

# A SUPERIOR RACE

BY AMY CLARK

100-mile champ, Adam Schwartz-Lowe, enjoying the moment



IAN CORLESS

A magical combination of breathtaking beauty and soul-toughening challenge faced all of those lucky enough to compete in the Superior 100- and 50-mile races on September 5, 2014 in the high north country of Minnesota—where the runners are strong, the volunteers are good-looking, and the level of trail running is way, way above average. A fixture on the Minnesota ultra circuit for years, the race has, for the last few years, been directed by John Storkamp and his wife Cheri of Rocksteady Running, along with a mud-covered army of volunteers who spend weeks pouncing on every detail of the race. Not sure where to go? Backlit flags appear magically on your left in even the remotest sections. Special dietary needs? Someone is cooking you a vegan pizza even as the words “no animal products” are leaving your lips. Need a mental lift? Someone’s family is screaming and hollering and ringing a cowbell on the most desolate stretch of trail, whooping like you’re an Olympian, often with a charming bulldog in tow.

All this Minnesota goodwill may seem sappy or contrived in a written account, but those who were there know it is genuine. And the warm wishes are necessary, because the trail—the trail, she forgives no one. Encompassing 21,000 feet of elevation gain (deviously spread out over countless ups and downs that manage to stealthily accumulate in the legs of even the fittest runners), seas of roots, fields of rocks, a predilection for mud swamps that form at the merest suggestion of rain, flying downhills and hairpin turns, the

race is one that any mountain warrior would embrace in full battle dress.

This year, the field of 100-mile warriors was impressive if not eclectic, from 2013 champion John Horns to many-time podium placer Adam Schwartz-Lowe, Leadville ace Kyle Pietari, two-time Badwater runner-up Grant Maughan, former Zumbro and UROC champ Nathan Leehman, up-and-coming local phenom Michael Borst and even ultrarunning legend and 1992 Superior 100 champ Eric Clifton. The women’s field featured 2013 victor April Anselmo, local ultra stars Leslie Semler and Amie Spieth, and a potent infusion of out-of-town talent came to join the party in the mountains including Mallory Richard, Frayah Bartuska and Johannah Ylanen. The audience of friends, volunteers and family members was primed for a fast-paced, multifaceted Superior performance, and the players did not disappoint.

The race began with a requisite “Cliftonesque” pace, with Horns, Borst and Clifton taking the early lead. Slowly, as the morning light lengthened inexorably into afternoon and evening shadows, Pietari made his push and gained the lead by Tettegouche (mile 35.5) just to see it hi-jacked by the one-two combo of Borst and Schwartz-Lowe. Once the sun set, in the cover of night Borst and Schwartz-Lowe would find themselves engaged in a daring chase scene worthy of the subway train montage in “The French Connection.” Although freely admitting he was silently wishing Borst “hadn’t picked to-

day to run such a smart race,” Schwartz-Lowe eventually overtook him in the last 15 miles and sailed in to his first-ever Superior win in 20:58. Borst was an impressive second in his inaugural outing in 22:52, while Nathan Leehman claimed the third podium spot in 23:26.

As the men’s race slowly evolved and morphed throughout the day the women’s race exploded into tiny pieces as early local race leaders April Anselmo and Amy Spieth made the difficult decision to drop and Semler faded from the final podium spot, and in that vacuum Mallory Richard of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada cruised for the win in 27:32. Rounding out the top three were Frayah Bartuska in 29:56 and Johanna Ylanen in 31:08. The tenacious duel served as a great illustration of the reach of the Superior 100 with all three top women’s spots going to out-of-state runners; Canada, Wisconsin and Finland by way of California.

Throughout this entire endeavor, the platoons of volunteers moved in and out of the shadows of the sparkling lights of the aid stations, adjusting headlamps, filling bottles, offering understanding, commiseration, uplift, spontaneous 80s dance moves. It was all done with a unique melding of joy, precision and unadulterated Midwestern work ethic. All of those privileged enough to play their part in the epic dance that is Superior affirmed once again why it is that year after year, fall after fall, it relentlessly calls them back.

## THE SUPERIOR 50-MILE RACE

BY JOHN STORKAMP, RD

The Superior 50 Mile Trail Race has the burden of living in the giant shadow cast by its infamous “older sibling” the Superior 100, but it would be a complete oversight to not highlight the race and examine its performances “stand-alone,” as it continually proves itself as one of the most scenic, prolific and challenging 50 mile trail races in the country.

