

**25 Years of Masochism**  
**1983 - 2007: MMTR 50 Miler**  
*By David Horton*

One of the major issues that new race director Clark Zealand will have to deal with up front is the entry process. We had already filled to 300 registered runners in May of this year. If we had an open registration, we could have had over 500 runners. Ultrarunning is very popular and growing all the time.

The MMTR is one of the 6 races in the Montrail Ultra Cup that guarantees the first 3 male and female runners automatic entry into the Western States 100 Miler. It is also the final race in the Lynchburg Ultra Series (LUS). These two things guarantee a quality field of runners every year.

One of the things that is most special about the Masochist (in my opinion) is that it is not just a race . . . it is an event. With the great pre- and post-race meals, it is a homecoming event that is like a reunion for me and everyone else. As usual we were serenaded by Danny McDonnell at the pre-race meal in a very truthful version of the Masochist theme song that he wrote and sings for us every year. Runners received either a quality t-shirt or sweatshirt and a pair of Smartwool socks on Friday night. Sub 12-hour finishers received a Patagonia silk-weight shirt. Top 10 males and females and age group winners also received embroidered Smartwool jackets. Those who finished the LUS (Holiday Lake 50K, Promise Land 50K, and MMTR 50 Miler) received a Patagonia Houdini jacket.

As we were starting the pre-race briefing, Andrew Thompson and Jonathan Basham began running at the race's finish line in Montebello, running back to start, and joining everyone else on Saturday morning ( yes, a double Masochist ). It was hard for many to believe that they were going to run all night long and then do the race the next day. Andrew was going for his 10th finish and the beautiful 10-year jacket. I told him that he would have to abide by the cut-offs just like everyone else.

The favorites in the men's field this year were: Eric Grossman (Emory, VA) who ran 6:53 for the victory in 2006, Nate McDowell (Los Alamos, NM) who was the national champion at 50 miles a few years ago, and Zach Miller (Ann Arbor, MI). Miller had called me in early October asking the possibility of entering the already full and closed field at the Masochist. He told me he had finished in first or second at all 50 milers that he had run. I told him I would let him in if he could guarantee me that! There were many other very good males in the field.

The ladies field had even better runners. The best ultra runner in the nation, Nikki Kimball (Bozeman, MT) was entered for the third time in the MMTR. Kimball had won the MMTR in her two previous attempts and was also the course record-holder. Krissy Moehl (Bend, OR) and Bethany Patterson (Richmond, VA) were two previous winners who were expected to give Kimball some competition. Annette Bednosky (Jefferson, NC ) had also been running very well.

Weather conditions on race day were very good, low thirties at the start with highs in the upper 50s with good sunshine throughout the day, although it became a little windy later in the day. As expected, the two early leaders were Grossman and Miller. However, they were joined by a first time 50 mile runner Brian Schmidt (Leesburg, VA). Through aid station 7 (20.2 miles) Grossman, Miller, Schmidt, and McDowell were there all at the same time. By aid station 10 (26.9 miles - the halfway point in the race), Grossman had a 1 minute lead over Miller, 3 minutes over Schmidt, and 5 minutes over McDowell. At 29.5 miles (aid station 11 – famous for their blaring “Rocky” music), it became apparent that it was a 2-man race between Grossman and Miller. Grossman had a 2 minute lead over Miller with Schmidt 12 minutes back.

By the loop (aid station 13 - 33.6 miles) Grossman and Miller were together. They stayed together through aid station 14, 15 and 16. After this aid station, there is supposed to be only 2.9 miles to the finish. Of course, these are Horton miles, which means it is about 3.8 miles to the finish? Miller put the hammer down and beat Grossman to the finish completing the course in a fine time of 7:04:16 with Grossman just over 2 minutes behind. It was another 34 minutes before the next runner Schmidt finished to take 3rd place

in his inaugural 50 miler. Only two other runners were able to break 8 hours.

Even though the women's field looked VERY tough on paper, none of the ladies looked to be at the top of their game and their results showed it. Through aid station 4 (11.2 miles), Kimball had a 3 minute lead over Patterson and 4 minutes over Bednosky. Just 2 more minutes behind Bednosky was surprise entrant 21-year-old Sabrina Moran (Williamsburg, VA). Moran had only run 3 ultras and no 50 milers. Through aid station 8 (22.3 miles) Kimball still had 3 minutes over Patterson, 6 minutes over Bednosky and 12 minutes over Moran. By the loop (33.6 miles) Kimball had 8 minutes over Patterson, 11 over Bednosky and 12 over Moran. Kimball continued on strongly to take the win in 8:31:42, her third win in three attempts. Even though she ran her slowest time at the MMTR, she showed tremendous courage in that she was coming back from injury and not in top shape. Bednosky took over 2nd in the loop and finished in second place with a time of 8:43. Moran took third in 8:49. Patterson became ill and fell far from the lead but was able to finish.

Bednosky was the **female's master's winner** as well. Serge Arbona (Baltimore, MD) was the **men's masters winner** finishing in a tie for 4th overall. The **grand master's winners** were David Drach (West Ossipee, NH) and Sally Brooking (Marietta, GA). The **men's super masters winner** was Dave Grider (Greensboro, NC). The **Mountain Man and Woman winners** were first time 50-mile runners Krista Meisch and Jeremy Ramsey of Lynchburg. Jeremy finished 9th overall and Krista was 8th overall in the ladies division. I am very proud and impressed by these two local runners and expect more out of them in the future. **Best blood** went to LeAnn Ankney (Sturgis, MI). **Fastest Fat Boy** went to Trey Barnes (Granite Falls, NC). The **Iron Horse award** went to Neal (Rosie) Bryant and Kate Kayne-Joyce. Rosie completed 35 repetitions of 150 pounds and Kate completed 21 reps of 75 pounds. The Brian McNiell "**horses rear-end**" award, given to the last finisher under 12 hours, was given to John Teague (Charlotte, NC).

One of the highlights of the MMTR Awards Dinner is to present the beautiful 10 year jackets. Receiving their jackets this year were Derrick Carr (Fredricksburg, VA), Dave Grider, and Andrew Thompson. I am very proud of these guys for completing 10 MMTRs. No . . . Andrew does not get credit for 11! Finally, a special engraved crystal clock was awarded to our one and only 25-time finisher, Tom Green (Columbia, MD). Tom has now started 25 MMTRs and finished 25 MMTRs. Fantastic job Tom.

Overall winners of the LUS were Chris Reed (Allentown, PA) and Lenore Studt (Columbia, MD). The master's winners were John Cassilly (Glen Allen, VA) and Donna Elder (Lynchburg, VA). These winners received a beautiful eagle trophy for their excellent performance at all three LUS events. It has truly been a labor of love to have directed the MMTR for 25 years.

I have put a tremendous amount of work into this event. It has meant so much to me and I know it has meant much to many of you as well. I feel honored and privileged to have directed it all these years. Lord willing, I will continue to be there each year to help Clark in any way that I can.

Who knows, I may be a runner on the starting line next year. Reminder: The Lynchburg Ultra Series will include the Holiday Lake 50K (Feb. 16), the Promise Land 50K (April 26), and the MMTR 50 Miler (Nov. 1) for 2008. There will also be a new series next year called the Beast Series. It will include the LUS events, plus the Terrapin Mountain Half Marathon (March 29 – or maybe it will also be a marathon), Grindstone 100 Miler (Oct. 14), and the Hellgate 100K (Dec. 13). If you enter and finish all six races under the time limit you will receive the Beast Award. By entering LUS you will automatically be eligible for the Beast Series.