

The NUTSO (Newsletter for Ultra and Trail runners in Southern Ontario) – July 2005

Hello runners. It has been a while and I hope your training and racing is going well. It seems that the season has barely started and we are already at the halfway point. The weather has been cooperating quite well (as long as you enjoy the heat) so far. We've had some fantastic results in many of our races and I encourage you to visit our web site (www.ouser.org) and follow the links to our results page.

Hope everyone will be able to make it out to our next race – the Damn Tuff Ruff Bluff trail 25k and 50k in Owen Sound on July 16. Doug Barber and his crew always do an amazing job and make it worth the drive.

Also, Tony Martin has included a brief update on his Conquer the Canuck races taking place on the weekend of July 30 and 31. See below for details.

The Iroquoia 32k Trail Test takes place this year on Saturday August 20 in Kilbride. Race limit is 175 on some challenging sections of the Bruce Trail. This year my plan is not to get lost (but that has been my plan every year).

Also, the results of our online survey are included in this issue. Thanks again to Jeff and Vitalika for choosing ultra-running as the focus of their academic studies. There are some interesting findings so check out the details.

I always welcome submissions on any adventures that you would like to share. Please forward them to me at sezelineski@excite.com. I will also be glad to pass on any compliments (or complaints) that you may have. If there is anything we can do to make your race more enjoyable please be sure to pass on any ideas.

As always, please let me know if you would like to be removed from the list or know of someone who would like to be added.

Happy trails, Sharon

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CONQUER THE CANUCK

New Location in 2005 -- Kelso conservation area -- scenic and breathtaking.

A very challenging 12.5km trail loop in the GTA, Golden Horseshoe and KWC epicenter. The course is named "What Goes Down, Must Come Up", and includes the best portions of the Bruce Trail and tests runners over 12.5km, 25km, 42.2km, 50km and 92.2km distances. The dates for this even tare Saturday July 30th and Sunday July 31st. Massage therapy has been confirmed for both of these dates and additional information can be found at www.conquerthecanuck.com

See you at the race. And don't feel shy about bringing a friend (runner or volunteer) as well.

Happy Trails,

Tony Martin
Race Director
conquerthecanuck@sympatico.ca
519-742-3513

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OUS SURVEY RESULTS

Please keep in mind that these numbers are based on the respondents who took part in the survey. For the most part, they reflect the data that correspond to runners who have participated in races in the Ontario Ultra/Trail Series.

Our goal for this survey was to:

- find out something about the people who participate in our races
- determine what kind of races they enjoyed the most (distance, terrain, location, etc.)
- find out what kind of products they preferred to use
- learn what other sporting activities were important to them
- find out price break points and what perks they found important

You are important to us and we want to find out what you enjoy about our races so that you will keep participating. We also want to find out what we need to do to attract more runners. Our races are generally small and even a few extra runners can make the difference between breaking even and losing money.

The data is provided, with thanks, by Jeff Hurdman and Vitalika Quenville. They ask that you contact them for permission to use their findings. Email me at sezelski@excite.com if you are interesting in contacting them.

General Demographics

Ultra marathoners are middle aged, well educated, affluent and mostly male.

- half of the runners are between the ages of 35 and 50
- 84% have completed educational programs beyond high school
- 40% have an annual household income of over \$100,000
- 70% male and 30% female responded to the survey

Generally, the above statistics can be verified by a quick scan of our race results pages and from what I have seen in other publications, our runners are similar to those in other areas of North America.

Runner Characteristics

42% of runners ran their first ultra between the ages of 35 and 44. Only 18% started before the age of 30 and 15% after the age of 50.

It was interesting to see that almost 17% of respondents had never run a marathon prior to completing their first ultra. Also, given the thought of increasing mileage 'up the ladder' and thinking that people started ultras after years on the marathon circuit, only 23% had run more than 10 marathons prior to their first ultra and 60% have run 5 or fewer before their first ultra. 27% participated in only 1 event but 22% participated in 5 or more (out of a possible 10).

Of those who responded, 41% did not participate in any other endurance sport or event. Cycling, triathlon and cross-country skiing had from 40 – 20% participation each and adventure racing and swimming had about 10% each. Keep in mind that people could be involved in multiple activities.

Course Preferences

The 50k distance is preferred by 42%. 50 miles at 22%, 25k at 20%, 100 miles at 11% and 100k at 5%. The splits between men and women were fairly even for all distances except the 100 miles where 2/3 of the people responding favourably were men (of course leaving 1/3 as female).

People prefer trails (82%) and they like them tough (42% moderate and 47% difficult to extreme). Generally, if the choice of difficulty was easy the respondent was a woman. If the choice was extreme, the respondent was male. However, the split was fairly even between genders if the choice was moderate to difficult. Also, if a runner was over 55, 80% preferred easy or moderate courses regardless of gender.

The majority of runners are not overly concerned about winning. Slightly over 50% of those under 30 were concerned about their placing, 40% in their 30's, slightly over 20% from 40-54 and 20% over 55.

There was no definite preference regarding the layout of the course: 28% point to point, 39% continuous loop (although number of loops was not asked) and 32% out and back.

Marketing

3/4 of respondents found out about the series through word of mouth, 2/3 from the OUSer website and just over 50% through magazines.

The top three reasons to choose an event were: course description (75%), distance from home (59%) and event reputation (53%). Perceived challenge level was important to 47%. Entry fee was important to 20% of respondents but it was not a primary reason for choosing whether to enter or not.

