

SUPERIOR SAWTOOTH

The Northern Lights make an appearance

AURORA BOREALIS

by Helen Lavin

“So, the only difference between you and me is genetics?” John Horns can’t have been too surprised by this question from a fellow runner after winning the Sawtooth 100-mile race in just over 24 hours. While it may have been his first attempt at the distance, John’s running roots are deep. His mother is Mae Horns, an ultrarunner before the term was widely used, and holder of several Minnesota age group records, and his sister is Janis Klecker, winner of the Olympic Trials marathon in 1992. Add to that his second place finish in the 50-mile race last year and previous wins at the marathon distance on the same course, and it’s easy to see why he went into this race as one of the favorites.

Knowledge of the course is a definite advantage for runners taking on the challenge of 100 miles on the Superior Hiking Trail. The race director isn’t lying when describing the course as rugged and relentless on the website. The endless rocks and roots along this beautiful point-to-point course almost entirely on trail will wear down even the most well-trained of runners.

It was timely to read in the September editorial of this magazine, that “Ours is the sport of ultrarunning, not ultrawalking, or ultraclimbing.” Arrive at the start line in Gooseberry Falls without any idea of what lies ahead and “ultra-crawling” might need to be added to that list.

Despite this, much of the course is runnable, and indeed it is often preferable to try to run rather than walk so that your feet only suffer the consequences of stepping on every second or third tree root. But it is an aggressive terrain with over 40,000 feet of elevation change which on this course translates into constant, mostly short, up and down on rocky trail.

The reward for this is spectacular views of Lake Superior to the south, Bean and Bear Lake to the north and beautiful river crossings including the Temperance River just before the longest climb of the race up to Carlton Peak. A few lucky runners even got to enjoy the northern lights, visible on the horizon at midnight from the open meadow section of trail just before the Cramer Road aid station at mile 77.

This year, to make things a little more challenging, the weather heated up considerably on race day with temperatures in the mid-80s. The sun beat down on runners as they traversed several exposed ridgelines in the first 40 miles of the course and there was little reprieve out of the sun as the trail wound its way north through dense humid forest. The heat proved to be a deciding factor for many people who suffered from dehydration early in the race with close to 10 miles between some of the early aid stations.



Superior Sawtooth's rugged rocks



The TC Running Company helps out



Susan Donnelly works through fatigue for fourth place

Along with the heat, volunteers marking the course the day before had to contend with smoke from the forest fires burning to the north. The winds had changed by race day so that most runners didn't notice it.

With the race starting at 8:00 a.m., many runners would need their headlamps earlier than they might be used to. Nightfall brings one of the most treacherous stretches of the course. After dealing with the Sonju tree roots for what seems like an eternity, runners enter the Crosby-Manitou section with its steep drop to the Caribou River, followed by an equally steep climb, all on rocky terrain. It's around this point where runners can look forward to wearing their race shirts with the tag line "rugged, relentless, remote" with great pride. The race is far from over, with Carlton to be climbed, and the endless

switchbacks of Mystery Mountain awaiting runners in the final section, but most would agree that the worst is over.

Rugged

Relentless

Remote

John Horns led the race from start to finish. In the closing stages, he knew he would have to work hard to cross the line first. Adam Schwartz-Lowe, third place last year, was closing

fast. Almost an hour and a half behind at the halfway point, Adam rallied through the night. As relentless as the course may be, so too was Adam's forward motion in closing the gap to just seven minutes at the finish line. Matt Aro took third place, moving up one spot from the halfway mark.

Sheryl Wheeler returned after winning the race last year in cold, wet conditions. This year's opposite weather didn't cause any issues for Sheryl as she took the lead about 30 miles in and never looked to be in danger of relinquishing it. Clare Abram ran a beautifully paced race to take second place, much to the delight of her energetic crew who traveled all the way from California. Julie Treder finished in third, moving up a few spots from the halfway point and knocking over four hours off her 2008 time.

