



Swire KOTH Lantau Mountain Marathon
Sunday, 5 January 2014. Sunny, but polluted, 16-20 degrees and dry.
Race Report

Great day, shame about the smog

About 750 runners started despite the high pollution levels which took their toll, particularly on the full marathon. While the half marathon had only one DNF, there were 50 DNFs out of 240 runners on the full. Never the less, the race day mood was festive and the temperatures were great for running. Swire Ambassadors put on a great spread at the finish and people enjoyed hanging out on a sunny day waiting for their friends to finish.

Full marathon: Clement conquers revised course

The KOTH Lantau course has changed remarkably little since its inception in 1984 so it was a disappointment to have to revise the course this year because San Tau villagers have been intermittently blocking the path through their village to hiking groups. Hopefully the authorities will have resolved this illegal behavior by next year. The revised course ended up being about 2.5 km longer than the old course, but considerably less rough, making direct comparisons to completion times with the original course difficult.

Lantau local Clement Dumont arrived at the start complaining about a cold, but then showed no ill effects powering up Sunset Peak. Some superior technical running down into Tung Chung allowed Clement to open up a lead that he never relinquished on the way to finishing in 3:46:09. Despite a fall and bump on the knee, Will Davies ran very well to finish second in 3:56:40, before dashing home to be with the family. Will has now placed second in each of the first two races. In third overall was super M50 Bob Shorrock, who just missed the 4 hour mark (4:00:40). Bob had complained about being "out of shape and running out of steam" at the Sai Kung race, but clearly faced neither of those issues this time.

Taiwan North Face athlete Ruth Croft blew away the women's field (and several men trying to keep up with her) to finish a superb fourth overall in 4:06:58. Ruth said she loved the challenging course and hoped to race more in Hong Kong. We'd certainly love to see her again and believe that she has the talent to set some new female course records. Mathilde Heaton had to settle for second after winning in Sai Kung, while Denvy Lo also slipped a place to third.

Tsang Chun Kit finished in 5th and grabbed the final male open podium spot, though Chan Wai Yu and Ng Kwok Lun were breathing down his neck and could see him most of the way along the South Lantau Trail.

M45 Michael McComb claimed line honors in his age group (4:10:24), ahead of Barry Hung in second and Rob Parks in third.

M40 Rupert Chamberlain continued a recent run of good form to win his age group (4:20:16) after struggling in Sai Kung. AJ Silberjagi placed second, showing no signs of fatigue despite completing almost every endurance race held in Hong Kong the past several months. Garrett Quigley placed third and still had the energy to chase his kids around the barbecue site following the run.

M50 Chan See Kau ran a terrific race in a time, 4:16:52, which would have made him the M40 winner. However, because of the aforementioned Bob Shorrock, Chan had to settle for second in his age group. Hau Ping was third.

M55 Chan Hoi Nam won his age category for the second consecutive race. His 4:48:52 putting him out of reach of second place Mak Pin Yin and third place Chan Chi Kin.

It was no surprise to anyone that Law Kwong Chow won the M60 division given the torrid form that he has been in, and 5:05:37 is a great time under the conditions. Leung Kam Yuen finished second in the division, followed by regular podium finisher Bob Whitehead showing he still has the speed. Yuen Kit Shan's 5:15:38 put her comfortably in front of Sean Ho in the F40 race. Sean is better known

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for her biking, but showed that she can still run the trails, finishing in 5:22:50. Lantau resident and Asian Trail Running Magazine publisher Sabrina Dumont finished third.

F50 Tammy Mak King Foon won her category for the second consecutive race in 6:08:32. This fine time put her 112th overall out of the 240 runners who started the race. Well done! Poon Yuk Pui finished second and just when I thought there was going to be a prize coupon left over for the race director, Cecilia Chan Kit Fong crossed the line to claim the third prize in the category, with 4th place Yiu Suk Yin hot on her heels.

Half marathon: Ironman Jo defies age

Let's face it: Open category runners usually win races, especially the shorter ones. So it is always exceptional when a "senior" runner wins a race. That's exactly what late 40's Jo Koster did on the day, leaving 2 open category runners in his wake to win in 1:24:06. Such was Jo's determination, that he didn't let a tumble and a bleeding, open cut on his leg get in the way of grabbing the glory.

Sebastien Mitrani (1:24:39) edged out David Woo (1:24:45) for second place overall and first amongst the open runners. David led Sebastien following the final checkpoint so it must have been quite a battle along the South Lantau trail. Romaine Riche grabbed the final open prize as well as coming in 4th overall.

Mark Western placed 6th overall, but needs to find 6 minutes to challenge Mr. Koster in the M45 category on this course. Not to say that second in 1:30:03 isn't a great result. Marcus Giles finished third in the category.

Leung Ping is new to the M55 category this year and won it with a great 1:32:57 time. Sadly for him, he missed the age group course record by 6 seconds, time he might have found on a less polluted day. Martin Cubbon knocked 2 minutes off of his time the previous year to finish second in the category, with Leung On third. Martin is one of the people to thank for Swire's fantastic support so it is only fitting that he wins a prize provided by Swire.

Another person that we should all thank for Swire's support is J.B. Rae-smith, and he put in a gritty performance to win the M50 category in 1:34:07 and come in 13th overall. (Honestly, this isn't a fix. These Swire guys just happen to be keen and accomplished trail runners.) Jon Gilchrist showed no after effects from his fine TNF 50 performance to finish second in the category with Wong Shu Keung 3rd.

And what of the M40's? Dwyfor Evans won the category in 1:34:20. Sean Haggerty was second and Eliot Fisk was third.

Peter Wong Chun Tong handily won the M60 race in a time of 1:45:37. Double grandfather to be Peter Clarke finished second and Tsang Hing Keung finished third.

The women's race came down to a battle between Zein Williams and Olya Korzh with Zein winning in an impressive 1:33:29. Olya was about 3 minutes back and 2 minutes ahead of third place finisher Emma Bruce.

Dennex Lui Lai Han won the F40 division in 1:53:07. She was followed in by Lilian Darboh (2:00:19) who just nosed out Catherine Leonard (2:00:25).

Leung Shiu Fung won the F50 race (2:28:49), followed by UK triathlete visitor, Karen Wigmore (2:34:04), and Elizabeth Brian (2:37:58).

Finally, 73-years young Rex Whittle won the John Lane Prize for being the oldest person to complete the race.

As always, a big round of thanks goes out to all of the volunteers helping out on the day. We should also pause to thank the Swire group of companies for the effort and resources they have put into

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supporting KOTH. I can't think of another race in Hong Kong where one pays only HK\$100 entry and gets for that a beautiful trail with drink support, a souvenir shirt, state of the art timing system and hot food and cold beer at the finish.

The next race in the series takes place on February 23 in Sham Tseng. See www.seyonasia.com for details. Please also mark Thursday, March 20th in your diaries as the likely date of the KOTH Awards Dinner. Further details will be forthcoming.

Happy trails.

Keith Noyes
Race Director