

ZUMBRO

BAND TOGETHER AND MARCH ON

by John Storkamp, RD

When “Zumbro” first started it was merely a fun run put on by our ZZ-Top-bearded friend, Larry “the Oracle” Pederson. All I can remember about those early runs over a decade ago – and the first few years of the race for that matter – were placid, fairly dry spring days. Before taking over as race director, I had the opportunity to run the Zumbro 100 on a warm and dry day, running without a shirt all day and only a t-shirt at night. After last year’s unforgiving conditions, which consisted of a slurry of snow, ice, mud and water, the first day of this year’s race (dry and warm) lulled us into letting our guard down. But Saturday’s torrential downpour, lightning and hail stones quickly brought us back to reality. Minnesota spring weather has been nasty over the past couple of years and has shown no mercy for Zumbro. After an entire day of running on Friday we had only seen a couple of 100-mile DNFs, but the thunderstorms that greeted us in wee hours of Saturday chilled the field to the bone and claimed its victims one after another. In the end, another low finishers’ rate in the 100 and 50 were observed.

Running swiftly enough to miss all of the weather, Nathan Leehman, owner of Ultra Running Company in Charlotte, North Carolina, sped to the win in the 100 and set a new course record while doing so. Also setting a course record was women’s winner and 2013 champion April Anselmo (formerly Cole), although she did not have the benefit of missing all of the weather as Leehman did. In a heart-wrenching decision, good friend of the race and five-time finisher Daryl Saari had to pull the plug on his 2014 race, but Susan Donnelly held on for her sixth finish and is now the only one remaining who has started and finished all six Zumbro 100-mile races – simply incredible.

Starting at midnight on Friday (early Saturday), the 50-mile group had even less time to warm up before the storm hit, and the slowest of them had to run another two full loops after the soaking to get their finish. After overtaking last year’s winner, Jake Hegge, around mile 40, Mike Dietz took the win and set a new course record. Hegge placed second. On the women’s side, last year’s 17-mile winner, Leslie Semler, went on to win the 50 in uncontested fashion, placing first for the women and fourth overall.

The past few years of Zumbro seem to be analogous to life itself: sometimes it’s ugly, sometimes it’s hard, we do our best, band together and march on, some of us make it, some of us don’t, while living to fight another day. On Saturday morning some folks were at home, warm and comfortable in their beds, while some of us were getting the rare opportunity to find out what we are made of – where would you rather be? As in life, we don’t always get to choose the conditions, but we get to choose how we handle them, and I think we all handled them just right, starter, finisher, non-finisher, volunteer and everyone else involved.



Dan Harke steadily pushing to finish 100 miles

MY FIRST 100

BY AMANDA RUNNION

We get a simple 1, 2, 3, Go! And just like that I’m off on my first 100-mile race. I have a simple race plan. Keep moving. Make the cutoff.

The 100-mile runners are a small bunch with 55 racers starting. Six loops of 16.7 miles keeps the run from being mundane, yet helps break up the daunting task in front of me.

I’m able to complete my first two loops in the daylight without any issues. Partially through my third loop, the sun starts to set, and I prepare myself for night.

I run the final stretch of my fourth loop, ex-

cited to meet up with my husband who will be joining me on my fifth loop. The night’s weather has been warm enough that I’m ready to leave my long sleeve behind. We set off together eager for daylight to join us. As we move across the trail, a light rain begins to fall. The light rain gives way to more intense rain and whatever daylight we were given is covered in dark clouds. It’s not long before I’m drenched and shivering as thunder and lightening crash above. The trail begins to flood. Dirt turns to mud and mud turns the trail to a downhill slip ‘n slide. The rain drags on for what seems like an

ZUMBRO | WABASHA, MINNESOTA | APRIL 11 | ▲ 4,4

100 miles | 50 miles | Elevation gain: 100 mile – 18,588 feet | 50 mile – 9,294 feet | The race is held within the Zumbro River Bottoms Management area in Southern Minnesota’s Bluff Country. The course is 16.7-mile loop of rugged terrain and consists of primarily single and double-track trail as well as some minimum maintenance gravel road sections. There are a few significant climbs in each loop.

