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## Ice age 50 race report

Race: Ice Age Trail 50 Miler Runner: Roey P Date: 5/12/2018 Location: Moraine Park Kettle, Wisconsin Results: 9:13:03 Strava Activity Link: 3 Bests – Which aspects of the race did you like the most? Atmosphere – The more I get in the trail running, the more I love it. Other runners are a huge reason why. They are friendly, talkative and supportive. Its almost like Hey, we're all in this together. The course is complicated, with non-stop hills. But boy is a good run. The varied terrain keeps it really interesting. Aid stations-16, not including start and finish. Very well supported, fully stocked, awesome volunteers. Not so much - Aspects of race that don't do it for you If I were pressed to come up with something.This race is in the middle of nowhere Wisconsin. The best way I could tell you where it is, between Madison and Rinsin. Don't expect a wide range of food/sleep arrangements. Weird factor - What's the weird thing about this race? One loop, and 2 from and back means you get to see the leaderboard several times. Like beautiful gazelles passing by you when you plough along. Not as weird as inspiring. Also, the hills NEVER end. Honestly, they don't. My watch said 5,000+ feet of lifting, but none of them were more than 200 feet at a time. Highlights of your race – What have you done well and enjoy about your race in particular? I feel like I pace it incredibly well. I was on point with my dressing and moisturizing, and was able to stick to my plan really well. I handled the hills well, and finished 47 minutes faster than I wanted. Lessons for others – Share your pro-race tips to help the next runner seriously, do your job on the hill. Even though it sounds flat for 50 softer ones, they don't end there. I was about half a mile from the finish line, and mistakenly thought of myself phew, no more hills. But guess what ... 2 more hills. The lessons you've learned that will help you next time around Protein Nut Butter and Vaseline don't stay forever. Re. The most important course of specific knowledge to know about the Hills race is also the hills. I mentioned Hills. Some of the outs and backs got a little pudding, both after 40D runners were on them twice. Try to be a leader. Then you get fresh stitches. Aesthetics is quite a course? Beautiful forest of the midwest. Is complexity a difficult course? Being my first 50, I don't have much perspective, but I would say deceptively challenging. Organized and well run - Did he feel well oiled by the car or were they flying near the pants seat? Everything was smooth. Race communication was great. Bib's pickup was smooth. The events of the day from the race are well handled. This race has been going on for 30 plus years and they've figured it all out. Competition – is there a strong field? Maybe not so much as years past. It used to be a WS qualifier, but More. Some more strong runners out there. Logistics – whether a special handshake, handshake is required, the year before the hotels that booked? Give us a low down on the nuts and bolts to make the race happen. Many camping options, only 1 or 2 hotels in the area. It didn't work. Aid stations - Standard fare or anything special to know about aid stations in terms of what's available or when? So much. 16, not including start/finish. They restricted Gu, but everything else was fully loaded. The weather and typical race conditions are 40-50 and wethumid. He poured in the night before, but was beautiful that day. Gear – Do you need something special or is there anything you would recommend for the next guy? The running belt should be fine. Lots of places for the crew, and many aid stations. Do not weigh yourself with a vest or backpack. Spectators – Is this a friendly course for your friends? Many places for family and friends to cheer you up, and keep you going. If you have a family there, Emma Carlin's aid station looked like a big party. 40 miles and they were swinging and rolling when I walked in. How wobbly? I finally ran the race that gave the buckle, so great! Total Score – How many stars do you give this race and do you recommend others run it? 5 out of 5. The big race is 50 softer for the first time. I think my theory about ultramarathons is that anyone who has ever heard of them has two immediate questions: 1) Why the hell would you do something like that? and 2) I wonder if I could run that far? How you answer these two questions, in your head, or out loud, dictates whether you really end up in an actual ultramarathon. As for Question 1, I know why people do really painful things like ultramarathons, alpiners, and wait in line for hours to see concerts: In some trick psychology, you convince yourself the pain will be worth it. And after that, most of the time, you think it's worth it. I signed up for Ice Age Trail 50 last December, wondering if I could run 50 miles of hills rolling along paths through the Moraine State Forest kettle in One Day. Then I showed up to the starting line last Saturday under grey skies and 40-degree paces, no less sure I could do it than the day I signed up for the race. Not content to just put myself through that much pain, I signed my friend Jason to the race as well, and we decided we had two goals: Finish in time to get the Ice Age Belt Buckle 50, and smile at the end of it. It was cold on the starting line, at 6 a.m., and 370 other 50-mile runners gathered in free mass around the start/finish line, most of us pretty ordinary people with different reasons to spend 9 or 10-plus straight hours on the rough trail. Or trying until we broke ourselves, I think. Then there were a handful of people I would call real runners, badassess who would maintain 8- or 9-minute miles throughout the race and finish in six to seven hours. By Mile 2, my left leg started hurting and I thought it would ever go away and the pain would move elsewhere as it normally did during our training runs. Your body parts just take turns hurting, in my experience, and hopefully none of the pains you feel are actual injuries - though after running 20 miles or so, you have enough endorphins pumping