

Running Briefs

Official Newsletter of Running Club North

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Bad Bob, Rocky, Compete in Iditasport

They're old, they're bold, and they'll kick your butt

Bad Bob Baker may have won the Iditasport 130 but ultimately it was Rocky Reifentstahl who went the distance. Either way, the two proved something the rest of us know: Don't mess with Fairbanks.

Baker won the Iditasport 130 from Knik to Finger Lake last Tuesday, and pocketed \$2,000 along with the rights to boast of the power of skis over tires as an effective mode of winter transportation. However, while Baker chose to drop out of the race after Finger Lake, "Never Say Quit" Reifentstahl (who came into Finger Lake in a second-place tie with two other Fairbanks cyclists, Doug Stewart and Kevin Petrone) went on to compete in the longer Iditasport Extreme to McGrath.

It appeared Rocky would easily steal the victory but severe bronchitis sidelined him 80 miles from the finish line. "I couldn't keep go-

ing," Reifentstahl told the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. "I could hardly stay on my bike because it took more oxygen than I could get in my lungs." After resting and taking antibiotics in Nikiski, Reifentstahl was able to finish the race (he could have lost both eyes, one leg, and one arm, and chances are he would still finish the race!) in a still-impressive 17th place, coming in at 8:53p.m. on March 3rd.

Tennessee (???) biker Peter Irwin ended up winning the race to McGrath and the \$4,000 first place prize. Not bad for a one-speed bicycle! Irwin went on to continue in the Iditasport Impossible, the 1,100 mile race to Nome.

Two runners from Pennsylvania came into McGrath in 8th and 9th place and also went on to run to Nome.

For more information, visit the Iditasport website at www.iditasport.com.

HUFFing & Puffing in Indiana

Mitchell takes on 50K in Hoosier country

By Michelle Mitchell

Running Club North Correspondent

This winter, I took up snowshoeing as a fun way to cross train on Sunday afternoons. Discovering new trails and finding new hills to haul my hinny up has been fun, and it's also a great workout. I had no idea that these conditions would prepare me for the HUFF 50K in Indiana this past December.

I ran this race in 98 with some old friends from the Alpine Runners (my running club back home near Chicago). I missed it last year because of a calendar glitch that moved it up a week early. So, I decided to make this my mid-winter motivational run and do it for fun again with the club.

A few days before I flew home for the holidays, it DUMPED in Chicago. I was greeted by 2 ft of snow upon arrival! Yes, there was more snow there than here and it was colder most of the time as well! I bore witness to a couple of more good dumps as the Dec. 30 race date drew near and was beginning to think that perhaps this race would turn out to be pure Hell instead of my mid-winter fun run.

This year, there were over 200 entrants reg-

istered which was the highest turnout ever. Well, it snowed during the entire drive from Chicago to Ft. Wayne, IN. The usual 3 hour drive turned into 6 and we arrived just in time to get some pasta and register. The race director said there were about 2 ft. of snow on the trail and he was hoping to get a snowmachine out that night to try and pack it. However, he advised us to use snowshoes if we had them with us since conditions were pretty bad.

The morning of the race, it was about +15 and the trail was under lots of snow. The course consists of 3 10.8 mi loops (a long 50k). About 90% is in the woods minus a couple of bridge crossings. At the start, I did see some smart folks in snowshoes and gaiters. I gladly let folks go ahead of me and break trail since I didn't see any evidence of any snowmachine having been through. It was absolutely ridiculous, like running in sand!

At this point, I realized it was going to be a looooooong day so I just paced at comfort zone and walked the hills in the first loop to save

(Continued on back page)

Looking for an Exotic Marathon?

By Gary Pohl

Running Club North Correspondent

For the marathon "collector" or adventurous runners with a little disposable income, there are now a number of marathons available in strange lands and exotic places. There used to be a wonderful marathon each year in early July at Nanasivik, a small mining community on the northern tip of Baffin Island, about 300 miles further north than Barrow. Going to this marathon, known as the Midnight Sun Marathon (not to be confused with the one in Los Anchorage) was truly a low cost way to see the high arctic, and run what was billed as "The World's Toughest Marathon". With the demise of the Midnight Sun Marathon, others seeking to draw runners to the high arctic have created new marathons. There is even one in Antarctica now.