This year's men's race had the look of three separate, expertly run time trials, with 100-mile winner Adam Schwartz-Lowe's frequent training partner in Duluth's Chris Rubesch easily taking first in 8:56 running alone for approximately 49 miles of the 52+ mile course. For some perspective, Rubesch (with the same, if not better fitness) ran 6:54 for 11th place at a stacked Ice Age 50 earlier this year – a certain indicator of the difficulty of the Superior 50. Top competitors usually focus on breaking nine hours and in the end Rubesch was only three minutes off of what is considered to be a solid course record. With the impressive top three performances rounded out by oft ultra-winner Forrest Tracy and trail/ultra-journalist Alex Kurt, there would be time for a peanut-butter and-M&M sandwich break before the rest of the men's field crossed the finish line. Shedding nearly an hour from her 50-mile debut time at this same race just a year prior, Kristin Rognerud, also of Duluth, MN, bested her nearest competition by over an hour, citing more experience, continued training on the Superior Hiking Trail and a regimen of strength training as factors leading to this excellent performance. Annie Behrend of Rochester, MN took second and “Grand Master”/50+ year old participant Shelly Groenke took an impressive third place.

### DULUTH

Noteworthy is that of the four top spots shared between the 100 and 50 mile races that three of them should go to residents of Duluth, MN (Schwartz-Lowe in the 100, Rubesch & Rognerud in the 50), this at an event that in 2014 attracted talent from 35 states and 5 countries. With access to endless, rugged single-track trail right outside your door in a city of 85,000 it is no wonder that trail runners from this area excel at races within, as well as beyond, MN borders. Garnering increased attention as one of the top trail-running cities in the United States, Duluth, Minnesota consistently turns out, or perhaps more appropriately stated, helps to create, foster and shape top talent. Perfectly illustrating this point, a Boulder, Colorado participant from this year's race noted the following, “I had a wonderful time suffering through 50 miles on the beautiful Superior Hiking Trail. A trail I was slightly unprepared for, I might add. Running in Boulder, CO, I am quite used to rough trails. However, we don't have nearly as many roots and our rocks are angular, knobby, textured granite on which one can hold footing at an angle. Out there, especially in combination with the mud and moss, the smooth, rounded rocks were something different entirely!”



Aaron Ehlers using his poles to help with the tough terrain



Lesli Semler demonstrates the need for rock climbing skills in this race



Michael Borst and his pacer in the 100-mile

IAN CORLESS

IAN CORLESS

IAN CORLESS

# MINNESOTA NICE

by Ian Corless

"You must be Ian?" I replied with a resounding "yes!" "It's so great for you to join us out here in Minnesota, we love our trails and the Superior 100 is our gem. An unknown gem."

## AN INTRO TO MINNESOTA NICE

And so it began. It was my first time in Minnesota and in all honesty, I knew very little about this area and was somewhat ignorant about the proximity to Canada and the wild country at its border. Extensive travel can sometimes make one a little complacent. Don't get me wrong, I love new places, I love the opportunity to travel and love to find a new race and the people that are connected to it. I research the race but sometimes not the place. You see; too much information can lead to disappointment and can cloud judgement. I like to be a canvas, primed and ready but without the stroke of a brush. Like any painting, I like to lay down a base, build up the layers and finish it off with a frame. The end result may well be a masterpiece but in the early stages, who knows?

## DECKER

Off the bat, Kurt Decker, my host and on-hand guide whilst on my voyage of discovery was a welcoming and bubbling knowledge of local running. Decker has been involved in running for 20+ years and is the manager at a Minneapolis run store, Twin Cities Running Company.

"Dude, it's so great to have you join us." He wasn't ruffled or angry at my extensive three-hour delay at passport control. "You are going to stay with my family and we have an 'RV' all lined up for you to make your stay easy and provide you with some privacy."

"You are going to love this race dude, Superior 100 is a real tough race and we are so happy to have you come and see it for yourself." Decker was enthusiastic; no, he was passionate. He brimmed running and when we entered his Minneapolis store I was somewhat treated as an arriving celebrity, "we listen to your podcast Talk Ultra all the time, thank you so much for joining us!"

