

2017 Holiday lake 50K , my first adventure beyond the Marathon. I do not describe myself as a marathoner. I have run three marathons, one in my 20s, one in my 30s and last October in my 40s. Short road races, 5Ks and a few 10 milers/ ½ marathons, have been most of my focus the last 6 years. After having a great running season in 2016 building miles for my Marathon and enjoying the Charlottesville Summer Trail Series I decided to dabble in a trail 50k.

Preparing for the run, I was able to ramp up my miles and get a few trail runs in. Attending the trailing run around Holiday Lake took a huge amount of concern out of this endeavor. Yes there is a water crossing, your feet will get wet, it will be cold, you will recover. Seeing and experiencing the water crossing and how technical the course is really helps eliminate those concerns. Practicing eating during long runs helped to. I was able to pick up my bib Thursday before the 50k so I would be able to get an extra 30 to 45 minutes sleep.

Race day, I arrived at the race 12 min beforehand and walked/ lightly jogged to the starting line, I did a few last minute things including placing my drop bag, checked in and hopped into the starting corral ~3 before the gun. I gave Brian, a friend and my ride home, a thumbs up and found some calm before the start. I would spend most the day with Brian. The first four miles were a little treacherous with the uneven terrain in the dark, but then it got light so it was just about punching out easy miles.

This aid station thing is new to me; it is like a finish line food at a smaller scale. At the first aid station I dropped my headlamp off as well as one of my two hats and an outer layer. I also stole a kiss from my girl friend that was kind enough to drive me to the race. I like to not think about the miles total miles left so much but more about the next aid station and how many aid stations left, this stayed true till about mile 22.

I continued to work easy miles and chatting with friends between aid station one and two as well as two and three. Between aid stations 3 and the turn around point there started the head on passing of lead runners. This presented some footing and ducking out of the way challenges, but it was exciting to see the leaders working fast on the trails. We then got to the turn around point, my drop bag as also my end of race bag and my last minute change into this at the start bag. This made the getting what I wanted more of a challenge. It was a much slower turn around than I wanted. I also removed one of my two layers. Earlier in the day I took only one cookie from an aid station, I primarily fueled on Perpetuem. At the turn around point I picked up a Honey Stinger Waffle and a hummus and raisin sandwich I made the day before. I also picked up more Perpetuem to add to my bottle along the way.

I continued to work easy miles, between the half way point and aid station five, I ate the Honey Stinger Waffle. Between aid station five and six I ate 1/3 on my sandwich and continued to feel good. This was now getting beyond my longest training run. I didn't feel the wall and decided to pick it up a little. I continued to work the miles between aid station six and seven. Aid station seven was a mess of people, more than any other aid station. I didn't feel I needed any more water or aid station fuel, I just passed it and its chaos. In the last four miles I decided I didn't need to eat, the calories wouldn't help I would just finish my sandwich at the end. I fell at mile 30... walking up a hill... it was my only fall and since it was a steep hill I did fall far. I got the road and coasted down to the finish line. I was able to finish it without a bonk and felt strong all

the way through, my last 10 miles were faster than my first 10. David Horton, the race director, harangued me at the finish line for not looking tired and added maybe I should have run faster. There are definitely things I need to work on but it was a good outing for my first 50k. We had amazing weather day, I think I will have another long day in the woods some time, but now it is time for a little rest and getting re-gearred for some speed.