

THE BUCKET LIST

by Sophia Wharton

If your only impression of Kansas is driving I-70 west on the way to Leadville, you're missing what the state has to offer. To know Kansas, you must experience the Flatrock 50-km near Independence. While we may not have the vast splendor of the Rockies, the might of the Pacific Northwest or the ocean breezes of California, we do still boast some pretty cool stuff.

New to the ultra-race directors' list, I've been more behind the scenes this season, and I missed running. When I saw that my co-race director Bad Ben Holmes and I could squeeze the Flatrock 50-km into our schedule, we jumped at the chance.

The weather was perfect with fall nipping at summer's heels - a great day to take on this stunning course.

This trail is a tech-junkie's pharmacy. Thirty-one miles of craggy, rocky rocks; rocks this way and rocks that, beauty in nature's design, a mosaic of unpolished limestone. Even for the seasoned trail runner it was a challenge. Bad Ben

was in heaven, dancing over the boulders like Fred Astaire.

"I love this stuff! Don't you love how we run along a cliff with a giant drop?"

Yes, we have cliffs in Kansas. And Ben and I finally met up later along the course, but before we did, it played out like this, as I called out reports to those coming toward me:

"The frontrunner's looking strong. Looks like he's going for the course record." (The record was set by Trail Nerd Caleb Chatfield in 2006)

"You're in fourth place, five minutes behind Paul Schoenlaub!"

"How far ahead of me is Ben?"

"...15 to 20 minutes."

Sigh. He really does excel at technical. I settled into the mid-back of the pack, feeling rather over-stimulated by the rocks. Amazing how on the back end, what seems exciting and technical on the way out, becomes seemingly un-runnable on the way back.

Most of this year's entrants came from four states: Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma. That, with a little sprinkling of Texas and California, made up the pool of competitors.

As I squeezed through one of the rocky divides I'd only seen in pictures. I thought to myself, "so this is Kansas." Not breaking any records, I snapped a picture with my phone.

Caleb's record of 4:29:21 remains intact. This year's winner, Matthew Schneider came close with a 4:31:40 finish.

To ultrarunners from the 44 states not represented: Put this one on the bucket list. The course is clearly marked. Aid stations are well-staffed with a variety of musical selections from Heavy Metal to Oldies and Rap. On a budget? You can camp or stay at the Super 8. So, take out your atlas. Get off the highway, and really experience Kansas. ■

FLAT ROCK 50K INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS SEPTEMBER 26 | ROCKY TRAILS

1. Matthew Schneider, 23, NE	4:31:40
2. Christopher Farney, 25, MO	5:08:01
3. Paul Schoenlaub, 50, MO	5:28:26
4. Aaron Norman, 28, MO	5:37:32
5. Greg Burger, 42	5:45:46
6. Scott Hill, 30	5:46:01
7. Brad Bishop, 24, MO	5:46:05
8. Steve Siegele, 48	6:29:44
9. Jeffrey Elliott, 48	6:31:31
10. Earl Blewett, 45, OK	6:36:20
11. Dave Krishock, 49	6:46:27
12. James Mercer, 40, MO	6:50:53

13. Jeff Wells, 51, MO	6:57:21
14. Jim Fiore, 32, TX	7:03:51
15. Richard Smith, 51, OK	7:06:42
16. Ben Holmes, 52	7:13:04
17. Jay Feist, 49	7:15:46
Greg Klenda, 47	7:15:46
19. Andy Bowman, 46	7:16:25
20. Levi Bowles, 28	7:22:21
21. Kurt Wiedenkiller, 42	7:30:24
22. Adam Monaghan, 26	7:30:42
23. Nikki Watson, 38, OK	7:35:03
24. Jay Mooney, 34, MO	7:42:31
25. Tammy Winn, 40, OK	7:42:55
26. Geoffrey Clark, 38	7:43:32
27. Kimberly Spielman, 34	7:55:57
Sophia Wharton, 39	7:55:57
29. Marvin Lee, 48, OK	7:59:32

