

## Psycho Psummer 2010 15-Mile race report

I woke up this morning to gloomy skies. I thought this might be a productive day of swimming and laying out at the pool as I recover from the Psycho Psummer 15-mile trail run yesterday, July 10, 2010. Turns out the pounding rain came on quick today, about the same time as I started running yesterday, and has just now finished. Hopefully, the gloomy clouds over Lenexa will move on out. If yesterday was like today, I would have had to throw in the towel. The mud would have probably consumed both shoes otherwise.

I woke up Saturday to a cloudless sky with a little bit of heat coming on, but fortunately not that much humidity. The heat never bothered me during the race--the shade in the woods kept the trails cool. I arrived at Wyandotte County Lake Park with about 15 minutes to spare before the 50K runners took off. I had ample time to stretch out, and casually get everything ready before race start at about 8:34 am. The 50K runners were given their exact 30 minute birth after a late start to get well ahead of the 15-mile runners if they pleased.

I was surprisingly calm before the race, even though a half marathon road race was the longest I have raced. I had everything ready to go the night before to take to the race. I am relatively new to the trails of KC, but to my advantage, the only trails I have been running are at Wyandotte lake. I didn't know until packet pick-up that we were running the trails the direction I consider to be backwards. See, my first race here was the winter Run Toto Run 10-mile, which traverses around the lake counterclockwise from the main aid station shelter instead of the way we headed the north into the three hills section.

I have seen a good section of the trails at the lake and the only part I wasn't familiar with was the Boy Scout trail. I had run sections of it, but not the whole thing until yesterday. The last time I came out to trail run through Shane's Debacle, the archery range, and back through Fester's Wander, I forgot one key item: socks. I drove in sandals and had the trail shoes in the trunk. I found my socks on the stairs back at home--they had fallen out of my pack along with a dry shirt for after the run. What was I supposed to do? waste a drive and a good dry day on the trails? I ran about six that day with paper towels for heel cushion and beer coozies slipped over the toes. They almost worked. I popped out of the trails on the very northern edge and had to walk barefoot on the road back down to the dam parking lot on the warming asphalt to ease up on a big toe blister.

Besides the woes I had experienced on the trail a few weeks before, I hadn't run more than 6 miles since late March. I have been sidelined with tendonopathy problems in my right calf since training aggressively for my would-be first road marathon.

I went out too fast in the winter Run Toto Run, so I wasn't going to go out with the leaders in this race. I talked with Ken Moran, who won winter Toto, and it sounded like I had better stay well clear of him because he had a pretty aggressive time goal. From the start, I counted and let ten go ahead of me. Bad Ben let me know at packet pick-up who he was expecting to be the front runners in the 15-mile race. He was right! Letting

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ten go ahead was a smart move for me. I tangled all morning with a few runners around the 7-11th place spots.

Even with a less aggressive start, I found myself trailing Darin Schneidewind through the first 3 miles at about an 8:45/mile pace. I felt comfortable running behind him based on his 15-mile split from his Kettle Moraine 100-mile victory. I passed him when he stopped to adjust a shoe coming out of trails onto the archery range and may have gotten passed back by a few when I stopped for water at mile 3. I would get a refill of succeed and ice at the next full aid station. At that station I moved back up a spot as one guy was confused as to where to head back into the trail and I blitzed by as he was asking directions.

I didn't see too many 50K runners yet through Shane's Debacle. That changed when I came up over the road to head down the dam hill and across the bottom of the dam. I really cranked up the pace on the smooth, slight downhill there. I jumped the stone water drainage gap, simultaneously passing three 50K runners that were safely climbing down and up the water gap. I was feeling an energy boost from a gel and an S! Cap electrolyte. I was fortunate that the aid stations had more S! Caps because the gelatin capsules covering mine dissolved in my hand-held water bottle pouch as it soaked with condensation and sweat. After the fun lift I got from running the dam hill, I was talking to the 50K'ers and cheering them on. As we were climbing Fall Down Hill, I would tell them we were getting close to the Boy Scout trail area. When I reached the turn in, I was greeted with downhill pavement I could make some time on and easily glide down.