100 MILES

1. Nathan Leehman, 40, NC 20:30:52
2. Bob Gerenz, 46 21:21:05
3. John Cameron, 25 22:19:55
4. April Anselmo, 29, WI 23:21:02
5. John Maas, 52 23:35:47
6. Lee Dalgety, 43, WI 23:55:23
7. Dan Harke, 29 26:23:04
8. Buddy Juusola, 38 27:12:17
9. Jason Tintes, 45 27:31:53
10. Nathan Ziemski, 36 27:51:50
11. Veronique Boucher, 44 28:07:01
12. Kathy Jambor, 48 29:31:43
13. Will Richter, 33 31:01:45
14. J.D. Coolidge, 39 31:08:09
15. Ben Brucker, 36, PA 31:14:27
16. Jeremy Lindquist, 26 32:16:53
17. Jeffrey Lenard, 48, IL 32:26:15
18. Timothy Kruse, 40, IL 32:26:16
19. Kathy Errthum, 37, WI 32:53:34
20. Jeff Thompson, 32, NE 33:11:24
21. John Taylor, 52 33:28:56
- Susan Donnelly, 51, TN 33:28:56

50 MILES

1. Mike Dietz, 40, IL 8:30:08
2. Jake Hegge, 22, WI 8:58:25
3. Jack Tinucci, 25 9:54:46
4. Aaron Ehlers, 26 9:59:46
5. David Hansen, 28 10:28:21
6. Leslie Semler, 32 10:54:03
7. Corey Jurowski, 36, WI 11:00:15
8. Scott Rassbach, 43 11:00:16
9. Aaron Hansen, 33 11:00:40
10. Ryan Chukuske, 32 11:00:41
11. Matthew Wilson, 38 11:04:13
12. Dave Schuneman, 36 11:21:48
13. Mark Johnson, 43 11:24:20
14. Chris Gulbrandson, 35 11:32:00
15. Thomas Luchsinger, 45 11:44:56
16. Dane Liebel, 48 11:54:13
17. Patrick Johnson, 41 11:54:59

18. Terry Eldien, 43 12:31:33
19. Drew Weaver, 25 12:35:23
20. Paul Olson, 39 12:37:41
21. John Zalewski, 48, IL 12:40:53
22. Michael Kopischke, 30 12:43:47
23. Brett Koplin, 52 12:50:21
24. Angela Hill, 37, WI 12:58:45
25. John Heemstra, 38, MI 13:12:26
26. Jerry Peterson, 35 13:12:26
27. Zac Lundgren, 23 13:17:15
28. Scott Breimhorst, 40 13:19:26
29. Jason Mason, 33, IA 13:20:08
30. Craig Woodward, 35 13:20:12
31. John Freemore, 38 13:22:02
32. Richard Templin, 34 13:32:10
33. Garrett Rettig, 33, IA 13:33:18
34. Scott Mark, 42 13:39:34
35. Stephanie Hoff, 34, WI 13:40:18
- Sara Petersen, 33, WI 13:40:18
37. Jerry Rogers, 47, WI 13:40:21
38. Eric Hadtrath, 33 13:44:18
39. Johnathon Hoel, 33, HI 13:45:41
- Emma Hoel, 26, HI 13:45:41