Rob Philip, 44, OK	7:59:32
31. Marshall Eidenberg, 41	8:05:09
32. Jenny Fritz, 34, TX	8:05:38
33. Janeen Lovelace, 29, OK	8:07:46
34. Hui-Qing Yin, 34, MO	8:32:05
35. Bill Barnett, 55	8:32:15
36. Roy Schneider, 43, NE	8:37:35
37. Jeff Vieyra, 62, CA	8:48:52
38. Christy Craig, 31	8:53:09
39. Patrick Allen, 54	8:53:37
40. Long Vu, 60, OK	9:00:10
41. Ken Childress, 50, OK	10:10:48
42. Ken Saveth, 50, OK	10:16:04
43. Dennis Haig, 49	10:37:58
Nicole Haig, 23	10:37:58

11. Grant Blackwell, 22, IN	5:57:34
12. Jeremy Dellabalma, 28, NC	6:06:07
Stephen Spear, 25, NC	6:06:07
14. Dwayne Jones, 40	6:13:10
15. Rick Croutharmel, 46, NC	6:13:38
16. Allen Phillips, 43	6:14:11
17. Kathleen Cusick, 34, TN	6:14:22
18. Nate Lawrence, 28	6:15:25
19. Gregory Millsagle, 47	6:16:01
20. Christopher Robbins, 43	6:17:00
21. Elizabeth Faye, 26, MA	6:18:26
22. Dave Hendrick, 37	6:18:35
23. Dave Warfel, 25	6:24:35
24. Gary Harvey, 54	6:25:05
25. Bob Clouston, 47	6:25:29
26. Kate Joyce, 34	6:31:32
27. William Tolbert, 40	6:35:31
28. Ling Dao, 32	6:36:34
29. Carter Wiecking, 39	6:36:46
30. Lucia Alzaga, 34, IL	6:38:08
31. Jack Broadus, 59	6:43:17
32. Al McDorman, 57	6:43:37
33. Liz Heavner, 48	6:43:53
34. Mike Riggs, 26, NC	6:44:35
35. Gordon Thomson, 50	6:44:41

36. Shelley Moss, 34	6:45:39
37. Maureen Rohrs, 53, MD	6:45:46
38. Christian Ward, 50, MI	6:46:25
39. James Harrison, 51	6:54:04
40. Jonathan Wicks, 29, TX	6:54:12
41. Dawn Banka, 37, TX	6:56:58
42. Tom Glaeser, 54, WI	6:59:51
43. Greg Ryan, 38, NC	7:00:27
44. Laren Rusin, 32, MD	7:01:10
45. Donald Schatz, 40	7:02:21
46. Douglas Taylor, 29	7:03:07
47. Steve Flannery, 40	7:04:13
Joe Barrow, 42	7:04:13
49. Carol Bartram, 45	7:11:40
50. Jo Short, 44	7:16:16
51. Byron Gordon, 59	7:18:05
52. Rhonda Venable, 48	7:19:33
Steve Amarillo, 47	7:19:33
54. Larry Geer, 51, MD	7:22:27
55. Kim Helms, 37, TN	7:28:49
56. Scott Lincicome, 33, DC	7:28:56
57. Matt Baker, 28	7:30:58
58. David Smith, 43	7:33:35
59. Delia Kulukundis	7:34:09
60. John Hill, 45	7:35:53

61. Randy Spell, 49, NC	7:39:00
62. Michael Osicki, 32	7:41:22
Roselle Abregu, 33	7:41:22
64. Samuel Fye, 34	7:41:27
65. Lee Griffey, 39, NC	7:45:12
66. Bill Dey, 49, IL	7:47:38
67. Paul Tusin, 41, NJ	7:49:41
68. Matthew Anderson, 49	7:55:37
69. Bob Beville, 53, MD	7:57:45
Deloris Clark, 43	7:57:45
71. Robin Dreeke, 40	7:57:46
72. Ben Tesdahl, 57, MD	8:08:40
73. Walter Esser, 71, NC	8:16:54
74. Thomas Soldan, 28	8:19:43
75. Joseph Campolatttan, 28, NJ	8:20:03
76. Jennifer Yentel, 36, NC	8:22:55
77. Angela White, 48, NC	8:23:21
78. Brian Gee, 27, NC	8:35:38
79. Kari Anderson, 48	8:40:28
80. Billy Cabell, 31	8:40:48
81. Kelley Thacker, 32	8:54:48
82. Adam Matheson, 30	8:54:50