

My 100-Mile Race Report

2006 Rocky Raccoon 100-Mile Trail Run Huntsville State Park, TX Feb 4, 2006

Initial race report:

Holy crap! 196 starters! 29th place! I finished in the upper 14% !!!

I ran the [100-miler](#) in 22:04:42 !!!

The race: [Rocky Raccoon 100-mile Trail Run](#), [Huntsville State Park](#), Texas, USA. Five 20-mile loops on every kind of trail type, with some jeep road thrown in for good measure.

Report:

This was my 4th Rocky Raccoon 100-mile finish in a row. Next year, I'm going for the 500-mile jacket!



Our Race Headquarters

The blow by blow:

Lou Joline and I drove down from Kansas City on Thursday. It's a short 720 mile drive down I-35 to Dallas, then we caught I-45 to Huntsville State Park, Texas. It took us about 11 hours net time to get there. We got a room in a motel for that night, and ended up running into Joe (the race director) and his minions at a local restaurant. We set up camp in Huntsville State Park the next morning. We were camping in the tent/Honda Element combination, about 0.3 miles from the start. I had rented a shelter 3 months in advance, and we used that as our "[KC Trail Nerds](#) headquarters."

That night, Lou and I met up with Dann Fisher from Manhattan, Kansas. He was going to use the shelter as a base, also. He said he was "out of shape", but that is a relative statement, of course. (He's always tough, and would do ok). We also ran into Rick Mayo and his wife/crew from Liberty, MO. He was attempting his 2nd 100-mile trail run. Dale Perry and Jan Ryerse, both fellow [SLUGs](#), were looking good to hit it hard the next day. Lou Joline, my partner in crime, is 73 years old and was going to run in the 50-mile event. (He completed the 100-miler here 3 years ago).

On race day, I got up at 4:45 AM. The race has a (dark) 6 am start. Lou's race would start one hour later. Dann showed up, and we started preparing ourselves for the onslaught of coming pain. I used my trusted and true shoe and sock combo for this course, and didn't use gaiters. I run in Montrail Leona Divides. I use Tetra toe socks, with a very thin Ultimex sock over them. If I get a "hot spot" on my foot, I will peel the outer sock back and apply thick silicone lube to the Tetra sock in that location. I never take off the Tetra toe socks or trade shoes during the race. It seems to work real well for me, and I avoided having any blisters at all, this year.

We checked in at race headquarters, and at 6:00 the race started. It was a misty and bone-chilling 37 degrees F, and I went out slow to warm up. I'm use to running faster in the dark, and will probably attempt to do so at the start, next year. Before we got to the jeep road, I got to meet "Dirt Runner," and his 100-mile mentor. Rick looked really strong, and I thought for sure he would have a great race. I settled into my pace, and tried to hold myself back...(you don't want to go out gangbusters on a hundred, or it will bite you in the arse later on in the race). And that's the problem with Rocky Raccoon. The whole course is runnable. There are no real hills of consequence, so this course can tempt your "runner's psyche" into hitting the whole darn thing hard. I held back my horses, and finished loop one in 3:51.

I changed out of my tights for the second loop, as it was supposed to warm up to 70 or so. I got to meet a lot of nice ultra folks, and run into a few old trail buddies. The time passed well, and I got to mile 40 in 7:58. Right on schedule, like a Human Trailrunning Metronome. Rick Mayo had gone out fast on the first loop and was surprised to see me at mile 40. I also caught Jan here. We ran out together and those two started talking about the Lean Horse 100 that they had run and finished last Summer. I was running my pace, and slipped ahead to keep myself on track. Loop 3 was completed at 12:12 or so, right about sunset. It was a clear night and the temp dropped 35 degrees instantly. I put on my Golight top and Patagonia vest, but left my shorts on for the night loops, (# 4 and 5).