Almost 50% of people indicated that they did not want to pay more for the entry fee (no surprise). However, almost 50% would pay more if they received a technical shirt. Other items such as number of aid stations and port-o-lets rated low on level of importance.

Products

4 of 5 people use gels with 30% preferring Hammer Gel, 13% GU and 10% Power Gel.

4 of 5 use energy beverages with 33% preferring Gatorade and 14% E-Load. No other product was used by more than 10 people.

Just over half use energy bars with Clif the favourite and 17% at Power Bar at 13%.

Four brands of road shoes dominated with Asics at 24%, New Balance at 20%, Saucony at 17% and Nike at 11%. Of the remaining brands only Brooks and Adidas were chosen by more than 10 respondents.

Montrail was the favourite trail shoe at 25% followed by New Balance at 14% and Asics and Nike at 10%. Approximately 7% did not use trail shoes at all.

The distance to travel to a race is not a big issue. Runners are prepared to travel in excess of 500k to participate in an event. Close to 80% stay overnight and almost 40% will stay for more than one night. Hotels are the first choice at 58% and camping a distant second at 23%.

Half of the respondents are accompanied by other family members to races and combine other activities other than running on their trip (even though only a quarter have family members who compete). General pleasure, sightseeing, shopping, and hiking were the favourite activities.

Conclusions

The average ultrarunner is a middle-aged, post high school educated, affluent male. They prefer longer, difficult trails courses and are driven by personal challenge and not to win.

The average satisfaction rating for each OUS race was a 5.7 on a scale of 7. Even the non trail events (that were preferred by less than 20% of the respondents) rated a high vote of satisfaction.

The majority of runners stay at least one night near the event location with at least half of the runners bringing a family member. Other recreation activities are included as part of their weekend.

There was a strong preference in shoes and nutritional products with a very high level of preference for the products of the existing OUS sponsors.

The surprise result was the number of participants who had never run a marathon (17%) or had run fewer than five marathons (60%).

Thanks to everyone who participated in the survey. If you have any further comments that you would like to share please feel free to drop me a line.

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LOST AND FOUND

At the Kingston 6 hour I have in my possession two pairs of men's large shorts (one Nike and one Pearl Izumi. From the Niagara race I have a Camelbak. Please contact me at sezelski@excite.com to arrange for delivery. I have washed everything, running stinks and I don't have to worry about any science experiments.

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WORLD ULTRA NEWS BLOG

For those of you that aren't aware, I have had a Blog up and running for the last few months that reports on Ultra news around the World. It is located at <http://worldultranews.blogspot.com>.

I don't think it will ever replace Dave Blaikie's wonderful web site, but I see it as a way of reporting Ultra News from around the World. I will try and improve the format as time develops. This can include race results, previews of upcoming races, new Ultra web sites and adverts for future/Upcoming races. I'm also willing to print articles about Solo runners or anything else Ultra related. This can include training, diet etc.

If anyone has any ultra news that they would like put on my web site, please email the information to me at pessam@bigpond.net.au at any time. If I don't respond for a while - don't worry - it will be posted in a couple of weeks. Any format should work ok.

Thanks, Phil

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UPCOMING EVENTS TO PIQUE YOUR INTEREST

The Escarpment Trail Run is taking place this year on July 31, 2005 in Haines Falls, NY. There are some fantastic photos on the web site at www.escarpmenttrail.com. Contact the race director if you are interested, information is on the web site. This is not your average 30k and has a cutoff time of six hours. Warning, I understand that when you have done this race once you will be hooked. Deadline is July 24 or the first 200 entries.

Dear runner, on September 10, 2005 the 5th Alpine marathon will be held in Slovenia. We will be very happy if you could join it. xThere will be three distances:

- 50 km ultra (20 km of roads, 30 km mountain paths. High difference: +1690/-1265m)
- 35 km (5 km of roads, 30 km mountain paths. High difference: +1415/-1035m)
- 10 km (In the beautiful Jezersko valley. High difference: +/-200m)

More about this event can be found on WEB: <http://www.boltez.si/maraton>.

With best regards, Milan Jeler
 SAM organizing committee
 phone.: +386 41 369146
 email: mjeler@gmail.com

Desert RATS 6 day race

On September 11-17th, 6 day Desert R.A.T.S. (Race Across The Sand) will take place in Moab, Utah. For more details go to www.geminiadventures.com.

Reid Delman
 Gemini Events
www.geminiadventures.com

My name is Melissa Langille, and I am the coordinator for the Marathon Strides against MS program at the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. Marathon Strides against MS is a program where runners of all abilities raise pledges and run in support of multiple sclerosis. The Marathon Striders run in vibrant green t-shirts in large and small races and can participate in any race while raising funds for MS research projects and local services.

If you are interested in registering for Marathon Strides against MS, please go to www.marathonstrides.com , after registering for your race. If you would like more detailed information on the MSAMS program please call or e-mail me at any time, as I be happy to introduce myself and discuss the program more in depth with you.

Regards, Melissa Langille
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Silvio sends out a notice for a race he just completed in BC. Something to keep in mind for next year!

A few weeks ago I ran the Kusam Klimb– my Iron Lung company was a sponsor of this second year event. This was probably the craziest trail race I ever ran! Check it out at: <http://www.kusamklimb.ca/>



WORDS THAT INSPIRE

"Long distance running is particularly good training in perseverance." –Mao Tse-Tung, former Chairman of China's Communist Party