



KOTH Hong Kong Mountain Marathon

(Wong Nei Chung Gap, HK, Sunday 27 November 2016. Temp. 11-19 degrees; cloudy to clear.)

The weather gods smiled on us

A strong tropical monsoon passed near Hong Kong the day before the race. In the evening before the race temperatures had fallen to 11 degrees, the wind was howling and the rain was lashing down. UNICEF made the decision to cancel their charity race due to be held the next day. Recognizing that trail runners are made of sterner stuff, KOTH chose to make the final go/no go decision only on race morning and depending upon the absence of thunder warning and black rain signals. The forecast was also for improving weather throughout the day.

In the event, the weather gods smiled. At 0645 at the race start, it was cold, but the rain had largely stopped. By mid-race the sun was out and the clear, unpolluted views were superb and the north wind had dried out the trails as much as could be hoped for. Hard to imagine much better conditions overall.

Half Marathon: That 70's Guy

Looking as much like a 1970's tennis pro at the local club as a runner, Jeff Campbell led from the start with bold and fast running. This was catch me if you can rather than tactical racing. Michael Skobeirski, in particular, gave admirable chase through the second water stop, but Jeff pulled away on Violet Hill and won going away in 1:37:58m with Michael second (1:39:05) and Kevin Scanlon third (1:42:13), just 2 seconds ahead of Guy Connell. Several spouses promised that once "Movember" is over, this group of front runners will be sporting new looks at the next race.

William Davies finished 6th overall and drew first blood for the MV40s (1:47:00) with Lam Shing Yip just behind him (1:48:07) and Seth Fischer a further few minutes back in a strong showing for this age group.

Returning from a bit of a hiatus, Anthony Davies claimed line honors in the M50 race (1:54:49), ahead of the first M45 runner, Peter Bachmann (1:56:03). These results were repeated a few minutes later as M50 Mo Devlin (1:57:18) finished just ahead of M45 Thomas Hardcastle (1:57:34) and then again with M50 third place Thomas Lai (2:01:55) finishing ahead of M45 third place Rupert Chamberlain (2:02:58).

Maturing to a new age group, M55 Steve Wong found the competition to his liking, winning in 2:01:21. Regular full marathon endurance junkie Hau Ping dropped down to the half marathon (thank you AFCD) and came in second (2:03:45), followed by Yeung Kwok Keung (2:06:17).



Danny Leung (2:32:27) had his way in the M60+ category, ahead of Yuen Tak Shing Ray (2:34:48) and Wong Peter Chun Tong (2:35:19).

In form, Zein Williams cruised to victory in the ladies' race (2:00:46). Zein was never seriously challenged, other than by the men around her and the chance to finish in under two hours. Zein also won bragging rights in her family since her husband had signed up to run UNICEF on the day.

Kwan Yee Ting Chris was second in and the first F40 (2:13:33), followed by fellow veteran Vivian Lee (2:15:59) and Tsang Woon Ming (2:17:10). Stephanie Roland (2:19:00) was the second open category female runner across the line, followed in third by Delphine Rich-Franz (2:22:30).

Kate Martin won the F50 race going away (2:30:04), with Sophia Kennelly second (2:36:29) and Susan Mifsud third (2:41:15).

A number of people appear to have missed some course markings and wandered of onto the full marathon course or other trails. This route was not marked or supported with aid stations, but AFCD still complained that these people were given water at the official half marathon aid stations. We find this criticism perplexing: A KOTH runner wearing a KOTH bib shows up at KOTH water stop, of course we give the person water. Are we supposed to deny them water and possibly precipitate a medical problem? We organize a race and hence have a responsibility to look after our own at the places we say we will. To be fair, we also have to disqualify short cutters as they have not done the requisite distance or altitude change, but we have never disqualified "long cutters" who choose consciously or otherwise make a mistake and end up doing far longer and harder distances. If anything, these people have taken on greater challenge and still persevered. They are the unsung heroes of the day.

Race results can be viewed at:

<http://www.racetecresults.com/Results.aspx?CIId=16387&RIId=6086&EId=2>

The next race in the series takes place on Lantau Island, on Sunday, January 8, 2017. Please see www.seyonasia.com for details.

This series cannot take place without our principle sponsor GigaSports, the beverage support of Aquarius and Bonaqua and the support of Columbia. All the racers and I are also grateful to the fabulous marshals who support and encourage throughout.

Keith Noyes

Race Director

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