

## 2010 Holiday Lake 50K++

### Subtitled, “Oh my aching ankles” or “you’ll need to be patient”

I’d like to preface my story with heartfelt thanks to everyone involved with the organization and execution of the race this year. This was only my second ultra, Promise Land 2009 having been my first, and I must say that these races are tons more fun than any marathon I’ve ever run.

How can I sum up my feelings prior to the start of the race? In a word ANXIOUS. I ordinarily trust my training and my training had gone fairly well, up until the Saturday before race day. During my last long run before the race a stupid wardrobe malfunction, on my part, resulted in blistered Achilles tendons on both of my feet. My “no show” socks had crept down into my shoes and I couldn’t feel them rubbing the skin off until I was 10 miles out and I didn’t really have a choice except to try and beat it on back home. Then I got the e-mail from Dr. Horton and when I read that he was extending the cut-off time to 9 hours due to trail conditions I knew it was going to be bad.

I arrived at the 4-H Center late in the afternoon Friday and got registered without any problems. Had a great meal (the lasagna was awesome) and good conversation with Jaime, JJ and two LU students who’s names I failed to get. Then the door prizes started whizzing around and even though none of them whizzed my way it was still fun. Then I headed out to my car for what I hoped would be a reasonable amount of sleep. While it was cold that night, it didn’t get as cold as I anticipated and I was able to rest. I’m astounded that JJ slept out in that weather w/o a tent or other shelter.

I was up and about by 4:30 AM (had to get moving or my face would have frozen off) to find an inch or so of beautiful new powder had fallen during the night. The 2 hours until race time passed in a snap. Next thing I knew there was a prayer and we were singing the National Anthem (thanks Dr. Horton for sparing us your solo although we sounded pretty bad too) and then we were off. A million thoughts were running through my head, what did I forget (nothing important), should I have brought a light (no), would I die today (well, no but it felt like it was close). The first half mile or so passed by w/o issues but I was surprised at the number of late arrivals we were meeting. I guess the road conditions that morning were less than ideal. I hope they all got to run. Then we turned onto the trail. I hadn’t gone 8 steps when I twisted my ankle. Not bad, but enough that I could feel it and that cranked the anxiety level even a little higher. I thought the footing was going to be bad but I was mistaken, it was horrible! I know some runners had little or no trouble with the footing but I did! I won’t bore you with the painful details of my entire race but the same pattern held true here as at Promise Land last year. I went out too fast and got to the turn-around in 3:13 but then suffered through a very slow and painful second lap to a 7:09 finish. I want to say thanks to Calvin and Heather. The three of us ran together for about 3-4 miles near the end of the first lap and the pace and conversation were ideal. I wish we could have stuck together longer but as it turned out I was holding them up ☺.

While I’m a little disappointed with my finishing time I’m glad I finished. There were many times I just wanted to quit. My feet, ankles and knees were in sad shape (as I’m sure were many others) and my fitness level just wasn’t up to the conditions. I learned a few lessons about patience and pacing and I’m going to try and apply them to future races.

Once again thank you to Dr. and Mrs. Horton, to the staff at Holiday Lake 4-H Center, to all the aid station workers (warm tomato soup ☺) and other volunteers and everyone involved behind the scenes. I had a blast and I’m looking forward to Terrapin Mountain. See you there!

**Steve Hinzman**