



Young guns Andrew Knapik and Michael Borst flying down the trail. Borst goes on to set a new 100-mile course record. (© Todd Rowe)

Be *The* Lion

BY JOHN STORKAMP, RD

The month of March has one simple job—to come “in like a lion” and go “out like a lamb.” The past couple of years it had started to seem like the lion ate Little Bo Peep, leaving April’s Zumbro Endurance Run condemned to seemingly endless rain, sleet, hail, snow, lightning and mud.

Pile on rubble, sand and the unreasonable gradients that comprise Zumbro on a good year, and you have a 100-miler fit only for kings of the jungle—or in this case, monarchs of the Southern Minnesota Hardwood Forest, nestled in the dark corners of the ancient Driftless Region.

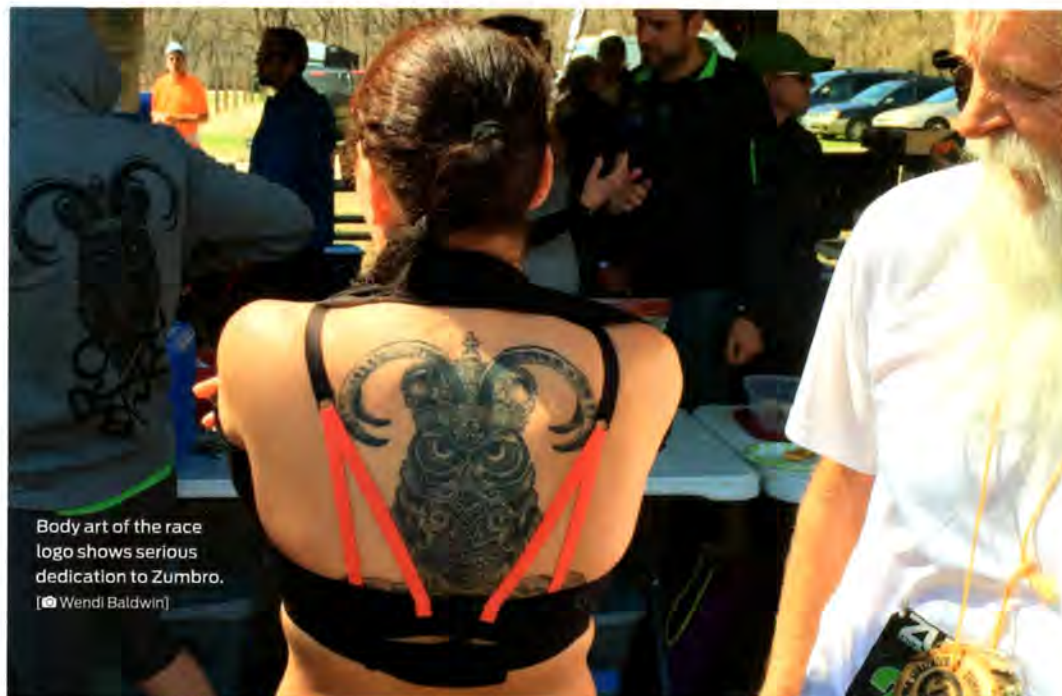
You would think these well-documented conditions would keep runners away, but that would be underestimating the strength and depth of the current that pulls at Zumbro loyalists—runners known for their own strength and depth. The 2015 race saw a record field, with 82 participants registered in the 100, 167 in the Midnight 50 and 339 in the non-ultra one-loop 17-mile race—so much for bad weather acting as an anti-marketing tool.

The 24 hours leading up to this year’s race were marked by the requisite torrential downpours, whiteout snow and high winds, but then the unthinkable happened—the clouds parted and the sun came out, and it stayed for the better part of two days with warm temperatures and gentle winds. These lamb-like conditions spurred the best performances seen to date in Zumbro’s seven runnings. Off to an expected fast start, Wisconsin’s one-two-wonder-kids Michael Borst and Jake Hegge, along with Andrew Knapik of Illinois, ran stride for stride for 50 miles. At the finish, only 15 minutes separated close friends and training partners Borst and Hegge. Knapik, in his 100-mile debut, was about an hour behind. All three were well under the previous course record.

