

Laurie “Nerdo” Euler’s 2008 Psycho Psummer 50k Report
and Other Semi-Humorous Ramblings

(You can't judge a book by its cover, but you can judge the length of this race report by the length of its title.)

First let me start out by saying, I'm stupid and crazy. This brings me to one of the most world famous quotes, “You've gotta be tough to be stupid.” I believe it was the legendary “Bad” Ben Holmes who coined the phrase. Speaking of coins and smallish pieces of metal, maybe he should put that on the finishers' medals next year. So back to my point. (That was an incomplete sentence just there, but I put a period anyway.) Hahaha. From a “training” perspective, I had no business running this 50k. I've really had no business running any 50k's so far, but I have anyway. I laugh in the face of training. What I mean is, I haven't run any longer than 5 miles at a time for the past month or so. Also, my mileage per week hasn't even exceeded the distance of a 50k in quite a while. This is the supporting evidence for the “stupid and crazy” comment. I can't imagine how kick @** I'd be if I actually put any effort into it. Probably not very.

To reaffirm my fears, Bad Ben sends me an e-mail a few days before the race, “Did you tell me you wanted to drop to the 15-mile race?” I'm paraphrasing here, because I don't feel like searching for the e-mail darnit! My response was something like, “No I didn't, but I probably should.” And of course he responds with “Good luck on the 50k!” Or some such nonsense. I just imagine Ben sitting around thinking, “I know it was a girl who wanted to drop back. Laurie's kind of a slacker. It's probably her.”



Wow, that was a lot of background. Maybe I should get to race day already. Blah blah, I got there at 7am, it was nice and cool. I was almost a little chilly. I said hi to the volunteers and gave Debbie “Old Hottie” (she said she preferred it to hangover hottie) one of many hugs to come...this being the least sweaty and muddy. Talking to Debbie, I met Nick, pictured above on the left, who is currently residing in Lawrence, nerding it up on the trails out there. Soon, I ran into Margaret, my new running buddy, a regular out at the Shawnee Mission park runs. She is pictured above in the center. Oh yeah, that’s me on the right. She quickly assigned Nick a new nickname, “American Eagle”...after the clothing store frequented by teens and young adolescents. He was wearing cargo shorts and sandals. I asked if he was volunteering and he said, no, he was running the 50k. I was confused by his attire. Aha! He brought clothes to change into. Whew. You might also notice that I’m wearing a 5k shirt. This definitely violates race t-shirt etiquette, as you’re never supposed to wear a shirt for a SHORTER race than you’re running...especially when you’re off by a whole order of magnitude. But we’ve already established that I’m a crazy rebel.

So after the raffle, which I will breeze over, because I didn’t win anything, we lined up for the start of the race. Nick asked if he could be my running buddy, and I said “Ummm sure, but I am going to be really slow.” Now the pressure is on...I’m running with a guy who is probably a foot taller than me.

The first few miles went well. We slowly ran the smaller hills and walked the bigger ones. Before we knew it, we were going past shelter 10. I tried to be a tour guide, calling out the upcoming hills and the names of the different sections...“Fester’s Wander”, etc. Giving advice like, grab onto that tree on your way down the hill. We came across Gary “Expansive Vocabulary” Henry when we were entering Fester’s Wander. I did my fair share of walking through this section. It is very up and down. The hills aren’t really big but there are a lot of them! I told Gary he had too many first names and perhaps he should change the middle one to a last name. Like, Gary Johnson Henry. Gary said I was decently funny for an engineer and gave me the title, Engineer +. Oh yeah, that’s going on my business cards for sure.

We continued on and went up Hedgehog Hill. I warned the other runners that this would be a pain in the...legs. We climbed it slowly but cheerily. Before you know it, we came across the world famous (ok, maybe KC famous) race photographer, Dick Ross. Darnit, if he doesn't ALWAYS park himself at the top of this not very steep but longish hill. I suppose it's one that I could run, but it comes shortly after Hedgehog, so I never feel like it. My solution is to just start running and smiling whenever I have Mr. Ross in my sights! See below for guide to "looking the part". (Razor sharp elbows are optional, but may come in handy if you're being followed by a giant math geek/American Eagle enthusiast.)



*Psycho Summer Trail Run
50K, 15-Mile*

I started to slow down a bit over the next couple miles. It's my thing. I always start out too fast and slow down halfway through a run. This happened to be half of a LOOP, which is really only a quarter of the race, but my legs weren't listening to the math. Stacy and Kyle's aid station was fabulous, of course. I had some delicious pringles and even tried the WATERMELON. I have to admit, I underestimated the awesomeness of the watermelon. After reading about a hundred trail nerd e-mails referencing watermelon, I was sick of hearing about it. It was all, "watermelon this, watermelon that." Every other word was watermelon. Quick, somebody start using the F-word. Anything but watermelon! But I discovered the secret of the watermelon...it's both a food AND beverage! It blew my mind.

