

Saturday, 20 June 2015

Josh Panasuk, Nicole Hunt run to Wulfman titles By [Bill Foley](#)

Josh Panasuk surprised himself Saturday at the Wulfman's Continental Divide Trail Race. The MSU Billings runner and former Butte High Bulldog ran to victory with a time of 59 minutes, 53 seconds for his first title in the 14-kilometer race that started at Pipestone Pass and finishes at Homestake Pass.

Lynn Reynolds, 26, of Dillon placed second overall at 1:00:48. Mike Telling, 46, of Dillon was third on the men's side at 1:03:38, while Butte's Jeff Braun placed fourth at 1:04:38, and Butte's Don Foley took fifth in 1:05:46. The 22-year-old Panasuk, who has run the race in each of its eight years of existence, placed second the last two years. "I was surprised. I didn't think I was in that good of shape,"

said Panasuk, who noted that he has been working at a tire shop in Billings. "I haven't been training that hard with work and what not." During the race, Panasuk said he was looking over his shoulder for Nicole Hunt, who defended her title on the women's side. "I was worried about Nicole, honestly, coming up on my tail," Panasuk said. "Right before the race she said, 'I'm going to come after you. You know that, right?'"



Josh Panasuk finishes strong to win Wulfman's Continental Divide Trail Race. (Bill Foley photos)



Nicole Hunt

Panasuk had good reason to be worried. Hunt, 45, now of Anaconda, won with a time of 1:05:44. She ran 1:06:06 in winning last year when the route was run in the opposite direction.

Olivia Wood, 20, of Anaconda, placed second among women in 1:10:51. Kaitlin MacDonald, 26, of Bozeman finished third at 1:12:57, Ashley Powell, 38, of Missoula was fourth at 1:13:16, and Bailey Roberts, 29, of Bozeman finished fifth at 1:14:15.

Hunt, who beat all but four men in the race, laughed at the idea of beating Panasuk.

"We tease each other," Hunt said. "I think we were close a long time ago at the beginning of this race, when he was a lot younger."

Hunt said she didn't reach her goal time. It didn't help that she didn't have a lot of company in the race, which starts a runner every 10 seconds.

"I wanted a sub 1:05, so I was sort of off my goal," she said.

"But I was pushing myself, running by myself. At least half the race I was by myself. I didn't see anybody."

Hunt is in training for next month's Mountain Running National Championships in Bend, Oregon. There, the top four women qualify for the World Championships in Wales. She qualified for the World Championships in 2006 and 2010.

"I felt really good. I've been training in the mountains every weekend," Hunt said after her victory. "I just love racing in the mountains. It's my new love. I was a track runner and a marathon runner, now I'm definitely a mountain runner."

When he's not working on tires, Panasuk is preparing for another season at MSU Billings. He will redshirt in cross country next season to focus on his last year of indoor track. He will run outdoor track and cross country the following season. "The indoor is really where I want to drop some time, especially in the mile," Panasuk said. "Hopefully I'll be at the national caliber, or close to it."

First, he is going to take a little time to celebrate his first Wulfman victory in eight tries.

"It's been eight years," Panasuk said. "I've wanted to do it. It just kind of happened this year. It fell into place."

In all, 118 women and 100 men ran the race.