



KOTH Hong Kong Mountain Marathon

(Wong Nei Chung Gap, HK, Sunday 26 November 2017. Temp. 17-21 degrees; overcast to clear.)

20 Years of KOTH

KOTH began in 1998 so this makes this season the 20th anniversary. If you add on the Three Mountain Marathon Series which preceded KOTH, we have a trail running series that dates back to 1984, almost certainly the longest running off road series in Asia.

We are tremendously honored that KOTH continues to go from strength to strength and thank all of you for participating and supporting the events. When it first started, about 100 runners showed up and I knew most of them personally from Trailwalker. Now we have a pleasing mix of new and old faces each season, but the sense of community spirit has remained intact and is one of the things that I think people enjoy about KOTH.

Full Marathon: In rarefied company

Though the course has changed for the faster over the recent years (no General Rock, no shaggy trail turn off of Boa Vista), today Jeff Campbell became only the second full marathoner in the history of the event to break the 3-hour barrier for the full marathon. Jeff ran 2:58:23 to send an early signal of his intention to claim the King of the Hills crown this year. (The other sub-3 hour runner was Neil Tait, who ran 2:52:48 in 2004.) Guy Connell finished strongly (3:03:08) to beat out John Ellis (3:05:48) for second place with John taking third.

Jeremy Ritcey finished 4th overall (3:07:32) and 1st in the M40 veteran's category. The next several runners in all hailed from the open category – Tom Robertshaw, Leung Chun Keung, James Park, and Wong Hon Hei Tommy – before M45 Ezra Emerson (3:23:24) finished 9th overall and first in his age group. Open runner Joseluis Alvelais Gonzalez rounded out the top ten.

M50 winner Luk Siu Hong (3:25:56) was next in and was first in what proved to be a competitive M50 field as second place Michael McComb was close behind (3:27:33) and not that far ahead of M50 3rd place Anthony Davies (3:32:24).

Peter Bachmann claimed second place in the M45 age group (3:34:18), just ahead of third place Ingo Wende (3:40:25).

Mathias Knobloch was second in the M40 age group (3:41:29), followed by Jaques Clot (3:49:28).

Chan See Kau started the season strongly to win the M55 race going away in 3:42:02. KK Choi

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finished second (3:58:21) and Jube Lo third (3:58:42).

Christopher Gunns picked up where he left off last season, winning the M60 race in 3:58:57. Chan Hoi Nam came in second (4:27:32) and Wong Wai Yin third (4:41:49).

The ladies race experienced some excitement as Emily Woodland claimed a stunning victory in 3:34:28. Emily not only won the ladies race, she also finished 18th overall. This is the best we have ever seen Emily run and hope that it bodes well for her future races. Chiu Wai Yin finished a distant second (3:59:07), managing to break the 4-hour mark in the process.

Last year's Queen of the Hills Marie McNaughton finished third overall (4:04:59) and first in the F40 age group. Marie races almost every weekend so perhaps post-Trailwalker fatigue finally caught up with this superwoman? Tsang Woon Ming finished 4th overall and second in the F40 category (4:10:46) and Natalia Watkins took 5th overall and 3rd in the category (4:16:05). Irene Montemayor (4:28:42) placed third in the open category.

Sophia Kennelly claimed line honors in the F50 age group (4:37:23). Yeung Chan Au was second (4:47:14) and Eva Lo third (5:05:02).

Half Marathon: Kevin by himself

Kevin Scanlon found himself in front early on and made sure that no one had a chance of catching him on the way to a fast (1:41:36) victory. Baptiste Puyou dropped down from the full to the half due to knee pain and still finished a respectable second in 1:47:22 while Tim Marchant struck a blow for veteran runners, coming in third overall 1:51:04 and first in the M45 age group. Tam Tsz Hong finished 4th overall and 3rd in the open category.

Several other veterans also ran their way into the top ten overall: Jan Littlewood was 5th and first in the M40 category (1:53:25); Seth Fischer was sixth and second in the M45 category (1:54:35), Frank Riehm was ninth and second in the M40 category (1:56:16), Jeremy Sutch was tenth and third in the M45 category (1:58:11) and Alan Zagury was eleventh and third in the M40 category (2:01:39).

Wong Tsz Wan had a strong run to finish thirteenth overall and first in the M55 category (2:03:45). Steve Wong (2:06:36) was close behind to grab second in the category, followed by To Hoi Lau Eric in third (2:12:27).

When told that he had won the M50 age group, Olivier Streun looked on in disbelief, but the fact is that his 2:07:56 was gold on the day. Kristian Murfitt was second (2:13:09) and Kwok Ching Po third (2:13:09).
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(2:14:35).

Yuen Tak Shing Ray surged to victory in the M60 race in 2:32:13, leaving long-time rival Wong Peter Chun Tong a ways behind in 2:38:21. Tsui Pak Long was third (2:40:55).

Vivian Lee stormed to victory in the ladies' race in 2:10:50, claiming F40 line honors at the same time. Few people looked as fast, relaxed and easy as Vivian did crossing the finish line.

Newcomer Charlotte Paquet finished second overall (2:12:54) and first in the open category. Charlotte was just ahead of Stephanie Mak (2:13:12), who finished third overall and second in the open category. Kwan Yee Ting Chris (2:16:56) finished fourth overall and second in the F40 category. Recent-mom Nia Cooper finished fifth overall and third in the open category (2:20:03). Then following a couple of open runners, Nathalie Darbon (2:21:12) grabbed the final podium position in the F40 age group.

Ada Chan ran well to grab first place (2:28:40) in the F50 category. She was followed by Kate Martin in second (2:32:08) and Poon Yuk Pui (2:53:36) in third.

Once again, evergreen Frank Pilkington, 75-years young at the moment, was the oldest finisher in a highly credible 3:02:20.

Race results can be viewed at:

<http://www.racetecresults.com/Results.aspx?CI=16387&RI=6144&EI=1>

The next race in the series takes place on Lantau Island, on Sunday, January 7, 2018. Please see www.seyonasia.com for details.

Starting out our 20th season, we are again grateful to the Swire group of companies, including the brands GigaSports, Columbia, Aquarius and Bonaqua, for their generous support. This is also the first year in 15 years that Ling, due to illness, has not been at the starting line helping out. I'd be grateful to all of you who have gotten to know her over the years for your positive thoughts for her speedy recovery so that she can rejoin KOTH as soon as possible. All the racers and I are also grateful to the fabulous marshals who support and encourage throughout and I am especially grateful to the strong team that have taken on Ling's KOTH duties while she recovers.

Keith Noyes

Race Director