Loop 4 is always the toughest on this course, for me. It is a real mental challenge. At the start of the loop I'd put on my iPod, and cranked up the volume up to 11. An old bootlegged Nirvana tune came on, "Radio friendly unit shifter"...and I was off like a shot. When I finally worked my way around to the "Farside" out and back, the mental part became extreme. It was getting cold and misty. I was headed toward the mile 70 aid station, and saw a SUV parked on the jeep trail. I actually thought about checking to see if the keys were in it. I fantasized about "borrowing" it, and driving into Huntsville for a beer and a soak in a hot tub somewhere. I laughed at this crazy thought, but it did sound damn good. I got to the Farside aid station, (my favorite), and had some GREAT homemade potato soup and a cup of coffee, (all in the space of 45 seconds or so). I felt a lot better, suddenly. I would continue to stop for soup at the next two aid stations on that loop. I really pushed myself through the rooty and twisty single-track trail on the backside of the lake; it's my favorite part of the course. I finished the loop at 17:09 elapsed time. It was a slow loop, but I was only passed 2 times on this loop (by world class runners who had actually lapped me), and I passed 21 runners.

I took off on my last 20-mile loop. Scraped from the far-flung bowels of my iPod, Black Sabbath's "War Pigs" started blaring. Kick-a\$\$! I was blowing by runners on the single-track trails like they were rocks and trees. I hit the first jeep trail. I counted off two more roadkill on the way to the first aid station. I filled my bottle halfway with water. No food, from now on. I concentrated on getting to the next aid station. I hit the little bit of single-track on the way there. I seemed to gain strength from it's twisty soul. I hit Dam Road aid station, chugged a coffee and went for broke toward Farside aid station. That miserable piece of straight trail seemed to go on forever. I asked the guy at Farside how he not only moved the aid station further back down the trail each time, but how he also moved the fire pit and fire. I took off back toward Dam Road aid station, blew by the aid station and then hit my favorite part of the course. The roadkill count zoomed higher very quickly. People were "clumping" into listing and tripping zombie-like groups. I would wait for a rooty downhill, and pass them like a crazy maniac yelling, "on your left!" I couldn't believe my eyes. I passed a 6'5" zombie that looked like Dale Perry from the back, and then passed a short, cute zombie that looked like Beth Simpson. Holy cow, I must be doing something right! I got to the last aid station, put a dribble of water into my bottle, and got going. An aid station person asked, do you need anything else? I said "yeah, your opinion...do I look fat in this?"

I hit the last mile of trail; flew by roadkill # 55 and 56, and rolled into the finish line at 22:04:42 elapsed time. I waited for Beth and Dale to finish, and congratulated them. I got a hot shower and 2 hours of shuteye, and started walking around to B.S. and cheer-in runners from 7:30, on. The award ceremony was fun. I had done well. Out of 196 starters, I had placed 29th, overall. I finished in the upper 14% of the race. There was a 68% finish rate for the event. Lou had finished his race first in the over-60 group. Dann had a tough time at night, but had finished ok. I didn't see evidence of Dirt Runner or Rick Mayo, and feared the worst. I thought I had seen Dirt Runner sitting with his mentor on a bench in the middle of nowhere, wearing a sweaty hoody. I was hoping otherwise.

Comments:

Physically and mentally, I went into this race feeling strong, (even though I still weigh near 200-lbs). I felt strong the whole race. All of the strength training and trail-only running...especially the night speed work on rocky & rooty trails, paid off with dividends. I actually could have shaved 30 minutes off my time, if I'd had my crew person there. (I sure missed not having Vicki at this one; she is an awesome wife, friend, & crew).

The toll:

No blisters, no chafing, no swelling, no pain (as of today), and I'm walking normally. I feel better after this one than I do after most 50-milers. My secret? Strength training 5 days per week, a GREAT personal trainer (thanks, Igor), tons of abs, and NEVER TRAINING ON EVIL PAVEMENT! Also, two of my trail training runs per week are run after dark on rocky, rooty, and hilly trails. We always run the 2nd loop of these night runs at mountain bike speed; and I'm not kidding here. This makes me go like a crazed banshee on the night portion of a hundred.