Noticeably absent for a couple of years on the Midwest ultra scene while pursuing continuing education, Becky George of Minnesota ran for an emphatic first place

finish in the 100. This came as no surprise, since George is the reigning Zumbro 50-mile course record holder. Second place was held down by an ecstatic Stephanie Hoff of Wisconsin, with Zumbro 100 vet Jessica Pendleton of Iowa rounding out the top three. About 10 minutes after the start of the Zumbro Midnight 50 Mile race, the volunteers and spectators looked to where the massive bluff and first big climb of the race meets the sky. It is mesmerizing to watch the steady stream of headlamps silently moving on the long exposed bluff’s edge while imagining what the dark night has in store for the brave group of midnight marauders. After the sunrise and a few hours of morning running, Molly Pennings of Minnesota had pulled out an impressive performance,

bested her previous time by over an hour and built upon the success of her 2014 season. Valeria La Rosa, who ran even with Pennings through 17 miles, had given up five minutes by mile 34, and in the end held on strong not far behind her and well ahead of third place. On the men’s side, Kurt Keiser, owner of Mankato, Minnesota’s River Valley Running specialty shop, dominated the competition and, after some company on lap one, ran uncontested to a first place finish wrapped in an impressive course record, which bested the previous CR by about 20 minutes. Finally, the 2015 Zumbro Endurance Run was the first Minnesota ultra of the season since good friend of the race, frequent volunteer, previous Zumbro 100-mile finisher, UMTR Gnarly Bandit finisher, husband, father and personal friend Aaron Buffington passed away this past February at the age of 41, after a hard-fought battle with cancer. Several friends and Zumbro veterans ran in his memory. A framed picture of him was placed at the finish line/transition area so that at the start of each loop, Aaron greeted his friends with his magnetic smile and offered inspiration for those fighting the good fight, just as Aaron had done until the end. Aaron is deeply missed by his Minnesota ultrarunning family. ✨



Body art of the race logo shows serious dedication to Zumbro. [Wendi Baldwin]



Zumbro 100-mile Endurance Run

Theilman, MN // April 10

3,3* // 100 & 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 Mile

1	Michael Borst, 21, WI	18:04:00
2	Jake Hegge, 23, WI	18:20:33
3	Andrew Knapik, 22, IL	19:46:17
4	Doug Kleemeier, 48, MN	21:57:38
5	Brian Klug, 35, MN	22:05:08
6	Nate Ziemski, 37, MN	24:11:52
7	Rebecca George, 32, MN	24:53:10
8	Adam Rood, 34, NE	26:38:01
9	Kevin Langton, 44, MN	27:47:36
10	Stephanie Hoff, 35, WI	27:47:46
11	Todd Brown, 46, IL	28:03:04
12	Nathan Marti, 38, MN	28:07:30
13	Dominique Lasalle, 28, MN	28:24:23
14	Matthew Patten, 44, MN	28:37:57
15	Jeff Winter, 46, MN	28:39:39
16	Harris Larson, 60, SD	28:43:44
17	Jessica Pendleton, 37, IA	28:44:15
18	Tony Cesario, 51, IL	28:53:52
19	Trevor Uhlir, 29, ND	29:09:21
20	Jason Willits, 31, IA	29:30:04
21	Bob Gerenz, 47, MN	29:31:45
22	Alex Eichman, 28, WI	29:49:05
23	Will Richter, 34, MN	30:06:11
24	Mark Johnson, 44, MN	30:06:22
25	Steve English, 48, MN	30:06:24
26	Susan Donnelly, 52, TN	30:50:35
27	Brian Woods, 50, MN	30:55:57
28	Daryl Saari, 52, MN	31:16:02

29	J.D. Coorlage, 40, MN	31:17:32
30	Allan Holtz, 65, MN	31:18:25
31	Jeremy Knaus, 41, WI	31:20:08
32	Jeffrey Lenard, 49, IL	31:23:15
33	Jake Burkhart, 38, IL	31:23:16
34	Timothy Kruse, 41, IL	31:23:16
35	Janet Hausken, 50, MN	31:26:39
36	Paul Peterson, 35, MN	32:13:17
37	Mikhail Titov, 33, MN	32:19:57
38	Jason Mullenbach, 42, MN	32:24:36
39	Erik Raivo, 31, MN	32:37:26
40	Linda Britz, 44, WI	32:59:38
41	Brenda Bland, 55, WI	33:18:50
42	Jordan Schmidt, 20, MN	33:21:34
43	Nick Schadewald, 28, MN	33:22:26
44	Tony Nicholls, 30, MN	33:22:45
45	Kate Hoglund, 26, MN	33:30:13
46	Kathy Errthum, 38, WI	33:30:41

50 Mile

1	Kurt Keiser, 41, MN	8:10:45
2	Eric Tadt, 27, MN	9:06:06
3	Tyler Heinz, 24, WI	9:08:07
4	David Hansen, 29, MN	9:16:03
5	Scott Rassbach, 44, MN	10:09:15
6	Corey Jurovski, 37, WI	10:12:19
7	Aaron Asmus, 35, MN	10:12:28
8	John Maas, 53, MN	10:12:49
9	Brett Balfe, 37, MN	10:19:04
10	Aaron Hansen, 34, MN	10:27:47
11	Molly Pennings, 40, MN	10:28:47
12	Rob Henderson, 31, MN	10:29:24
13	Joe Reiter, 32, IA	10:34:48
14	Valeria La Rosa, 39, MN	10:39:48
15	Gary Hahn, 29, MN	10:44:53
16	Tim Sieh, 54, MN	10:54:56
17	Steve Sorenson, 50, NE	10:55:09
18	Eric Johnson, 44, MN	10:58:31
19	Mikala Shremshock, 32, WV	11:07:17
20	Jeremy O'Brien, 41, MN	11:07:27
21	Zac Lundgren, 24, MN	11:12:58
22	Kelcey Knott, 41, MN	11:14:56
23	Matt Lutz, 29, MN	11:16:58

