

Psycho Wyco 50k Race Report by Travis Liles

I picked up my packet the morning of the event, said a quick hello to Ben(RD) and Caleb and found a spot to lay my bag down at the start/finish. My cousin Dylan had signed up for the 10 mile for his first trail event. I was excited he was here since he is going to help pace me at McNaughton, this would give him a glimpse into what to expect on rugged trail. It also gave him some insight to aid stations and just general atmosphere around an ultra. He's a pretty fast road runner, but had not ever been on a course like this, so I told him to just take it in, be careful of his footing and don't be afraid to walk the hills, just walk fast and keep moving. I also spotted some of my fellow SLUGS along the way and said some quick hellos.

The 10.35, 20.65, and 31 milers were all standing around the start line getting ready to begin. It was about 30 degrees and still. The ground was covered in snow, but it was not deep, just enough to cover. The ground would crunch with each step. Ah that crunch, I'd be missing that sound later. Ben gave his pre-race speech and told us to watch out on a few spots on the course where the footing was in his words "treacherous." Last year the course was covered in ice, this year it looked like it might be slick with the snow melting and the added traffic. Slick would be an understatement.



With the word "Go!" we all took off. Its hard to move very well since all distances take off at the same time. I laid back, took a spot near the middle and just tried to settle in as best as I could in the crowd. I was carrying two UD handheld bottles, one with Perpetum, and one with water. I had my LD shorts on with 2 Just Plain GU's pocketed and a few S! caps in a pill case. I was going to try to stay on the course as well as I could and only hit aid stations as necessary. My plan was only to stop after each loop to mix another bottle of Perpetum and get back out on the course. The first loop went as planned. The ground was getting beat up from all the runners and it was starting to warm up. It was a little slick in some parts, but overall the conditions were great. I was feeling good and just trying to stay focused and get in under 2 hours. I came in a little over 1:55. Dylan had finished in 1:45 so my wife and his girlfriend were there to watch him finish and were still hanging around to watch me complete the first 10. They cheered for me and Dylan came running and got my drink mixed up. I kissed my wife and baby girl and I got out of the aid station in a hurry.



I was feeling good and no issues to speak of. I was trying to duplicate the last lap and hit sub 2 hours again. I ran with a fellow named Mark for a fair amount of time until we hit some downhills where I seemed to excel a little better than him and went on my own. I was keeping hydrated and my calories up. I saw a quote from Karl King in Trail Runner Magazine not too long ago that said something along the lines of "when I feel my stomach start to turn, I take a salt pill" I stuck to that mind set instead of my normal which is to take one every hour, which I always seem to miss one or take too many. The 2nd half of the course was getting tore up pretty well in some spots. Lots of mud and standing water. It was not horrible, but I knew the next lap was going to get sloppy, so I pushed a little harder while the footing was still with me. I hit the 2nd lap in just under 2 hours. I mixed my 3rd bottle, threw the Margarita Clif Shot Blocks in my back pocket and hit the course for the final lap.

I was on track for hitting close to 6 hours for the day and was feeling confident. My legs felt good and had no real soreness or stomach problems to speak of. The first part of the lap is running through some flat areas, followed by a small stretch of road then turning onto the trail. The trail was not too bad here. There was mud but it was avoidable for the most part. About a mile or so in, that all changed. It was a slop hole. Ankle deep in a lot of areas and super slick. I enjoy trail running for this type of thing. Mud sucks, it give no return in your step, it causes your body to work overtime by having to constantly adjust to the slipping and sliding, and every step is more work than on a harder surface. You can't do anything about the course conditions other than just go with it so I just sort of grinned to myself and kept pressing. It was slowing me down a lot and areas that I had ran on lap one and two I struggled just to stay upright and get traction. When I found a spot I could run, I made myself do so. I arrived at the first aid station and just kept moving, my bottles were about 3/4 full so no need to stop. You hit this aid station twice as there is a loop of sorts that makes up miles roughly miles 3-4 until you come to the back side of the aid station. There I topped off my water and said my thanks to the workers and carried on. Here was the "treacherous" section of the course. It's basically a mud slide on the rocks and I don't mean the drink. I took this downhill as careful as I could but tried to keep speed up. After this is a climb on the road. Normally, I am not a big fan of this part, but since it was sure footing, it was welcome. I spotted a couple of runners in front of me and decided it was time to make a move. I walked with a purpose up the climb and was closing in on the two. My bottles were good to go so I passed on the self-aid and passed one of the runners

who was refilling. The other guy had on bright green gloves so I could spot him a ways in front of me. I caught up to him on a downhill and we slogged through the muck for about a mile then I found a spot I could pick up the pace and we parted ways. I knew I was only about 3 miles out and needed to keep the pace up and hold my spot. I'm out there for me and to finish, but I enjoy the competition of it also. It keeps me on my toes and knowing that I had made up 5 positions on this last lap gave me a good feeling. It also pushed me to keep the pace up so that someone would not do the same to me. My 6 hour goal had slipped so I had adjusted to 6:10. I was not even trying to stay out of the mud or water anymore. My feet were wet and they were not going to get more wet, so I just pounded away. Mud and water were flying everywhere. Each step would spray so much water that it was actually hitting the trees and leaves on the side of trail and make a sound like someone dumping out a glass of water on the ground.

I hit the backstretch and knew the end was close. I looked at my watch and was at 6:08:45.. I had to kick it. I was right on top of the end and did not notice until I saw the parking cones lining the shoot. My wife, baby, Dylan, his girlfriend, and my friends who's house we crashed at, Leonard and Sarah were clapping and cheering. It was awesome to see them all there as I crossed in 6:09:15. My legs were covered with mud from the knee down and easily had 1/4 inch thick on the backs of them.

I had an awesome day once again. The event is put together well and the aid volunteers are top notch! I cut 20 minutes off of my time from last year in what I would consider harder conditions. 2008 has been officially kicked off the right way!