By the time I made it to the out-and-back section, Coleen and Sophia had caught up with me. They ALWAYS catch me! Two out of two times I've seen them anyway. I ran with them and Nick for a while but let them go on ahead of me. I was starting to get tired and

the gravel road was torture for me. I know, the flat part was difficult? Hahaha. My knees were starting to hurt so I took some ibuprofen when I got back to the aid station. I began to consider the possibility that I would only complete one loop. Heck, at this point, I didn't even want to finish the one! Oh yeah, did I mention Pat's aid station was fabulous? It had a shower. He told me to say his was the best, but by virtue of knowing Kyle and Stacy longer, I can't do it. Plus, Kyle and Stacy are a well-oiled machine out there. Want me to refill your bottle? Water or sports drink? Want ice? Want ice in your bandana? Want ice in your shorts? Ok, they didn't really offer the shorts ice.

After the out-and-back and getting back into the woods, I began feeling much better. Less sore and more pep! I came across a runner in the Triangle and informed him we were only a few miles from the starting line. Yay! We got out of the triangle and began the great mud trek. I came upon some more runners...getting stuck in the mud, losing shoes. I knew the wyco mud and had anticipated this before the race by making sure my shoes were tied TIGHT. I too have lost my shoes in the dreaded pits. I passed one guy who decided he would just take his shoes off altogether. I thought this might be unwise, having tried it once and not liking the rocks poking my feet. It was unpleasant to say the least. But I'm no barefoot runner! I think the guy put his shoes back on pretty quick. The guys eventually got unstuck and soon caught up with me, but we were close to the starting line, so we all ran in together. I convinced them they could pass me later and they should let me finish the first half ahead. So they drafted off me. (See below. The hair makes me look FAST!) Hahaha.



When I got to the main aid station I was feeling good. I was happy to see everyone! I snacked and gave Debbie a sweaty hug. She told me I was looking strong. I take all the compliments I can get! I said hi to a friend from college and chatted with Emily Horn for a bit, then headed out. Emily is awesome by the way. She can kick my butt any day, but she chose to spare me and only run the 15-miler that day!

I was pretty excited at this point. I knew as soon as I left that aid station that I would finish, regardless. You can't quit part way through a loop! Well you can, but it might be a long walk back! I was alone for most of this loop. I ran the parts I could...the definition of what I "could" run getting smaller and smaller. Lots of things looked like hills at this point. I was still in a good mood though. After walking bits, I would say out loud, "Ok, let's go legs." Did I mention I was alone? Being alone has it's perks though. You don't have to concentrate on chasing anyone or keeping from getting passed. It's just you and the dirt and the giant attacking flies. They make you go faster though. Luckily,

right about the time I was being pursued by a most persistent fly, I came upon a runner and passed him. Whew. Lost the fly at this point. If you saw a runner at the end with a dislocated shoulder from repetitive swatting, it might have been him. I swear, I wouldn't wish that fly on anyone.

Before I knew it, I was going back up Hedgehog. It was torturous this time. I stopped several times on the way up. When is this going to end??? Got through that and eventually made it to the out-and-back. I knew this was my least favorite part so was looking forward to getting it out of the way. I saw Nick on the way into the aid station. So, I guess at this point, he was at least 3.5 miles in front of me and looking full of energy. At the aid station I came across a nice girl feeling pretty sick. She had been in first place until she hit a wall and got sick. I think she had just finished the out-and-back and was resting for a bit. She still beat me by a whole lot!

I was trying to run as much as I could but found that I was running less and less, even on flat parts. I just kept my eyes on the guy in front of me and tried to keep him in sight. I was so glad to be done with that part and get back to the aid station. Pat informed us we only had 3.5 miles left!!!

On my way back into the woods, James and another volunteer cheered me on from a distance until I got about 20 yards away. I said, "What? I'm not running fast enough? You're gonna stop clapping before I even get there?" So they humored me and clapped some more! Haha. When I came to the Triangle, with all the twists and turns, I quickly realized I had a HUMONGOUS blister on my left toe. The relief of being close to the finish was wearing off quickly and being replaced with pain, fatigue and soon MUD. At this point, the only thing that was gonna make me happy was coming out of the trees on the way to the finish line. Actually, THAT wasn't even very encouraging. I started feeling sick towards the end. Luckily, I was running with a guy who made me run the rest of the way from the bridle trail exit to the finish line. I protested, "they can't even see us from there." I'll start running when we get closer. He insisted. I sucked it up. I finished!!! The End.

I mean, the race was great. The weather was great. I finished an hour faster than Psycho Wyco, winter edition. I owe that to the lack of mud, not any improvement in myself. The volunteers were awesome and kept me going...the runners too! It was a great race!

THE END