When I finished the Wyandotte Triangle I tried something I'd never had during an ultra---coffee! Wow, did it taste freakin' GREAT! My

stomach started feeling a little better, I power-walked the hills and still managed to shuffle through the flats and downhill. Some of the ice was turning to mud and I noticed something different about my ankles. They didn't hurt. Usually running this course makes my ankles swell up and hurt for days. So far, so good. When I got back to the start/finish I had an "issue" that scared me. The world started spinning and I thought I was gonna pass out! Not sure if it was a blood sugar issue or what but I was really dizzy standing still. I wasn't dizzy when I was running---so I ran some more. One more flippin' loop.

Loop 3

Loop 3 was pretty un-eventful except for the light-headedness. I got dizzy again at the first aid station as they filled my water bottle. I swayed a few times on some of the harder climbs too. And my stomach problems were back in a BIG WAY. It seemed like everything I had been eating and drinking was just sitting in my gut like a rock. My stomach was hard and bloated and actually hurt from the bouncing when I ran. It was during the paved section of this loop that I did my good deed. I caught up to a runner who was cramping really bad and I gave him some of my electrolytes. I walked with him for a few minutes then wished him luck and powered ahead. Son-of-a-bitch passed me a mile or so to go!!! NICE comeback, Minnesota! I was pretty out of it when I finally hit the aid station. Mile 8. 2 to go. I didn't even get a chance to tell Stacie thanks—you guys do GREAT aid station! I was determined not to finish in a death march so I shuffled whenever I could. I was really out of it at this point—I wasn't even sure where I was on the course so the road-crossing and short stretch to the finish actually came up on me quicker than I thought. I brought it in down the hill in style finishing in 8:12:54—over 30 minutes faster than last year and good for 54th out of 65 runners! I talked briefly with Ben about how you can't fake your way through this one. I faked my way through a 50K on Jan 1 on very little training, but I paid for being unprepared this time.

Although I secretly wanted to break 8 hours I'm very happy with my finish. Between the "light" training and stomach issues I'm lucky I even finished one loop. Barefoot Rick ran the 10 mile version---that's freakin' INSANE! My IT Band never bothered me at all. I DID, however, maim a couple of toes, but no ankle or knee troubles which is a first for me on this course. I've never felt worse after a race though. EVER. I'm sore and wiped out still!

Thanks again to RD Ben Holmes and all the volunteers. This is a first-class event! Great finisher's medal and long sleeve tech shirt---nice! Already looking forward to running it for my third time next year!

-posted by Gregg