

2016: 21st Holiday Lake 50K --- The Cold Year by David Horton????

At the December 2015 Hellgate 100K, we had our hottest year EVER, with temperatures in the mid to high 70's. But Holiday Lake was a different story. With a morning temperature of 17 and a high of 29, it was our second coldest temperature ever for this event. Earlier in the week, forecasters had predicted a low of 7 degrees, which thankfully didn't happen. For the runners, the low temps were not that much of a challenge. However, for the aid station workers, it made keeping warm while standing around extremely difficult.

Holiday Lake is known as a GREAT beginner's race. There is very inexpensive lodging at the start/finish, food, showers, and parking without ever moving. There is a little over 2,300 feet of gain in the double-loop course with very mild hills, just over one mile of pavement, and the rest on single track trails, dirt roads, and double-track trails. All sub 8-hour finishers received a BEAUTIFUL silk weight Patagonia long-sleeve shirt. Top 10 men and women and age group winners, also received a Patagonia back pack.

Holiday Lake is also the first race in the Lynchburg Ultra Series, the Beast Series, and the SW VA Triple Crown. This race also signals the beginning race for the new year. Many runners are not in prime shape for an ultra this early in the year.

There were four female runners with a very good chance of taking the title of champion this year. Bethany Patterson (Richmond, VA) set the course record last year and claimed she was just training through HL. Of course, no one believed her. Amy Ostrofe (Suffolk, VA) led Patterson in the 2015 MMTR 50 Miler through 45 miles finally being passed by Patterson but hanging on for second place. Sarah Schubert (Charlottesville, VA) was training well and had trained on the course. Hannah Bright (Blacksburg, VA), a Hokie girl, has become a VERY good ultrarunner and was running strong.

A Hokie runner, Darren Thomas (Blacksburg, VA), has developed into one of the best ultrarunners in the southeast. Michael Dubova and Nicholas DiPirro (both from Charlottesville, VA) had been running mega miles and were expected to race well.

In the women's race, Ostrofe took the lead from the start and ran strong through the first loop and maintained the lead until 21 miles where Schubert took the lead. Patterson was still in 5th place at this point. Schubert ran strong on to the finish, winning in a time of 4:29:11. Patterson closed the gap and took 2nd finishing less than 2.5 minutes back with a time of 4:31:36. Bright ran a PR and took 3rd in 4:36:54.

The men's field had a surprise at the front of the race. Through 12 miles, the leader was a Liberty University sophomore Caleb Wakeley. Trailing him by one minute was Cory Rand (Washington, DC). These two stayed that way through 21 miles. After this point, Saft, DiPirro, and Thomas came on strong. Saft finished 1st with a winnign time of 3:50:38. DiPirro followed less than 1.5 minutes later placing 2nd in 3:52:01. Thomas took 3rd in 3:56:20.

The Master's titles went to Christopher Miller (Radford, VA) and Michelle Mclellan (Elizabethon, TN) in 4:18:57 and 5:10:21 respectively. The Grand Master's titles went to Matt Prescott (Roanoke, VA) and Martha Wright (Richmond, VA) in 4:42:50 and 5:54:01 respectively.

The Best Blood awards went to Harry Landers and Nicolien Wilder, both from Charlottesville VA. Landers tripped and landed headlong into a tree. He suffered a serious concussion, broke 2 bones, received 12

stitches, among some other problems, but last reports were that he was doing well. Wilder also fell and received lacerations and 4 stitches . . . and they weren't even running together! They had driven up together . . . so I guess they had a competition going to see who would win Best Blood?

In 2017, the race will be on February 11. Many first-time runners will be there, will you?