

The Muddy Buzzard Musings of the Trials of Miles in Big Sky Country

The Wulf Was Howlin' Today, Saturday, June 18, 2011

WOW!!!! That pretty much sums up the results from the 4th Annual Wulfman's CDT-14K Trail Race. The race Run in opposite directions every other year, this year saw the race in the northbound direction between Pipestone and Homestake. Although not considered a technical trail, the course makes up for it with a combination of climbs and altitude. With a starting elevation of 1935 meters, the course rises almost 400 meters in a steady climb over the first 5.5 kilometers. That leads to a series of ups and downs over the last 8.5 kilometers; but, with a net downhill to the finish at 1905 meters.

However, being a single track trail all the way – the race start has to be adjusted to accommodate the field which is limited to 240 runners. Based on predicted times and consideration by the race directors, the runners are seeded to go out on the course in 10-second intervals. With the faster runner's going out first, this allows all of the runner's great access to the trail with very little needs for passing or other potential conflicts.

The 2009 running of this route was held in a cold, steady rain that made for some miserable racing conditions. Not so this year. Although a bit breezy in places – race day was cool and dry. And, in spite of the massive amounts of snow through the winter and the rain this spring – the course was mostly dry and fast. Just a couple of notoriously swampy spots held any mud. And, none of those were bad enough to have a negative impact on the race.

The result – a spate of fast times with a rash of course records. As with the race preview, we'll start with the women's event. The race at the front of the pack fell together much like predicted. Sarah Graves of Ballantine started the race 40 seconds ahead of co-favorite Michele Bazzanella of Butte. Bazz got several glimpses of Sarah on some of the switchbacks on the course. And, she maintained the gap well throughout the race. But, in the end, Sarah pulled away by 23 seconds – 68:34 to 68:57.

It was a great race between the two. Michele came into the race as defending champion; and, has proven herself over the last couple of years as a trail racing specialist. Sarah made a great transition from the roads. Having run 2:46:20 (and missing the Olympic Trials Marathon qualifying standard by a mere 20 seconds) at this year's Eugene Marathon – she clearly has some wheels. In the end, Sarah's speed was just too much for Michele's trail acumen.

Making a big jump in performance was Beth Schumate of Clancy, moving up two spots from her 2010 5th place. Beth at 69:35, finished just 37 seconds slower than Bazz – after being seeded 90 seconds back.

The top 5 was rounded out by a couple of teenagers (but not strangers to the event). Olivia Wood (16) of Anaconda moved up 3 spots with her 70:20; and, 18-year old Bekah Kirtley of Fromberg nearly broke the 71 minute barrier with her 71:01.

Sarah Graves of Ballantine won the race with a finish time of 1:08:34.

Photo courtesy of Samasara Chapman



Lynn Reynolds of Dillon won the race for the second year in a row, and his finish time of 54:30 broke Thomas Jodoin's existing course record by nearly 2 minutes.

Misty Oswald photo



The top 3 men finished in exactly the order in which they started. Lynn Reynolds of Dillon and the U of M track and XC teams was out first. But, Jimmy Grant of Missoula made a hard charge in the first 5 kilometers and was nipping at Lynn's heels at the top of the switchbacks. But, at that point, Lynn turned on the jets and blasted away from Jimmy for the win in 54:30. Jimmy held on for a close second, just 35 seconds back in 55:05. (Grant's time bodes well for his projected attempt at a sub-2:30 marathon in 3 weeks at the Missoula Marathon.)

Both runners were under the old course record of 56:29 – set by Thomas "Big Bird" Jodoin in 2009 – and they were the first two runners to complete the course in under 56:00 (sub-4:00 per km). The CR and the sub-56 prime normally would have earned Lynn a \$150 cash prize bonus. But, due to his collegiate eligibility and NCAA criteria, Lynn had to turn away the cash and settle for a round of applause and a hearty pat on the back.

Speaking of Big Bird, Thomas hung on for third in a fine time of 56:50 – just 21 seconds outside of his CR from 2 years ago. He seemed to race well; but, Lynn and Jimmy were just too quick this day. In 4th was Big Bird's Vigilante Track Club Teammate Hunter Nelson of Helena at 57:17. And, rounding out the top 5 was 48-year old Scott Creel of Bozeman in 57:32 (more on Scott below).

