

I went into the RunTotoRun with some apprehension. I had been blessed with a free entry to the 10 mile, courtesy of Dick Ross on Facebook, just a week before the race. Because I had never run at WyCo, I read the past reports and got myself a bit unnerved.

That was the right feeling to go in with! The trails at WyCo are like nothing I have ever run on. Hills that are literally soul killing, mud up to my eyeballs, terrain of every kind and switchbacks nonstop for miles on end - all of this was daunting for a newbie.

BUT - and this is a huge but (no comments about the size of mine please LOL) - it was so awesome, and beautiful, that all of the difficulty of the trail has already faded. First, and foremost, the race director Ben and his lovely lady Sophia are very welcoming, and so were all the Nerds I met along the way. That was also true of all the participants - none of whom I had ever met before yesterday. I fell three times - in mud - and was helped up and asked after each time. You won't catch many road racers doing that mid-race.

The volunteer stations were great, but the most memorable thing about them was the huge positive energy you could feel as you approached and departed. Every time I passed through one, of course I was offered water and so on - but the people actually spoke to me, cheered me on, and let me know that I could do this. This may sound corny, but that got me back running every time, and running with a smile. I've been racing for several years in road races, and I always appreciate the volunteers, but I can honestly say I have never been at a race where every single station was manned with folks who seems to be happy to be there, and whose presence made me smile.

The course itself was muddy, difficult, challenging, hellish at points, and made me want to puke, and the funny thing is, I LOVED that about it. I felt like I was really doing something out there. The scenery was gorgeous and I stopped and looked over such pretty snowy, leafy scenes that I could hardly believe I was in fact in KCK. WyCo Park is definitely going to get repeat visits from me. Having never even entered the park before, it was a real treat to know that this exists so near a neighborhood I work and volunteer in frequently.

My time was never even a goal for me; I went in not wanting to DNF and hoping, more than anything, to find a love for trail running. Goal accomplished. The people, the sights, the thrill of the challenge - who could want for more?

Thanks for a great, muddy, memorable race!