

KOTH Lantau Mountain Marathon

(Nam Shan, Lantau, Hong Kong. 4 January 2015. 16-20degrees and sunny.)

What a beautiful day for the first KOTH of 2015!

Today was a just plain gorgeous day. Some might argue that the weather got a tad warm – and that does account for the generally slower times – but what a great day to be out on the trails and one could sense runners endorphins buzzing from the finish area atmosphere.

Full Marathon – Santosh comes of age

Santosh Tamang is born in HK of Nepali descent. Prior to today, he had always faltered at some point during the race and missed out on the podium. Running just behind Vlad Ixel over the first few sections today, Santosh managed not to get despondent when Clement Dumont passed him going up Lantau Peak and dropped him to third. Instead, Santosh stormed through the final section on the South Lantau Trail, flew past both Vlad and Clement and won going away in 3:39:29. Santosh is only 23 years old and has a job that only allows him free time to run once per week. The mind boggles at his potential if afforded more time for training and a bit more experience with nutrition and racing.

Vlad Ixel hung on for second place (3:42:54) following an insane schedule of racing once or twice every week over the past month and a half. Lantau local, Clement Dumont was third (3:43:33). Santosh, Vlad and Clement were all in the open category.

Will Davies admitted to taking training seriously over Xmas and his 3:44:06 showed the positive results. Will easily won the M40 race while coming in 4th overall. Lam Shing Yip (4:02:42) was 8th overall and 2nd in the M40 category. Alger Cheng Sai Kit rounded out the M40 prize winners.

Bob Shorrocks finished 5th overall (3:49:31) and first amongst the M50s. Bob claimed to have indulged in a lot of holiday feasting, but given that he was faster than last year, its safe to say that he didn't overdo it. Hau Ping was second amongst the M50s, with Churn Chau Leung third.

Michael McComb grabbed first amongst the M45s (4:09:19), which placed him 11th overall. Peter Lee was just behind in both the race and the category while Mark Doel showed he's recovered from stitches in his knee by finishing third in the category.

Chan See Kau gave it his absolute all to finish first in the M55 race (4:30:32). I'm used to seeing him energetic at the finish so to see him so exhausted was a bit of a scare.

Thankfully, he bounced back quickly. M55 second place Mak Ping Yin was some ways back so it is likely that Chan pushed hard to eek out a 2 second win over Zein Williams (the second female finisher – of whom more below). Chim Yiu Cheung was third in the category.

Law Kwong Chow had a good race to win the M60 category (5:42:13). Lai Shu Tai was second and Cheung Kui third.

Mary McNaughton continued her recent run of good form, winning the women's race in 4:25:00. Mary struck a blow for the F40s and for mothers with this victory. In fact, she

fits a pattern we've noticed of women who become stronger trail runners following child birth.

Zein Williams led until the Big Buddha, but finally had to settle for second overall and first in the open category (4:30:34). Zein likes rough courses and would no doubt do even better on the original KOTH Lantau course (let's hope the local village issues can be settled by next year and that we can go back to our preferred route to the Buddha).

Nadia Koucha finished third overall and second in the F40 category, followed by Mathilde Heaton, also in the F40 category. Joanne Brown was the 5th woman across the line and first in the F50 category, impressively finishing in 5:11:31. Though it is difficult to compare this course with the original course, Joanne's time is the fastest F50 we have seen for either variation.

Fion Yip and Justine Kozicki finished 2nd and 3rd respectively in the female open race. Tammy Mak King Foon was 2nd in the F50 race, and Au Yeung Cham third.

Half Marathon – Photo Finish

Jo Koster went out fast looking to defend his title from the previous year. At Pak Kong Au this looked inevitable. Then Eti Rodriguez blitzed the South Lantau Trail and caught up with Jo. Jo was just ahead crossing the finish line, but the race was so close that the timing system recorded the same 1:27:29 for both. Jo won the M45 race and first place overall while Eti won the open race and claimed second overall.

David Woo returned to KOTH with a fine third place finish (open second) in 1:30:37. Ryan Whelan tried gamely to catch David but had to settle for 4th overall and 3rd in the open category. This was Ryan's first time grabbing some silverware and he was pretty chuffed.

Yeung Kwok Keung ran a devastating race to finish 5th overall and first in the M50 category (1:31:45). He missed the age group course record by a minute or so. JB Rae-smith (1:39:11) and Steven Wong (1:43:10) had no answers and had to settle for second and third in the category respectively.

Rob Parks managed 7th overall and 2nd in the M45 category (1:33:55). Sean Haggerty was 9th overall and third in the category.

Leung Ping was 11th overall and first again in the M55 category (1:38:24). Wong Tze Wan was second and Kwok Sun Wah third in a category that has recently become very competitive.

Inexplicably less competitive was the M40 category where Joe Thomson cruised to victory in 1:45:39. Frank Rheim was second with Martin Boldt-Christmas third.

Peter Wong Chung Tung won the M60 category again (1:54:31) despite the fact that we should be fair to him and create an M65 category. Tsui Pak Long was second and Cho Yan Kwong third.

Emma Bruce ran another great race (1:42:29) to win the women's race and the F40 category. This was Emma's second consecutive victory. Emma was followed home by female-open winner Rachel Jacqueline. Rachel doesn't just write great articles about running, she can get out on the trails and hammer too.

Shirley Cheung Pui Yu ran steadily to finish as the second female open runner, followed by Emeline Douteau.

Old friend Olivia Luk was the second F40 finisher, followed by Korena Tang Pik Kwan.

Yeung Mei Lun (2:10:35) enjoyed a lot of banter with the tourists heading up Sunset Peak in the opposite direction then put her foot down to win the F50 race. Poon Yuk Pui was second and Icerio Chong Bing Ying third.

79-years young John Fowler won the John Lane Prize last race, so it was 75-year old Rex Whittal who captured the John Lane Prize this race. Keep it up guys!

Once again Swire Ambassadors provided a great finish area meal and Giga Sports provided great prizes to all the category winners. Swire Beverages kept everyone well hydrated. My great thanks also go out to the marshals who did a superb job and to all of the racers who collected an item of trash from the trail and brought it back to one of the checkpoints.

The next race of the series takes place in Sai Kung Country Park on Sunday, 1 February 2015. For further information, please see www.seyonasia.com.

Happy trails!

Keith Noyes
Race Director