I'll post more later about what I ate. Full [RACE RESULTS](#).

By the way, Lou is an extremely pleasant traveling companion. I've spent time with him at Leadville, Javelina, Berryman and many other trips. He's a great guy to have a conversation with (for 11 hours at a time). The road trips went by quickly.

I can't say enough about the quality of the food and beverages, the experienced ultra aid station volunteers, the good course marking, and the fine organization of this race. It all makes for a stress-free, quality hundred. (The course was also in the finest shape it has ever been, due to decent weather).

By the way, on this last 100-miler, I used [Clif Bloks](#) as my main caloric intake for the 1st 40 or 50 miles or so. Cran-Razz was my favorite flavor. They worked great! Somehow, I eased through the "bonk" of the "glycogen to fat-burning wall" that I usually experience between miles 25 and 35. (I usually have a tough hour or so somewhere within that mileage range). After I got tired of the Clif Bloks, I switched to "real food." I was craving protein. I didn't use Boost, like I usually do. It just didn't sound appealing, at the time. The "real food" that I ate was PB & J sandwich slices, chicken noodle soup, potato soup, canteloupe slices, boiled potato slices, orange slices, and a little bit of mac & cheese.

Something else I did differently: I had 2 Tylenol at about mile 65 instead of Advil, to reduce swelling, especially in my feet. I had two more at mile 90. I didn't have any more pain relievers for another 35 hours. (I don't like to use them). During the race, I also kept up with my electrolytes with [SUCCEED!](#) capsules, as needed. Knowing when and how often to take them is a good thing. For me, it's based on sweat output and hand swelling. I don't usually get to the point of calf cramps to realize I need electrolytes. I also drank about 4 bottles of [Clip2](#) Sports drink before switching completely to water within the first 35 miles. (I alternated between water and Clip2 to that point).

Eating right is very important in a 100-miler. Here's an explanation of why: You cannot take-in enough calories during the event to sustain your effort. Your liver runs out of glycogen within 20-30 miles. Your body's own fat has to be fuel from then on, so you have to stay within your body's "fat burning range" for the entire distance. This is usually about 75 to 85% the effort you put-out in a marathon. To complete a 100-miler, you have to learn to run at that 75-85% effort the whole race. If you run faster, you will use energy faster than your body can convert the fat and bonk harder than you have ever known to in any marathon, believe me. Your food intake during the race needs to be steady. You will need carbs and some protein to help your body consume its own fat. Sometimes you won't feel like eating, **but you have to force yourself to!** That's why it's VERY important to learn what you can eat (and keep down) for 20 or more hours straight.

My splits were fairly even at [RR100](#). I had to artificially hold myself back, so that I would have even splits and a strong finish. One young friend of mine (from KC), didn't hold back for the first 30 miles or so. He DNF'd, even though (compared to me) he was 20-years younger, 70 pounds lighter, well prepared, and in much better running shape. I

caught him by mile 40, at the main aid station. He ended up DNF'ing at mile 77 due to being extremely cold, and not being able to warm up. This is a classic sign of running out of fuel. He was flirting with hypothermia, even though it was only 30F or so, and he had 5 jackets on.

Experience and training got me through the 100 with a PR. Now I'm (finally) using my mind and all of my experience for a successful recovery.

Sometimes I do learn from past mistakes!

Rocky Raccoon 100 Photos



Here were our digs at Huntsville State Park. The Element/tent combo worked well. We used the shelter as our [Trail Nerds](#) headquarters.



Dann Fisher and Lou Joline relaxing in the shelter the afternoon before the race.



Dann Fisher (Left)
& Bad Ben at the
2006 Rocky Raccoon
100-Mile Trail Race

(At about Mile 16)



Bad Ben (and Dann)
at mile 55 or so,
at the 2006 RR100.



Dale Perry and Jan Ryerse, fellow [SLUGs](#), receive their 5-year/500-mile RR100 jackets.

I'll hopefully get mine in February 2007!

Happy Trails,
Bad Ben