All in all, 7 guys ran under 1:00; and, it took 62:32 to crack the top 10. A big, big jump in the level of racing at this great event.

The master's races were based on two criteria. There were the traditional age-group results. But, the primary awards were based on age-graded criteria. In this format, your time is adjusted based on your age – trying to equalize your time against those of the younger, under-40 crowd.

For the women's master's – the age group ace was Nicole Hunt. Her 77:51 was a solid run (good enough for 9th overall amongst the women). What really makes it special is the fact that she is in the 2nd trimester of pregnancy – with twins no less!?!?!? Holy \$&!# It just proves – a stud is a stud is a stud. Rounding out the top 5 in the 40+ division was Elizabeth Chura of Gallatin Gateway in 82:58, Wendy Ferris Schoonen of Butte (who turned 40 on race day) in 86:10, Marnie Johnson of Belgrade in 86:11; and, Christine Evans of Bozeman in 86:44.

It was no surprise when wonderfully talented Debbie Magilke (62) of Billings won the women's 40+ age-graded event with an a.g. time of 1:06:03, a time that broke the previous record by 2:54.



Photo by Samasara Chapman

But, the age-graded awards were “owned” by ageless Debbie Magilke of Billings. A fixture on the Montana running and racing scene for over 35 years, Debbie was the 8th overall master in 88:47. But, apply her age adjustment and she hit 66:03 – smashing the old age-graded record of 68:57 – and garnering her \$75 in the process.

Following Debbie in the age-graded results were Sherry Vogel of Butte at 67:31, Elizabeth Chura of Gallatin Gateway in 69:52, Momma Hunt in 74:38; and, Marnie Johnson in 75:23.

The big fireworks for the master's was definitely on the men's side. 4 of the top 10 overall were of the over 40 ilk. The top of the over 40 crowd was led by Scott Creel of Bozeman

with an incredible 57:32. Scott has been quiet on the racing scene the last couple of years. But, with his impressive wins and course record at the Bridger Ridge Run, he established himself as one of the best trail runners in the state. And, his February race at the Montana Men's Master's Mile showed he was back in the groove.

2nd behind Scott was Pat Judge of Helena, himself pulling in a sub one hour run with his 59:30 and 7th overall. Mike Telling (Dillon) was 8th overall and 3rd Master with his 60:44. Butte's Jeff Braun was 4th master in 62:32 – also breaking into the top 10 overall. Rounding out the top 5 over 40 was Paul Koch of Colorado Springs (and an old friend of Judge's) with his 65:40.

Scott Creel (48), the legendary 10-time winner and course record holder of Bozeman's Bridger Ridge Run, made an appearance at Wulfman's race and he showed his metal by demolishing the previous 40+ age-graded record by nearly five full minutes. His amazing a.g. time was 51:23.



Samasara Chapman photo

But, it was the age graded results where Scott really blew things out of the water. The old age graded record was 56:13 by Kirk Keller. And, on the southbound course last year, Ray Hunt ran what was considered a stratospheric 53:48 age-graded. Scott reached into a whole new level of the atmosphere.....at 48 (to be 49 in just a few day) Scott's time adjust to and incredible 51:23. This resulted in prize money of \$75 for the age graded record and another \$75 for the 56:00 age graded prime.

The top 5 age graded looked a lot like the overall 40+ results. Judge (41) at 56:11, Braun (47) at 56:19 and Telling (42) in 56:54. Kirk Keller (at 52, the old northbound age graded record holder) cracked the adjusted top 5 with his 57:26. In all 7 guys found their way under 1 hour with age adjusted times. Pretty nifty running for some old guys.

The race clearly hit some new levels of competition and popularity. With several new records being set, the performances at all levels took on a whole new dimension. And, the 240 available slots were filled by April 30th – over a month earlier than 2010. With great organization, a great trail, fantastic awards and a top-notch post race picnic – it's no wonder that this is becoming a “must do” event on the Montana racing circuit.

The Wulfman would have been pleased to see all his people having such a great time out along the backbone of the continent.

See you on the roads, tracks and trails

The Muddy Buzzard