Running brings people together, together in a way like no other; it crosses boundaries, crosses countries and binds like a harmonious family. I'd been in Minneapolis for just over an hour and I already knew that I was going to love this place. – Minnesota Nice

## EHLERS

Aaron Ehlers is a young guy with a family, new to ultra he has a fire within. Last year he bailed at Superior and this year he was going back, unfinished business. More miles, more focus and an understanding of what's required to complete 100-miles. He picked me up at 9:00AM for the trip up to the pre-race meeting. On the roads to the North Shore we chewed the fat. He

knows the sport of ultra, "I just want to learn, soak up the sport and become better. Even my wife, Mary has found the passion. At Superior she will run her first 50-miler." A new friend, Aaron feels like an old friend. A bond made in sport but ultimately a great guy to hang with. Selfless and giving, Aaron is a true Minnesota guy. – Minnesota Nice

## THE RD

Two black spiral earrings, Mohican haircut, black 'T' with a huge artistic print that he designed and cargo shorts, John Storkamp looks like a rock star. He greets me with a hug and the shake of hands, "It's great to have you here man." Storkamp is the RD for the Superior 100, a runner himself; he has a resume that deserves respect. Modest in approach, he welcomes each and every runner as they arrive for packet pickup. "Welcome to the Superior 100, one of the most the rugged, the most relentless and remote 100 milers in the USA. Now let me hear you howl like wolves..." The response is loud and spine chilling. Without wishing to bore everyone, Storkamp provides a brief history of the race, the journey of 100-miles along the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT). "This race follows the ridgeline overlooking Lake Superior, a ridgeline of the Sawtooth Mountains. It's gnarly, tough, rutted and many of you won't finish." Storkamp has a twinkle in his eye, the challenge he

# Lake Martin 100

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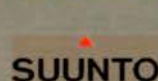
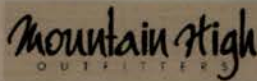
Along the shores of Beautiful Lake Martin, near Alexander City, in East-Central Alabama

\*The course is 100 % Single Track Trails or Carriage Paths and Gravel Roads. All trails are very runnable.

\*Beautiful rolling hills along the lake and creeks with about 13,000 feet of elevation gain.

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\*Register at [Ultrasingup.com](http://Ultrasingup.com)



and his wife Cheri provide is tough, the runners know it. But they want everyone to achieve and as he says, not all of them will, however, they need to be on the journey with a chance of completing and if they make the finish or not, lives will be changed. Storkamp knows the enormity of the task and the responsibility he has. Like a father, the runners are his children; if possible he will nurture them to the finish line. – Minnesota Nice

#### VOLUNTEERISM UNMATCHED

You can't run without aid stations and volunteers. It just can't happen. Those who are passionate about the sport often pay back with a volunteer stint at an aid station, marking the course or manning road crossings. After all, we are all runners' right? Imagine working an aid for 16 consecutive years... Mum, Dad, Son and Daughter. A family enterprise! The selfless task of helping others and asking nothing in return, that's the Immerfall family. An inspiration to all and believe it or not, they are not runners. They just want to give and have pleasure in the act. In 2014, Storkamp welcomed them into the Superior 100 hall of fame. An award that stirred emotions, many shed a tear when the award was given, a standing ovation somehow feeling inadequate. – Minnesota Nice

#### LANGTON

Arguably the happiest runner and most grateful runner I have ever witnessed, Kevin Langton illuminated the trails. "Thank you for being here guys and supporting." Running with a smile and grin, whenever he passed he repeated, "Thank you for being here guys and supporting." You've got to love this sport... despite the difficulty, despite the fatigue, despite sore legs and being mentally tired, Langton's smile never slipped, the positivity never wavered. Oberg, 93-miles, Langton's family welcomed him with a hug and high fives, 'let's get this done' he said. "Great job man you are looking so good," I shout. "Thank you for being here guys and supporting." – Minnesota Nice

#### SCHWARTZ-LOWE

Earning the last Superior 100 podium spot in 2010 and a bridesmaid in 2011 and 2012, Adam Schwarz-Lowe really wanted a win at Superior, would 2014 be the one? A sub 20-hour running at the iconic Western States earlier in the year showed the form was good. On the trails of the 'SHT' Schwarz-Lowe bided his time and eventually made his move with three quarters of the race covered. Buckle in hand the victory was his. In response to my "congratulations Adam, you had a great run today," he said "thank you, thank you for coming and being here, it means a lot." – Minnesota Nice

#### MALLORY

No, not the one from Everest, but as she ascended Carlton Peak, Mallory Richard was catching previous year's champ April Anselmo, between aid stations she would close almost 45 minutes, April would DNF and the fore-mentioned Canadian would take home the coveted wolf.