The Nuuk Marathon in Nuuk, Greenland is scheduled for July 21, 2001, and considering what it would cost to do an independent tour of Greenland, it's a bargain. The basic package is \$1,140 US and includes round trip airfare between Ottawa and Nuuk, 5 nights accommodations, entry fee, and a pasta party. Of course, you have to get to Ottawa on your own, but you have five days to explore the place. Nuuk is more civilized than you might believe.

The Great Wall Marathon will be held on May 26, 2001, and you are correctamundo if you've guessed that it runs (at least for 7K, over 4,000 steps) on the Great Wall of China. Basic package here is on \$625 US, and includes 4 nights accommodations, breakfasts, all marathon expenses, and a tour. Other more expensive packages include more time and more things to see. The stinger here is that you have to get to China on your own.

If you want to learn more, you can check out the Nuuk Marathon at www.nuuk-marathon.gl or contact Tour Trends 1-888-318-7233, www.tourtrends.on.ca, or get ahold of me at 452-2128 (w) or pohl@uskh.com and I'll fax you info.



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Running Briefs

Official Newsletter of Running Club North

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Running Briefs is printed bi-monthly or every two months, whichever comes first. It is probably printed on recycled paper. I really don't know. If you have something that you feel is worthy of being published in a high profile publication with a large circulation, then for the love of God, don't send it here! But if you've got a story that a bunch of nice people should read, send it to Running Briefs at Box 82445, Fairbanks, AK, 99708 or email at fnsjm@uaf.edu. Deadline for the next issue subject to change. For more information contact Scott and buy him a beer.

ADVERTISING

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Runnin' From Hail to Heat

By Matias Saari

Running Club North Correspondent

Swiss Alpine Marathon, July 29, 2000

Last summer I found myself unexpectedly in Europe, first for my grandmother's funeral, then to stay seven weeks and help renovate the farmhouse where my mother grew up in the foothills of the Austrian Alps.

Once I decided on an extended stay, and with an ideal training ground out the front door, I began hunting on the Internet and discovered the Swiss Alpine Postmarathon in Davos, Switzerland was just six weeks off and a few hundred miles away.

I arrived via car, bus, train, thumb and foot in Davos and was promptly rained on at the racer's campground for the better part of three days. The weather cleared somewhat on race day, however. The event drew 3,200 runners, with the signature event a 78-kilometer ultramarathon that drew 864 masochists. I opted for the 42-k marathon, which included more than 1,900 meters (6,270 feet) of cumulative elevation gain and scaled two mountain passes. (There is also a 30-k, and a team event featuring running, in-line skating and biking.)

My strategy was to push up the mountain passes but not kill myself, and have energy left for the gradual downhill of the final 15-k. Miraculously, it worked. I finished in 3:50.11, good for 28th place (of 941). The winner was a Moroccan in a superhuman 3:04.

This marathon may appeal to Equinox enthusiasts, given the stunning Alps scenery, challenging terrain and wonderful crowd support in the many villages. One father and child must have spotted my European name in the program, for the when I ran by they cheered "Matias, Alaska!" The marathon is well-organized as supplies were helicoptered, or carried, by the military to each mountain pass. (The chopper came in handy as two stragglers were evacuated after being pelted by hail later in the day).

The event drew runners from 34 countries (mostly Swiss and German), including 34 Ameri-

cans.

For more information, look up www.swissalpine.ch

My time: 3:50:11

Overall place: 28th/of 941

Tucson Marathon, Dec. 3, 2000

Tucson is a nice winter break for an Alaskan though the heat on race day (low 70s) was a challenge. You get bussed to the 7 a.m. start in nearby Oracle. With 1,700 feet of cumulative descent, this marathon is considered a fast one and is a popular Boston qualifier. I'm not convinced it's so fast though. It's a quad-killer, with maybe two-thirds of the descent coming in the first half, and pavement the entire way. The last 10 miles (at least for my quads) was survival. This isn't the kind of marathon I would run more than once. Nonetheless, if your body holds up this marathon is ripe for a PR. (Just don't plan on descending stairs frontwards for a few days.) And the scenery of the Sonoran desert (Saguaro cactus) couldn't be further from a Fairbanks winter. The Tucson Marathon website is at www.tucsonmarathon.org

My Time: 2:51.36

Place: 21st/1,422

Age group: 21/913

Age group: 4th

Winning time: 2:17 (by runner from Ivory Coast)

Kramer Takes Fourth in Napa Valley Marathon

Fairbanks runner Mike Kramer took fourth place in the 2001 Sutter Home Napa Valley Marathon on March 4th.



