

23rd Annual Mountain Masochist Trail Run
“The Year of Fast Women”
by David Horton

The MMTR is the last race in the Lynchburg Ultra Series (LUS) and for the past three years, the Montrail UltraCup Championship race. Because of this, the Masochist attracts a highly competitive field of runners. The men's field was headed by 2003 and 2004 champion and course record-holder, Dave Mackey (Boulder, CO). No male had ever won the MMTR three times in a row. George Brown, Dennis Herr, and Courtney Campbell had each won two MMTR's in a row. Janice Anderson has been the only woman to win the MMTR three years in a row (1994-1996). Those who hoped to give Mackey some competition were Eric Grossman (Emory, VA), Todd Walker (Amherst, MA), and Paul DeWitt (Monument, CO).

The women's field looked even tougher (and was) than the men's field. The field was weakened (slightly) by the withdrawal of Beverly Anderson-Abbs shortly before the race. In June of this year, Annette Bednosky (Jefferson, NC) won the Western States 100 Miler in the third fastest time ever at that event. On the same day, Anne Lundblad (Asheville, NC) was just seconds out of 1st at the World 100K Championship. Because of her experience on trails and the MMTR course, I seeded Annette ahead of Anne who is a very strong runner.

These were not the ONLY fast women at the MMTR. Local runner and professional tri-athlete, Cat Phillips, has run three ultras and won them all, beating both Annette and Anne at the Holiday Lake 50K in February 2005.

As expected, Mackey took the early lead, but was closely pursued by several runners. Mackey checked into Aid Station 4 (11.2 miles) at 8:02am. This was almost his exact time for his 2003 and 2004 races (6:48 and 6:52). He stayed within one to two minutes (at each aid station) of his pace in 2003 and 2004 until very late in the race. At Aid Station 4, Mackey was trailed by Grossman (8:04am), Jason Mayer (Grafton, WI), (8:05am), and Paul DeWitt (8:07). Mayer had just run one ultra (a 50 miler in 6:40) but was a 2:28 marathoner.

These four runners stayed very close through aid station 10 (Long Mountain Wayside, 26.9 miles) with Mackey at 9:58am, Dewitt 9:59am, Grossman 9:55am, and Mayer 10:00am. This pace is a 6:56 finishing pace.

By Aid Station 12 (32.1 miles), Mackey had a 2 minute lead over DeWitt, 8 minutes over Grossman, and 22 minutes over Mayer. Mackey had increased his lead to 4 minutes over DeWitt by aid station 14 (41.5 miles) and went on to win for the third consecutive year in 6:54:11. DeWitt pushed it the last mile (the only accurate mile on the course) to dip under seven hours in a time of 6:59:52. Grossman took 3rd place with a time of 7:18:26.

As expected, Bednosky took the lead from the start. At aid station 4 (11.2 miles) she checked in at 8:14am with Phillips at 8:15am, Jenn Shelton (Virginia Beach, VA) 8:18am, and Lundblad at 8:19am. Jenn is only 21 years old, but had made dramatic improvements in 2005.

At Long Mountain Wayside (26.9 miles – aid Station 10), Bednosky and Phillips both checked in at 10:28am (7:56 overall finish pace). Lundblad checked in at 10:31am and Shelton at 10:38am. On the long climb up to aid station 11 (29.5 miles) with the “Rocky” music blaring, Lundblad made her move. Mackey ran this section in 30 minutes!! Bednosky checked in 1 minute after Lundblad, with Phillips checking in 4r minutes after Lundblad. Exiting the loop, Lundblad had a 4 minute lead on Bednosky and 12 minutes on Phillips. At this point the question seemed to be, would Lundblad beat Nikki Kimball's 2004 course record of 7:55:57? At this point, she was 8 minutes ahead of the record with Bednosky 4 minutes ahead of the course record.

Lundblad continued on strongly to finish the MMTR with a new course record of 7:49:48, finishing 6th overall! Her husband Mark finished 5th in 7:38:52. Bednosky came in 2nd, BUT still finished 5 seconds under Kimball's record with a time of 7:55:52. I had told Bednosky a week earlier that she would have to

break 8 hours and that still might not win ... and that is exactly what happened. Phillips finished 3rd in a time of 8:13:15, the 4th fastest time ever in the 23 year history of the Masochist. Jenn Shelton took 4th place with 8:28:10. Justine Morrison (Washington D.C.) came in 5th with a time of 8:33:52. Ragan Petrie (Decatur, GA) finished 6th in 8:48:49. This 6th place time would have won 14 of the previous 22 Masochists. In the 23 year history of the MMTR, 4 of the top ten times were in 2005. It was definitely the year of the fast women.

Dink Taylor (Huntsville, AL) and Susan Baehre (Triangle, VA) in 7:37:40 and 10:29:38 respectively were the Masters winners. Herman Richards (Stockton, NJ) and Barbara Isom (Silver Springs, MD) in 9:14:04 and 10:52:00 respectively were the Grand Masters winners. The Super Masters winner was Frank Harrison (Bradenton, FL) in 10:53:33.

Special embroidered 10 year jackets were presented to Frank Harrison, Tom Possert (Brownsboro, AL) and Lonnie Vogan (Huntsville, AL). John Price (Virginia Beach, VA) received an embroidered Patagonia Primo jacket for completing the MMTR for the 20th time. Price also won the Best Blood Award for doing a face plant crossing Dancing Creek at Aid Station 4. It was possible that he had fractured his cheekbone. And as the evening progressed ... his face and cheek became very distorted and very colorful. Tom Green (Columbia, MD) finished the MMTR for the 23rd time, the only person to complete EVERY Masochist.

Neal (AKA Rosie, Push-ups Bryant) has overseen the annual Fastest Fat Boy Award (200 lbs and up) for several years. This year (to be fair to the fairer sex) a new award was instituted... "The Bethany", given to the fastest female who weighed at least 150 lbs and completed the MMTR. This award is named after one of our good friends (Bethany Hunter Patterson) who does not weigh 150 lbs.... yet!!

The winner of this year's Fastest Fat Boy was Andrew Semanyk (Downington, PA) weighing in at 204 lbs. Semanyk finished in 37th place with a time of 9:19:58. Ashley McCowen (Carrboro, NC) took the Bethany award in 10:36:26.

A new novel competition conducted after finishing the race was to see how many times a runner could bench press 135 lbs. This was called the "Iron Ho" award. For the men, Adam McChesney (Morgantown, WV) completed 25 reps and received a hoe for his work. Denise Davis (Franklin, NC) was able to perform one repetition of 135 lbs. and was awarded an iron .

Annette Bednosky and Mark Lundblad (Asheville, NC) were the overall winners of the LUS. Byron Backer (Greenville, SC) and Susan Baehre (Triangle, VA) were the Masters winners of the LUS. Thirty-two runners completed all three races in the LUS (Holiday Lake 50K, Promise Land 50K, and MMTR 50 Miler). All these runners are eligible to complete the Horton Slam if they complete the Hellgate 100K in December.

Remember ... The 24th Annual Mountain Masochist 50 Mile Trail Run will be held on November 4, 2006. Maybe this new date will bring a lot of new obstacles ...Who knows! We could continue to have great weather or it could be very, very cold. My wife says we are getting too old for this particular race (so much hard work and logistical problems) and she is encouraging me to stop at 25 years. Hmmm... I just can't see that happening ... but you never know!