I really liked the new Boy Scout Honor trails. They are mostly flat and smooth since they are down low by the lake. But, they have a lot of camber still since not too many feet have carved on them to flatten out the singletrack path. Just when the grating on the hot feet and blisters was getting to be too much on one foot, a switchback would send you the other way to work on a hot spot on the other foot. I can't fail to mention that Gary Allen's video "Get off on the pain" is on right TV now. I think ultrarunners must feel that way at times. Besides relishing the pain, they learn to push through it. Props to everyone completing two laps to finish the 50K. My limiting factor on distance always seems to be blisters on the feet, not burning calves or quads.

Coming out of the trails meant hitting another full aid station. There I loaded up with ice and water, chomped down 4 orange wedges, grabbed a Nutella and tortilla wrap, and a hand full of peanut M&Ms. I came out of the shelter with hands full. I slammed the M&Ms with no deference towards savoring them. Trying to free up both hands I went to put my bottle lid on and put the tortilla in my mouth all while running. Well, both lid and wrap ended up in the dirt. I grabbed them both and told a 50K'er, "I'm eating that!" He concurred that he would do the same. Hopefully I got some trace minerals from the bits of Wyandotte soil I took with me!

After running back up the asphalt that was previously a blessing, I hit the bridle trail for a short stroll to the Wyandotte Triangle section. I have run it backwards and frontwards on tired legs during training runs. Usually, I can zip through switchbacks and flit through

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the trees to weave on responsive legs and a torso ready to duck a tree in order to keep the feet running straight. On this day there was no response. My legs felt dead and this disappointed me a little through the Triangle. Don't be fooled--it and Fall Down Hill are still my favorite trail sections at Wyandotte. Also, Darin was coming up on me again and I was sure he was well ahead of me. We were talking in the Triangle and thereafter. He, a trail veteran, had taken a wrong turn on the trails. I heard that twice from guys that both beat me. At least I had the edge on them for a while with my "nav" skills. I helped a woman out that I came up on to get back on course through Rubber Legs Romp. She was only about 20 steps into her wrong turn and I had to yell, "The trail is over here" four times before she caught my drift. Maybe I slurred it into one word.

After exiting the Triangle I grabbed fluids, more M&Ms and another S! Cap. We were nearing 14 miles now, so SNAFUs were bound to happen. Darin had to say that this was the driest he had seen the trails just about a quarter of a mile from where we hit the worst mud of the race. My whoopsie was throwing the S! Cap electrolyte (loaded with 367 mg of Sodium) in at the same time as the candies. I stumbled and slowed for a bit while I chewed a mouthful of chocolate and salt all at the same time. All that salt in your mouth sure will take your mind off your tired legs for a moment.

Like I said, the worst mud was up ahead. I lost Darin for good about the time my foot tried to lurch out of my shoe that sat stationary in the wet clay. I didn't quite lose the shoe, so I narrowly avoided a shoe and sock slick with mud inside. Nearing the end of the bridle trail and the end of the mud, we popped out at a quick water stop in the grass. I stopped to refill and let a guy go by that I hadn't seen all race (Edwardo Cervantes) and had no idea was trailing me. I was soon finished on the bridle trail and with just a short distance on pavement and grass to the finish, I was able to reclaim some speed to the finish. I took a look back to make sure I was clear, then happily sprinted into the finish. I came in 10th of 191 listed finishers at 2:36:52, while 214 were registered starters. I don't know if the others didn't start, didn't finish, or if the cougars got them.

Thanks to all the great aid station workers! I can't say enough about how much the volunteer aid helped to keep me cool. I could have made it through the course without extra fuel, but the fluids and ice they provided was crucial to every runners' success. I think I refilled my bottle at 6 of the 9 available aid stations. I didn't really need much help in the cooler, shorter winter Run Toto Run I completed in February. This was the first time I fully experienced how well the Trail Nerds nourish their ultrarunners and those like me who only set out to tackle half of a 50K. The main aid station was super busy, but like Sophia said--they stepped up their game. The race directing by Bad Ben and Sophia was superb. Again, Thank You!

Brady Boyle