March 4, 2001
NRCA National Marathon Championships

Kramer came in fourth out of 1,361 runners with a time of 2:52:45. He also came in first in his age group.

The race was won by Anthony Crudale of Las Vegas with a time of 2:42:27.

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New Races Debut in March

Two new races will be making an appearance on the Running Club North calendar for March.

On March 24th, nonskiers can take part in the Anti-Sonot/Bradway Classic 6-Miler. The race will start at the North Star Volunteer Fire Dept. at the corner of Badger Road and Bradway in North Pole. It will be an extremely flat, out-and-back course. The race will be free and will begin at 11 a.m.. Soup will be given at the end. For more information, contact non-saker Scott McCrea at 488-4592.

On Sunday, March 25th at 2:30p.m., the Run for Davya will be held. It will be held as a fund raiser to aid Davya Baker in collecting funds to travel with Team Alaska to Australia this summer as a member of the cross-country running team. The race will be held in the Lincoln Creek Subdivision (near the top of Murphy Dome Rd.),

with the start/finish at the DeVoe residence on Abraham Rd. Participants may run (or walk, or probably even ski) a 6-mile loop on snow-covered back roads, where traffic is very rarely seen. (A shorter, or longer, out-and-back run is optional.)



Everyone is welcome to bring some goodies for a "finger-food" potluck following the run. Donations for Davya's trip to Australia are welcome, and with each \$2.00 donation you will receive a ticket for a chance to win a trip for 2 to Australia! (Example: \$10 donation = 5 tickets)

So, come enjoy an out-of-town run and support Davya Baker (this year's H.S. Regional Champ in both cross-country running and cross-country skiing) at the same time. For more information &/or directions, call Davya or her parents (Bad Bob and Sharon) at 455-6689.

Northern Marathon Challenge Being Planned for 2001

Why do one marathon a year when you can do, well, more than one?

A Northern Marathon Challenge is being planned for 2001. The challenge will be similar to the Williams Series, but will consist of marathons in Alaska and the great country of Canada. At press time, the following marathons are planning on participating: The Mayo Marathon (Yukon Territory, June), the Mayor's Marathon (Anchorage, June), the Yukon River Trail Marathon (Yukon Territory, August), Humpy's Marathon (Anchorage, August), the Yellowknife Marathon (Northwest Territory, September), and of course, the Equinox Marathon (Fairbanks, September).

The actual number of races runners are required to participate in is still being discussed.

Ideas include one marathon in each jurisdiction or participation in specific marathons.

Runners would get a passport stamped as they completed each marathon. Participants who complete in all the jurisdictions and/or specified events would get special recognition on the race websites (each race would have a link to each of the other race websites) and a unique shirt or jacket would be awarded. Special awards would also be given for the "Point Leaders."

Steve Bainbridge, who is one of the organizers of the challenge, said that this is still a "work-in-progress" event and that 2001 will be a low-key year as they get the bugs worked out. Comments and suggestions on how the challenge should be run can be directed to Steve at runner49@ptialaska.net.

Beaver Sports Offers Discounts for RCN Members

As if receiving this award-winning newsletter wasn't enough, your oh-so-cheap membership at RCN just got better! Beaver Sports is offering a 10% discount to RCN members on all running apparel (clothing and shoes). Beaver Sports is located on 3480 College Road and is opened 10a.m.-7p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 1-5p.m. on Sunday.

RCN to Host USAT&F Officials Certification Clinic in April

Running Club North will be hosting the 2001 USA Track and Field Certification Clinic April 12-14, 2001. Tom Light, a USATF instructor from Alaska Region IV (Anchorage) will be conducting the clinic. Tom is with Team Alaska Track Club, the club that has put on the Region IV track meet in Anchorage for many years and is also on the Games Committee for the State of Alaska track meet. Tom brings a valuable local as well as national perspective to the training.

The training will be held in conjunction with the first track meet on the 2001 Region VI calendar. Dates and times of the training are as follows:

Thursday, April 12: 6-9p.m.

Friday, April 13: 6-9p.m.

Saturday, April 14: 10a.m.-3:30p.m. (in conjunction with the track meet. Course participants will officiate during the meet and there will be a follow-up afterwards to discuss issues).