#### IT WILL CHANGE YOU

Racing is racing; only one man and one lady can top the podium. So why run? Superior 100 provided many answers to this question; the race provided a collective gathering of many individual passions that came together to create one wonderful whole. Each runner, from first to last; a welcome warrior who achieved greatness on the trails of Minnesota and the SHT. Storkamp told them all the experience would change them, it did, I am sure of it. It not only changed them, it changed me too. – Minnesota Nice

#### MINNESOTA NICE – DEFINITION

"Minnesota Nice" is the stereotypical behaviour of people born and raised in Minnesota to be courteous, reserved and mild-mannered. The cultural characteristics of Minnesota Nice include a polite friendliness, an aversion to confrontation, a tendency towards understatement, a declination to make a fuss or stand out and emotional restraint. 🐺

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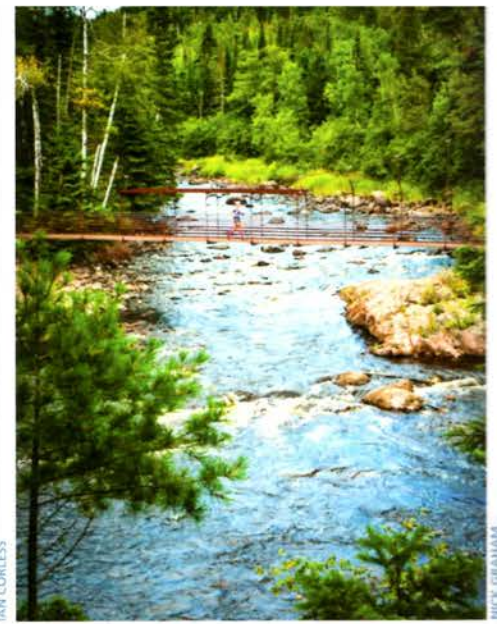
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TJ Jeannette heading toward a sub 30-hour finish

April Anselmo running across the Baptism River

## SUPERIOR FALL TRAIL RACES | TWO HARBORS, MINNESOTA | SEPTEMBER 5 | ▲ 4,4

100 / 50 miles | Elevation gain: 100 mile – 21,000 feet | 50 miles – 12,500 feet | This is a tough point-to-point race on 100% trail, which traverses the Sawtooth Mountain Range and parallels the north-shore of Lake Superior. There are roots and rocks with constant tough terrain hills.

### 100 MILES

1. Adam Schwartz-Lowe, 41
2. Michael Borst, 21
3. Nathan Leehman, 40
4. John Cameron, 25
5. Jacob Lawrence, 33
6. John Horns, 52
7. Grant Maughan, 50
8. Chris Robbins, 29
9. Steven Bailey, 35
10. Mike Dietz, 40
11. Brian Klug, 35
12. Robert Edman, 33
13. Steven Graupner, 25
14. Mallory Richard, 29
15. Eric Tadt, 27
16. Lee Dalgaty, 43
17. Kent Keeler, 36
18. Jared Fetterolf, 25
19. David Mentjes, 45
20. Ryan Wagner, 36
21. Kevin Cannaday, 35
22. John Maas, 53
23. Brandon Yonke, 21
24. TJ Jeannette, 39
25. Pete Kostelnick, 26
26. Trevor Uhler, 29
27. Frayah Bartuska, 29
28. Cody Braford, 38
29. Chris Hanson, 43
30. Cory Mahlke, 38
31. Greg Geiger, 35
32. Travis McCathie, 33
33. Johanna Ylanen, 32
34. Tony Pierce, 36
35. Leslie Semler, 33
36. Steve Sorenson, 49
37. Sean Faulk, 41
38. Kevin Langton, 44
39. Nicholas Whitbread, 33
40. Jerry Frost, 58
41. Marcus Taintor, 32
42. Terry Fletcher, 22
43. Erik Elmstrand, 25
44. Nick Nygaard, 24
45. Raymond Rolling, 25
46. David Dickey, 24
47. Will Richter, 33
48. Scott Huston, 50
49. Timothy Lupfer, 33
50. Jim Brown, 56
51. Kathy Jambor, 48
52. Blake Paulson, 41
53. Jason Rezac, 41
54. Michael Bunda, 33
55. Peter Newton, 33
56. Richard Plezia, 56
57. Michael Arnold, 31
58. Mark Smith, 35
59. Brian Woods, 49
60. Steven Andersson, 38
61. Susan Donnelly, 51