your body that you sometimes won't know if something actually broke until the next day or the day after that. At the second aid station, Miles 9—we threw our light jackets, replenished our water bottles, and kept running, spirits high. We were still feeling good at the relief station in Mile 17.3. where our friends and family members greeted us with food and electrolyte. In Mile 20 I started to feel fatigue in my legs, sort of like the kind of feeling you get if you're standing on your feet all day waiting for tables or bartenders, but in this case you keep running and walking, relentlessly, and you know the pain isn't going to go away unless you stop moving. On Mile 26.2 I sat down for a couple of minutes while filling bottles of water and eating potato chips. We were halfway through 50 miles, but I felt not even the least ink that we had it in my bag. We jumped a few identical people throughout the race—yo moved well through aid stations quickly and we didn't. I was distracted by Ahoy and Oreos chips at each aid station, giving myself permission to eat as much shit as I wanted, whether for calories or just emotional reasons. We hoped to finish at any time before 6 .m., just under a 12-hour cutoff. As the first fast guy passed us, going in a different direction, ahead of our pace, I remembered what I read on the race website: 'The awards ceremony at 3 p.m..m, I told Jason, and we both laughed knowing we were still 10 miles left to run at this point. Around Mile 30, Jason and I basically stopped talking to each other, the only sounds of escaping our mouths involuntary burches and sighs and occasional good work as we passed the runner moving in the other direction. At Mile 31.5, I officially set a personal record for the longest distance I've ever run in a single day.Friends who ran ultras told me before the race: Everything changes after 30 miles. I kept thinking about it as the miles swept in and I kept moving with one foot in front of the other, sometimes kicking a stone or root and sending a shot of pain up my legs through my leg. And I kept thinking. Nothing changes. It's just the same pain, gradually growing, the more I keep moving. The room was quite big and comfortable. I commented on it at least twice to Jason, and at one point he said, 'I'm going to make a cowardly Lion from the Wizard of Oz Country—I feel tired. I think I could just lie down here to take a nap. But most were just a blur of green, a moving meditation: focus on movement, ignore the pain and constant pain, ignore the clock if it hurts to walk, you can also run. At 66.5 km we at the #10 aid station to see our family and friends, share a cinnamon roll with ice cream, changed socks for nothing more than moral impulse, and ran back into the woods to finish the remaining miles. At an aid station 70km away, I heard a volunteer shouting: Does anyone else need a ride?when the Subaru station wagon pulled up to take the injured runner to the finish line. Temptation comes in many forms. I ate another Oreo and shuffled along the trail for Jason.About mile 44.5, we passed a handmade plaque that said: If you feel good during ultra, don't worry, it will pass. Fifty miles away. Can I run this far? I'm not sure where this idea comes from. A few years ago, I interviewed climber Kelly Cordes about the concept of being hardcore, and he said he thought the ultrarunners were real hardcore people, that when you're there, there's nothing stopping you from sitting down at an aid station and quitting. In the alpine, you often have to get up on top and back down if you want to survive, so that pushes you. But in ultrarunning, most of the time, you won't die - you can pretty much quit at any time when you see that table full of cookies and ask someone to call you to drive. I'm not saying that neither one is more hardcore, but having done some extremely long days in the mountains, I know how much those can hurt. While I kept baring these last miles in Ice Age Trail 50, I thought back to the time my friend Chris and I climbed Grand teton a few years ago, and how tired I was from descending that I nearly fell asleep with my feet sticking out on the trail in Garn's Canyon. This ultramarathon was, of course, the biggest pain I've ever had during this long- new line of fatigue. But there were cookies every few miles. At 48.5 we passed the final aid station. As we ran along a gentle Scandinavian ski trail, I looked at my watch. Almost an hour to cover 1.5 miles. A lot of time. I said to Jason: We'll have to fuck this up en masse so as not to get belt buckles at this point. I would throw you over your shoulder and incur,' he said. I would actually be up for it right now, to be honest with you. With 200 yards to go, we could hear the cheers of people at the finish line. At 50 yards we saw our friends and family screaming just before the finish line. Jason started screaming and giggling in joy and I felt more relief than joy and was just trying to keep my back straight and hands up, so it didn't look like I was going to die before I crossed the finish line. As we intersected under the arch at the finish line, I had the answer to my question that I would be able to run 50 miles in one day. We were at the back of the pack and as people crossed the finish line behind us, the cheers from the crowd grew louder. Race, at least the dramatic competitive part that we mythologize in most things we call sport, is long over at that point. But I think we're cheering for something else: normal people who are not there necessarily Anyone but the smaller person they can be if they haven't tried to run very long paths for no good reason. We packed up our belongings and waved all over the car park to leave, and when the crowd around the finish line went from cheerful loud to bananas, I realized we were missing the moment: the runner was crossing the finish line at 11:59:13, the last person to finish before the 12-hour cutoff. Maybe in a couple of weeks, I'll start wondering if I can run 100 miles. After my leg stops hurting. If they have Oreos at aid stations.—Gear I used: -Brendan -Brendan

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