Location of the class session is to be decided. The course features a lot of free food and great company! RCN members and parents of high school track and field athletes are encouraged to attend. No previous experience is required. For more information, contact Steve Bainbridge at runner49@ptialaska.net.

RCN Donates \$1,000 to UAF Endurance Sports Team

The Running Club North Executive Council voted to donate \$1,000 to UAF Endurance Sports (aka cross country skiing and running) scholarship endowment. The money will assist the department in providing scholarships to future endurance sports athletes at UAF. If you are interested in making a donation to the endowment, contact Coach Bill McDonnell at fnwbm@uaf.edu or 474-6802.



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HUFFing & Puffing

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energy. The folks ahead of me were also walking the hills no doubt for the same reason. I somehow didn't think I'd be breaking the course record I set in 98. In fact, I didn't really care how I finished, I was just hoping to survive and finish. Those early miles were averaging 12 min and some even a slow as 13! I couldn't believe I was going slower on this course than I do on the steepest part of Ester Dome during the Equinox! At least I can pull those crawler miles in the 9-10 min range.

A couple of women blew past me about 8 miles in. Both were familiar faces. The first one was a local from Ft. Wayne that took second at Humpy's in Anchorage. I guess this was pay-back for Humpy's. Well maybe not, I caught her again just before the end of the first loop and never saw her again. The second woman ran with me 2 years ago until about 1/2 way. I was in no hurry to pick it up and go for any of them because I knew if I tried that pace I'd most likely DNF. I came through loop 1 in 2:08!

Most people bailed after the first loop. This was where they told me the first woman was only about 2 min ahead. I decided not to bail. Considering I train on snow pack 6 months of the year, I really didn't think I had a valid excuse. I pulled into the aid station to drink and eat my GU which when pulled from my tights had FROZEN. I had to squeeze the crap out of it to get it out! It sure got lonely on loop 2 though. There wasn't a soul in sight! The trail was better packed, however if I stepped even a tad wee bit to the side I went in above the knees in snow!

About 4 miles into the second loop, I came upon the other woman who blew past me earlier. My turtle pace had picked up to 11 min miles with some 10 min ones in between in spots. I just

kept plugging along and tried to run on the best somewhat packed spots. At about mile 18, I came upon the lead woman and didn't even realize it. I thought she was a HE! OOOOOPS! She quit at the next aid station. She said the conditions were too much. I came through loop 2 in 4:11. "Wow," I thought, "A negative split!" The sick irony is that in 98 I finished 10 minutes slower than it took me to do 2 laps this time!

It took a lot of courage to keep going at this point, but the negative split gave me a mental boost. I had wised up about the GU consumption too. I had to pull each packet out and warm it in my mittens about a mile before the upcoming aid stations. At about mile 25, one would have thought I found gold at the aid station—they had IBUPROFEN (distance runner's best friend). I was pushing 5 hours at this point and quite frankly, my legs and feet were just beginning to hurt. I was running with my head and hoping my legs would buy it.

I came through the marathon in 5:08. Darn, I guess I can't use this as a Boston qualifier! I knew the end was near when I came to the final pit stop about 3 mi before the end. I took my sweet time too before that final grind over the bridge and home. I finished in 6:15—that's 11 min. pace! I was surprised how consistent my 2nd and 3rd laps were. The first man won in 5:04, and he also has the course record. This guy, who is sponsored by Power Bar and competes all over

the country was reduced to a 5:04! Of over 200 starters, only 80 finished!

I have run and raced in many places around the world, but this had to have been the toughest race I'd ever done due to the grueling conditions.

It was just like running on a non-packed snowshoe trail minus the snowshoes! For each step forward, it seemed I took 3 back. The snow packed Farmers Loop bike path would look like a speedway compared to this. When I finished, I noticed I had lost 8 toenails-YUCK! I got another gargoyles to keep the other one company (the winners get 40lb gargoyles) and a very nice big, warm, woolly blanket which was greatly appreciated after a long, cold run. The HUFF(Huntington Ultra Frigid Fifty) lived up to it's



The 2000 HUFF 50K

name.

Next year, the USATF 50K Nationals will be at the HUFF and they said I should be there since the previous year's winners get their pictures put on the cake that they are to cut at the pasta dinner the night before the race. I guess I missed that in '99. So, I guess all that training on snow here does have some practical use after all! Interested? The web site is www.fwtc.org/2000/huff50k.htm

Will I go????? Absolutely, so long as I am in Chicago over break again.

Running Briefs

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