- 21:58:32
- 22:52:28
- 23:26:47
- 23:51:48
- 24:54:59
- 25:36:03
- 25:42:49
- 25:58:58
- 26:04:19
- 26:21:39
- 26:27:12
- 26:49:53
- 27:31:15
- 27:32:27
- 27:44:05
- 27:45:04
- 28:00:29
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- 28:49:51
- 28:51:12
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- 29:47:27
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- 31:08:10
- 31:15:42
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- 31:48:20
- 31:51:04
- 32:06:29
- 32:08:08
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- 32:21:59
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- 33:13:25
- 33:22:32
- 33:30:05
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- 33:42:33
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62. Gregory Byrd, 44
63. Liam Thier, 38
64. Dave Schuneman, 36
65. Terry Eldien, 43
66. Jared Vanderhook, 30
67. Ryan Flynn, 34
68. Eric Skocaj, 28
69. Jeff Lanners, 31
70. Tom Cotter, 42
71. Scott Mark, 43
72. Mike Birkenheier, 27
73. Rob Mann, 42
74. Mike Gorski, 40
75. David Uhler, 45
76. John W Taylor, 52
77. Daryl Saari, 51
78. Paul Olson, 40
79. Shawn Severson, 41
80. Peter Schnorbach, 51
81. Jack Tinucci, 25
82. Aaron Hansen, 33
83. Veronique Boucher, 45
84. Benjamin Hawes, 28
85. Aaron Kennedy, 35
86. Kurt Drengler, 32
87. Wesley Rolnick, 26
88. Greg Bores, 50
89. Kurt Brown, 47
90. Terry Dreves, 50
91. Roberto Marron, 39
92. David Infante, 50
93. Geoff Moffat, 36
94. Kamie Nicholls, 36
95. Jenny Marietta, 37
96. Jeffrey Hainlein, 31
97. Christopher Reed, 31
98. Josh Phillips, 33
99. Todd Sullivan, 40
100. Zachary Lamb, 38
101. Harold Curioz, 29
102. Jeff Rock, 42
103. Nicholas Stoneman, 54
104. Kate Leis, 37
105. Kathleen Rytman, 46
106. Mike Witt, 51
107. Jeremy Lindquist, 27
108. Matt Long, 12
109. Josh Peterson, 31
110. Michael Gruber, 30
111. Troy Feustel, 39
112. Gary Dudley, 61
113. Carole Holley, 39
114. Matthew Fisher, 35
115. Shane Skowron, 26
116. Peter Hulbert, 35
117. Maria Barton, 48
118. John Gaich, 58
119. Justin Chapman, 35
120. Katie Chapman, 31
121. John Focke, 34
122. Tony Cesario, 50
- Michael Wolkowicz, 28

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- 37:10:33
- 37:10:33

### 50 MILES

1. Chris Rubesch, 28
2. Forrest Tracy, 35
3. Alex Kurt, 27
4. Jesse Berwald, 37
5. Greg Borzick, 45
6. Charlie Murray, 33
7. Steven Griffith-Cochrane, 27
8. Jason Buffington, 45
9. Dmytro Koshevy, 26
10. Ryan Wold, 34
11. Jonathon Graff, 30
12. Stephen Tapajna, 39
13. Sam Bird, 24
14. Kristin Rognerud, 33
15. John Finn, 44
16. Neil Johnson, 38
17. Scott Turi, 48
18. Scott Rassbach, 43
19. Jason Furney, 35
20. Richard Bjork, 51
21. Nathan Marti, 38
22. Rob Henderson, 30
23. Daniel Ruekert, 28
24. Anthony Lushanko, 39
25. Corey Jurowski, 36
26. Ben Barthel, 34
27. Michael Scandrett, 60
28. Stephane Malherbe, 41
29. Scott Reichardt, 42
30. Alexander Menacher, 21
31. Gerrit Bass, 22
32. Brad Whitson, 50
33. Annie Behrend, 28
34. Reid Plumbo, 30
35. Tom Lickteig, 50
36. James Keegan, 47
37. Derek Smith, 27
38. Derek Fritze, 33
39. Andrew Grosvenor, 36
40. Marcel Uttech, 37
41. Michael Korpela, 41
42. Edward Goetz, 56
43. Shelly Groenke, 56
44. Alex Eichman, 28
45. Rachel Wellman, 32
46. Paul Gucinski, 34
47. Ben Wacker, 38
48. Judy Carter, 50