SUPERIOR SAWTOOTH | TWO HARBORS, MINNESOTA | SEPTEMBER 9 | ▲ 4,4

100 MILES

1. John Horns, 49	24:13:53	30. Ryan Flynn, 31	34:11:42
2. Adam Schwartz-Lowe, 38	24:20:57	31. Ben Bruce, 28	34:35:58
3. Matt Aro, 32	25:45:43	Edward Sandor, 29	34:35:58
4. Sheryl Wheeler, 48, NY	27:19:17	33. Tony Stensland, 40	34:36:07
5. Garrett Peltonen, 29, CO	27:43:34	34. John Koester, 61, CA	35:16:33
6. Scott Myers, 38, ON	28:17:57	35. Brian Woods, 46	35:17:37
7. Christopher Hanson, 40	29:04:43	36. Joseph Hegman, 32	35:34:46
8. Patrick Susnik, 46	29:10:28	37. Spencer Swearingen, 33, IL	35:38:26
9. Christopher Martin, 44, MA	29:38:08	38. Jason Laplant, 32	35:42:14
10. Josh Miller, 39, IA	29:43:45	39. Ray Gruenewald, 51, WA	35:53:38
11. Clare Abram, 40, CA	29:57:14	40. Roberto Marron, 36	36:00:57
12. Jordan Hanlon, 27	30:20:38	41. Nathan Jackson, 33, WI	36:01:07
13. Julie Treder, 35, WI	30:45:26	42. Stuart Johnson, 52, KS	36:07:09
14. Jake Milligan, 28, IL	30:59:21	43. Zach Pierce, 38	36:10:35
15. Scott Laberge, 54, CA	31:22:14	44. Nicholas New, 50	36:38:22
16. Eric Zachmann, 46, MI	31:25:38	45. Michael Smith, 53, IN	36:48:18
17. Susan Donnelly, 48, TN	31:29:19	46. Scott Rassbach, 40	36:49:05
18. Jarrow Wahman, 50	31:43:41	47. Tina Heil, 32, WI	36:50:24
19. Aaron Smith, 48	31:43:42	48. Linda Wilson, 46, ON	36:53:08
20. Scott Hoberg, 33	32:00:24	49. Jason Husveth, 39	37:07:21
21. Roxanne Zobava, 35, TN	32:18:45	50. Derek Fritze, 30, WI	37:16:23
22. Joseph Fejes, 45, GA	32:24:03	51. Steven Brown, 43, IL	37:21:48
23. Sarah Jurgaitis, 31, IL	32:27:51	52. Carolyn Anderson, 39, WA	37:23:25
24. Darrin Johnson, 45, WI	32:43:57	53. Scott Mark, 40	37:23:40
25. Richard Plezia, 53, IL	33:07:18	54. Jim Lemke, 50, WI	37:24:30
26. Bill Jordan, 37, SC	33:09:29	55. Matt Lutz, 26	37:28:21
27. Paul Wilkerson, 35, IL	33:53:44	56. Jennifer Majewski, 27, WI	37:39:48
28. Aaron Buffington, 38	33:54:59	57. Matthew Bartz, 36, WI	37:39:55
29. Daniel Shirey, 26, IN	34:07:07	58. Carol Izadi, 52, MO	37:41:40
		59. Jerry Frost, 56, MO	37:41:41

50 MILES

60. Louis Telles, 51, NM	37:45:28	26. Jordan Langen, 22	13:29:10
61. Angela Barbera, 51, WI	37:46:18	27. Salvatore Librizzi, 37, WI	13:31:35
62. Leonard Martin, 58, TN	37:50:04	Jose Villegas, 33, WI	13:31:35
		29. Gary Sheets, 59	13:41:42
		30. Mark Becker, 22	13:43:04
		31. Nicolai Mollgaard, 41, WI	13:52:08
		32. Jerritt Johnston, 38	13:59:20
		33. Tim Podas, 45	14:07:35
		34. Jason Furtney, 32	14:11:01
		35. Benjamin Schierer, 37	14:21:39
		36. Mary Gorski, 48, WI	14:23:17
		37. Tom Weigt, 59	14:29:21
		38. Deb Vomhof, 49, WI	14:29:23
		39. Maranda Unzeitig, 26	14:30:31
		40. Jonathan Howard, 31	14:43:05
		41. Jodie Taylor, 36, WI	14:52:54
		Marty Kanter-Cronin, 52, WI	14:52:54
		43. Nick Mariotti, 32	14:57:52
		44. Corey Stender, 36	15:03:35
		Trent Armstrong, 49, IL	15:03:35
		46. Erik Dalgaard, 48	15:09:24
		47. Jay Finkle, 48, VA	15:14:36
		Anita Finkle, 45, VA	15:14:36
		49. Paul Peterson, 31	15:16:30
		50. Kobi Phillipps, 51, WI	15:30:25
		51. Anjanette Arnold, 35	15:49:00
		52. Tom Rowe, 63	15:49:52