

H.U.R.T. 100 Race Report by Beverly Anderson-Abbs

“The course is very runnable, just be careful, don’t get caught up in the first 2 laps. A 4:15 to 4:30 first lap is good for guys, then about a 4:30 to 4:45, then 5:00 hours. If you do that, the last two laps should be around 6 to 6:30.”

I don’t honestly know who said that in the early morning hours prior to the start of HURT 100, 2006. I don’t even know if it was one person, or a composite that I put together in my mind. All I know is that I didn’t pay any attention to it!

When the race started at 6am, there was a mass of lights bouncing up the dark trail, feet picking carefully through the roots and rocks of the first hill climb. I started fast hiking/jogging to get up toward the front and see who was where in the field, finally pulling up beside Jim Kerby and Karl Meltzer, Alan was right behind me and a young man named Corey was there with us. The five of us set a fairly stiff pace, me pulling up the hills, then falling back a bit on the technical descents. For most of lap 1, I was with Karl, James, Corey, and Alan just following their footsteps through the technical areas where I am not good. Lap 1 was FAST...I didn't see anything except the feet in front of me or the ground when they put me out in front. Going into Paradise Park aid station, we passed a waterfall and I had no idea it was there until we came back from the aid station and there was this 300' fall right in front of me... talk about focused. Coming out the first aid station, I noticed Darcy Africa coming in to it about 5 minutes or so after. I kept following the feet, scrambling over rocks and picking through masses of roots. We finished lap 1 in 3 hours 52 minutes, much to my surprise.

Lap 2 was still fast...a little slower though, 4:13. I stayed more or less with Jim for lap 2 while Karl kept up that ungodly pace the entire race (he could have completed another lap by the time I finished). I took the time to change socks at Paradise Park, knowing how bad my feet can get if they stay wet. Darcy was staying pretty close, making up some time on me on when I changed socks.

After lap 2, I slowed a bit to look around on lap 3, I was still pretty close to James and enjoyed that contact, and I started to see what I was running in. (Don’t look down though, the ground is a mass of treacherous roots and rocky sections waiting to catch toes and turn ankles. The forest was quite spectacular, I often saw little critters running across the trail and thought I heard a pig once. I even saw a little orange feral kitten. This lap could have been brutal if it had been really hot. As it was the weather to this point was perfect, no rain, sun dappled through the leaves. Warm enough to take off shirts, but not so warm that you were sweating profusely. I took the time to really look at the waterfall coming out of Paradise Park, but still recognized that the next woman was only minutes behind me. I picked up a head light at Paradise, just in case I didn’t make it to Jackass Ginger before dark. Jim was coming out of Jackass Ginger as I was going in. He had picked up a pacer, a luxury I did not have (nor did I have crew). Once the darkness set in and I was alone, it was hard to keep any kind of decent pace going. I was a little worried about hurting myself or going the wrong way, fortunately Cindy, an angel had shown up at the main intersection to direct traffic. The ground in some areas was just a mass of

roots, the downhills were treacherously steep with boulders in some areas you had to crawl over, the climbs were just steep, and everything was slippery and muddy and getting worse as more and more feet passed through.

I had a bright headlight, but not my waist light (it is at the S/F) big mistake, not good enough lighting to really make any speed on technical areas and I no longer have the guys to follow foot placement. I got back to the Start/Finish aid station in about 5:13 and looked up to see Darcy coming in about 3 minutes or so behind me. She came over to her bin, next to mine and said "you know I'm only doing the 100k don't you?" I tried to be nonchalant, thanked her, wished her good luck and continued to eat and deal with my stuff while she took off on her final 2 mile loop to finish the 100k. Darcy went on to set the Women's course record for the 100K.

Laps 4 and 5...ok its dark. These laps were much slower, mostly at a walk. It was carnage out there...it looked like the night of the living dead...at the intersection you could see lights coming from all directions, people looked half catatonic, lights bobbing around through the trees. Very surreal! I finally finished that lap and figured I could run at least some of the next one...

Overall, the race is very well organized and the aid station people were great. On lap 5, I decided to change socks one last time at Jackass Ginger and Greg washed my feet, put powder on them and helps me with my socks while someone else got a cup of soup for me. The trails were great the first couple of laps, until they started to get chewed up by all the feet going over them. A crew and pacer are a must if you want to shoot for a fast time, but the race is easily doable with neither.