- 37:10:46
- 37:17:44
- 37:23:09
- 37:23:44
- 37:27:55
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- 37:54:38
- 8:56:33
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- 10:29:04
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- 13:41:07
- 13:41:38
- 13:42:22
- 13:49:18
- 13:56:25
- 13:57:54
- 13:59:18

49. Daniel Collins, 51
50. Mitch Ernst, 34
51. Jennifer Walter-Mobley, 47
- Natalia Sander, 41
53. Jack Prentice, 43
54. Tricia Hess, 39
55. Carl Skustad, 39
56. Jon Matthiae, 63
57. Margaret Litchy, 27
58. Dan Langland, 43
59. Richard Templin, 35
60. Alain Dupuis, 31
61. Cheri Dostal, 32
62. Jesse Ruekert, 34
- Nicole Parkhurst, 34
64. Natalie Kaufman Stamp, 40
65. Rebekah Metzendorff, 29
66. Robert Crist, 31
67. Paul Wilken, 44
68. Jerry Rogers, 47
69. Jodie Taylor, 39
70. Steve Greseth, 60
- Angie Puente, 43
72. Scott Funk, 47
73. Mary Gorski, 51
74. Elizabeth Amundsen, 29
75. Chad Walstrom, 40
76. Rollie Everson, 55
77. Deb Vomhof, 52
78. Carin Zinter, 41
79. James Stenulson, 57
80. Todd Carter, 40
81. Bruce Juppe, 58
82. Stephen Backstrom, 58
83. Nathan Borth, 28
84. David Staples, 42
85. Scot Rownd, 45
- Andrew Murphy, 31
87. Mark Tekippe, 30
88. Wesley Meier, 29
89. Gregory McGrath, 29
90. Patrick Tebbe, 45
91. Alex Stephens, 36
92. Edsel Miller, 34
93. Matt Mitchell, 37
94. Stephen Gasser, 44
95. Ryan Yearley, 36
96. Lacy Naud, 30
97. Sherry Hnatiuk, 36
98. Brianna Millett, 32
99. John Manier, 34
100. Mary Ehlers, 25
101. Benjamin Anderson, 43
102. Laura Smith, 41
103. Jamie Klemenhausen, 32
- Dan Laplante, 30
105. Deb Johnson, 54
106. Tyler Sears, 26
107. Karen Shearer, 49



KELLY DOYLE



IAN CORLESS



IAN CORLESS



IAN CORLESS

From top: Dan Mattimiro in the Drainpipe; The face of an ultra warrior; A determined John Mass; Julie Berg in the 100-mile race



Runners who tackle the most challenging mountain terrain demand maximum durability, lightness and the utmost traction every step of the way. Our latest addition to the trail running collection delivers all that and more in the MTR 201 Pro Low.

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### MTR 201 PRO LOW – TESTED BY OUR ATHLETES

The climb to the Pers moraine requires a trail runner that can stand up to some of the most difficult terrain in the Swiss Alps. The super lightweight EVA-IP wedge, durable yet breathable air mesh upper and GripeX™ Sonar II sole combine to create the newest and lightest shoe in the Alpine Performance line. The rounded outsole promotes a mid-foot strike which produces an enhanced feel for the surface underfoot. Finished with a sticky rubber outsole, the MTR 201 Pro Low provides unsurpassed traction in various conditions.

Dynamic, breathable, lightweight and durable – absolute performance.

[www.mammut.ch](http://www.mammut.ch)



**MAMMUT**  
Absolute alpine.

SWISS TECHNOLOGY