41. Michael Barton, 40 14:03:38
42. Mikhail Titov, 32 14:06:44
43. Tim Smith, 52, IA 14:08:41
44. Mike Strommen, 46 14:14:51
45. Seth Korhonen, 19, WI 14:23:00
46. Mike Schmitt, 37 14:46:50
47. Julie Berg, 49 14:48:42
48. Timothy Smith, 46 14:54:23
49. Greg Bores, 49 14:59:54
50. Jim Wilson, 54 15:10:15
51. Annie-Lori Jobe, 33, IA 15:17:02
52. Kate Hoglund, 25 15:45:07
53. Tom Weigt, 62 15:53:28
54. Tom Cotter, 41, WI 16:01:25
55. Byron Hoogland, 32, NE 16:06:47
56. Brett Behrens, 39, NE 16:18:28
57. Kris Rosenbush, 43 17:27:56
- Lynn Saari, 48 17:27:56
59. Janette Maas, 54, GA 17:31:36
60. Craig Sevick, 38 17:36:42
61. Dave Eide, 56 17:39:21



Susan Donnelly enjoying the trail on her 100-mile journey

eternity. It's getting harder to keep my spirits up, and the rain adds obstacles to my goal. I don't know if I can run another loop in these conditions, but I stay hopeful that it can't rain forever. Please stop raining. Please stop raining. Please. Stop. Raining. This becomes my running mantra, and my desire to keep warm drives me to keep moving. I arrive at one of the aid stations drenched and dazed, but the rain has finally subsided. Aid station workers hurry to keep the racers warm, and I'm given a sweatshirt and a rain jacket by some generous volunteers.

My newfound warmth fuels me, and I'm able to find my way back to the start/finish line to set out on my final loop. Although the rain has stopped, the effects remain. Thick, sloppy mud covers many parts of the trail and makes for an interesting new challenge. I know I'm close to the cutoff, so I push myself to keep moving. After traversing one final loop of mud, rocks and sand, I find myself on the final stretch. I take any remaining strength I have and move myself across the field toward the finish. As I collapse into my husband's arms, I can't help but think, how soon until my next 100?

LESSONS LEARNED

BY TIM SMITH

I had a really stupid idea a year ago.

On what can only be called a whim, I signed up for the Zumbro 50-mile race in 2013.

The race demolished me. I had no idea there were mountains in Minnesota! Well, that's what they felt like to a guy who trains in Central Iowa. The ups and downs were relentless, and steep. On top of that, the course was nearly 100% snow, ice, water, mud or combinations thereof. On my second lap, near the end where I was reduced to mainly walking, I decided to hang it up and take my first DNF. I managed 33.4 miles, but quit, with my tail between my legs. I was completely undertrained and underprepared for the race.

I vowed I would come back, prepared, and complete it in 2014. And that's exactly what I did. I taped my bib to my front door, so I would see it every day as a reminder. I signed up the day registration opened, and I trained better. Not perfectly, but better. I worked on hills more, practiced hiking more, and got in more miles. This time the course was in great shape for lap one, but a major rain storm came in during lap two, turning the course into a very muddy mess, making it extremely slippery and borderline treacherous on some downhill. The course felt way more rocky than the year before, since all that snow and ice had covered many of the rocks in 2013. Quite a few runners dropped this year. But I was prepared for about anything and I finished. I was near the back of the pack, which is my usual spot, but I was still mostly running at the end. I was ecstatic!

So, lesson learned, right? Don't sign up for a race you are not ready for! Be prepared!

Or was that really the lesson? Think about it. Had I not been silly enough to jump into the race in 2013, would I have even signed up in 2014? And in truth, I learned a lot in that first attempt. I learned about the course, obviously, and that elevation charts should be taken seriously, that more than two days of thinking about a hard race is good before signing up. I learned that I can't just do a 50-mile race any day of the week. I learned that John Storkamp and his crew put on a fun and fantastic and challenging race. But I also learned that running at night is no problem for me, and that it's really a lot of fun. While I struggled with the concept of my first DNF, in the end I accepted it and realized that I have the strength to get knocked down, and to try again. I don't think "finishing" is really the important thing anyway. What's important to me is the journey, the striving and the adventure.

So, maybe it's not such a stupid idea to do something stupid sometimes. It might introduce you to a new adventure you might otherwise have not considered. I might do it again some time. Lesson(s) learned.



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