24	Daniel Ihnat, 49, MN	11:22:31
25	Shelly Groenke, 57, MN	11:27:05
26	A.J. Groebner, 27, MN	11:32:26
27	Jacob Pittman, 23, WI	11:36:08
28	Dan Salay, 27, MN	11:37:07
29	Keith Thompson, 31, MN	11:37:14
30	Paul Olson, 40, MN	11:38:57
31	Matthew Mccarty, 35, MN	11:44:48
32	Timothy Smith, 47, MN	11:53:25
33	Johnathon Hoel, 34, MN	11:56:19
34	Tim Owata, 36, MN	12:11:15
35	Aaron Boike, 26, MN	12:11:29
36	Carl Skustad, 40, MN	12:15:34
37	Scott Oleary, 50, MN	12:23:54
38	Paul Schaefer, 61, MN	12:28:15
39	Andrew Plackner, 45, MN	12:32:00
40	Lisa Burger, 44, MN	12:32:02
41	Scott Breimhorst, 41, MN	12:32:41
42	Chad Brower, 43, SD	12:45:33
43	Dave Cornette, 40, WI	12:49:33
44	Hank Tetreault, 50, MN	12:52:05
45	Aaron Schmidt, 25, IA	13:00:03
46	Jack Prentice, 43, MN	13:00:15
47	Missy Reynolds, 38, IA	13:05:43
48	Jon Steinhilbel, 34, MN	13:07:49
49	Aaron Benike, 41, MN	13:07:50
50	Zachary Lamb, 39, CO	13:08:45
51	Joe Kelzer, 45, WI	13:18:36
52	Christopher Stoffel, 31, MN	13:18:56
53	Jennifer Majewski, 30, WI	13:25:16
54	Jerod Thornton, 34, MO	13:29:41
55	Jay Blackburn, 35, WA	13:29:42
56	Wendi Baldwin, 45, MN	13:36:57
57	Julie Gee Moran, 43, MN	13:39:21
58	Ross Jilik, 50, WI	13:47:20
59	Nicholas Stocco, 44, OR	13:50:47
60	Megan Steil, 33, MN	13:53:41
61	Jerry Rogers, 48, WI	13:55:47
62	Sara Petersen, 34, WI	13:55:50
63	Harold Curioz, 30, MN	14:00:35
64	Curtis Pote, 38, IA	14:00:35
65	Nicole Jessop, 35, MN	14:03:35
66	Sheri Omernik, 33, WI	14:05:42

67	Lisa Tabbert, 38, MN	14:11:49
68	Sara Stanley, 32, MN	14:20:11
69	Ann Smith, 37, MN	14:20:13
70	Taylor Rettig, 31, IA	14:20:46
71	Thomas Morris, 50, IA	14:21:13
72	Clinton Dehne, 45, WI	14:23:46
73	Peter Taylor, 37, MN	14:27:40
74	Kelly MacWilliams, 42, MN	14:29:58
75	Steven Connelly, 36, MN	14:34:12
76	Jason Hara, 34, MN	14:34:13
77	Tom Weigt, 63, MN	14:54:00
78	Rachel Utecht, 28, ND	15:00:20
79	Kamie Nicholls, 36, MN	15:00:26
80	Tony Silvestri, 44, IL	15:03:14
81	Antonio Collodoro, 37, MN	15:07:12
82	Tr Carr, 52, CA	15:11:34
83	Steve Krampe, 64, MN	15:34:53
84	Randy Gannon, 61, SD	15:34:54
85	Christine Moore, 42, WI	15:39:46
86	Chalayne Palmgren, 30, MN	15:55:49
87	Scott Wagner, 49, MN	16:00:03
88	Greg Allen, 50, MN	16:00:04
89	Teri Lessig, 40, WI	16:04:05
90	Sarah Erickson, 36, MN	16:14:08
91	Gretchen Karstens, 38, MN	16:14:09
92	Justin Mix, 35, MN	16:19:59
93	David Ratley, 37, MN	16:20:00
94	Perry Bennor, 48, MI	16:20:26
95	Jody Sukow, 45, WI	16:44:23
96	Fay Sukow, 45, WI	16:44:35
97	Dan Cairns, 54, MN	16:47:29
98	Shannon Featherstone, 44, WI	17:26:52
99	William Hardwick, 56, MN	17:31:05
100	Sarah Hardy, 39, WI	17:51:39

*See page 34 for key

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