

KOTH Lantau – Sunday, 8 January 2017

### Hot start to the new year

Warm (19-25 degrees) without a cloud in the sky made for toasty conditions on the trails. Thankfully, the air quality was good in the morning and by the time the pollution had blown into Tung Chung, most runners were well past that section.

Post-race we actually received a complement from the Environmental Protection Association on the cleanliness of the trails. This means that runners are being responsible with their litter and our sweeps are doing a great job. Let's all vow to maintain this effort!

For whatever reason, this also continues to be the race every year where we treat the most injuries. The medical team reported cleaning up over 50 scrapes and bruises. This could be attributable to new-year hangovers, but it could equally be because people go faster and concentrate less on the named and well-maintained trails that AFCD insists are safer to use.

### Full Marathon – Mr. Skobierski to the fore

Michael Skobierski led from start to finish, pulling away emphatically over Lantau Peak. Michael admitted to being nervous that he was setting too fast a pace in the heat, but the blow up never came and instead he cruised to victory (3:45:07).

William Davies was the top pursuant for most of the race, only for John Ellis to continue his recent habit of sprinting past people in the last km of the race to take second (3:51:48). William had to content himself with third overall and first in the M40+ category (3:53:46). John was cruel enough to do the same thing at TNF 100 last month to a Hungarian visitor so this Lantau race was totally in character for him. Fatherhood is fast approaching so John will soon have other distractions.

Fellow M40+ veteran Ng Kwok Lun came in 4<sup>th</sup> overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the age group and was the last runner to finish in under four hours (3:59:49). Third place open runner Leung Chun Keung missed the four hour mark by an agonizing 25 seconds. Several other top open runners followed, including Pierre-Andre Ferriere, Guy Connel and Angus Chan.

Jeremy Ritcey took third in the M40+ group and managed to crack the top ten overall as well. Jeremy will also be a second time father soon and recently moved to Sai Kung so it is nice to see him running well.

Ever young Hau Ping won the M55+ category convincingly (4:27:01). Hau Ping has been remarkably consistent with his top results for many years. He always runs well, doesn't mind the heat and doesn't appear to be slowed at all by age. Chan See Kau was second in this age group (4:34:16), followed by Chan Wai Lam (5:54:14).

The M45+ category was closely fought, with Rupert Chamberlain (4:42:03) edging out Alger Cheng Sai Kit (4:43:36), with Pang Kin Sun third (4:58:57).

Yuen Kwok Man (5:00:31) won line honors in the M50+ category, ahead of Andy Churn (5:02:26) and Arnaud Picut (5:16:52).

Chris Gunns picked up where he left off last year in the M60+ category, his 5:14:51 being fast enough for a comfortable victory. Chan Hoi Nam (5:34:17) was second and Danny Leung (6:13:39) third.

F40 Tsang Woon Ming dominated the ladies' race (4:49:38), winning overall and claiming bragging rights for ladies' veteran runners. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the hot weather, second and third places overall also went to F40 veterans, with Katia Kucher (5:04:10) coming in second and Joanne Eades (5:33:50) coming in third. The hotter the conditions, the more important experience and pacing become.

Irene Montemayor was the first female open runner to finish (5:40:40), and was 7<sup>th</sup> overall. Christine Arnold was second in the category and Eva Wong was third. Eva was so happy to win a prize that she asked for a picture with the "handsome" race director and was promptly rewarded for her flattery.

Chan Au Yung (5:46:05) led a strong F50+ contingent, followed by Catarina Lilliehook (5:53:49) and Sophia Kennelly (5:54:59), who managed to run an extra kilometer around the Buddha area just to sneak in some extra training.

#### Half Marathon – Youth well served

Not much slowed Etienne Rodriguez down, save for a superman dive crash. Etienne was a late entry to the race, but made the most of the opportunity with a comfortable 1:23:09 victory. Etienne pulled away on the first uphill and running so quickly was able to finish before the temperatures really heated up.

Kevin Scallan was in second place at Pak Kong Au and held on to finish in second overall (1:29:48) with Sam Fletcher third (1:30:24) and Romain Demarre fourth (1:33:12).

The next four places were keenly contested, with the difference between 5<sup>th</sup> place and 8<sup>th</sup> place a total of 19 seconds. In perhaps his last race in HK before repatriating, Jo Koster once again showed that KOTH Lantau suits him best. Jo finished 5<sup>th</sup> overall (1:34:27) and claimed first in the M50+ category. Thomas Hardcastle (1:34:29) was next and first in the M45+ category, followed by Mo Devlin (1:34:34) and second in the M50+ category and then open runner Dan Falconar (1:34:46).

Plato Luk and Chino Chan rounded out the top ten before third place M50+ runner Anthony Davies (1:37:25) and first place female Zein Williams (1:38:13). (More on the ladies race below.)

Tim Marchant (1:39:09) won the M40+ race, ahead of Alan Zagury (1:42:08) and Frank Riehm (1:44:38). Carson Chan finished second in the M45+ category (1:40:22) followed by Peter Bachman (1:41:26).

Steve Wong won the M55+ race (1:41:17) despite what looked like a painful fall, followed by Yeung Kwok Keung (1:42:57) and Wan Heung Ching (1:56:29).

Wong Peter Chun Tung returned to his legendary best, winning the M60+ race (2:00:39), despite giving away 6 years to the youngsters in the category. Tsang Hing Keung (2:05:27) was second and Yuen Tak Shing Ray (2:05:43) third.

At one day short of 75 years old, Frank Pilkington was once again the oldest race finisher (2:23:31).

Returning now to the ladies race, Zein Williams did not at all look hot or bothered at the finish line. Zein has a tremendously positive mental outlook and has consistently been in top form for a several years.

Elsa Jeandedieu was in second place the entire race and well deserved her podium finish (1:42:09). Vivian Lee finished third overall (1:50:28) and first in the F40 division. Kwan Yee Ting Chris finished fourth overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the F40 race (1:53:17). Cheung Hoi Kei Kay finished fifth overall and was the 3<sup>rd</sup> open runner in (1:58:26). Kate Richdale (2:03:35) rounded out the prize recipients in the F40 division.

Kate Martin (2:04:35) won line honors in the F50 race, ahead of Susan Mifsud (2:10:24) and Joanne Brown (2:10:48).

At 7 years and 55 days, Luka Noyes became the youngest person ever to complete a KOTH race (3:18:17). Luka's sister, Kaya, had been the youngest ever finisher the previous year (7 years and 323 days). This year Kaya improved her time by 27 minutes to finish in 2:55:39. Many thanks to Aya Noyes for running with Luka and to Nic Tinworth for running with Kaya.

Thanks also to the Swire group of companies for their continued support (GigaSport prizes, Bonaqua, Aquarius, and a cheering squad). Thanks to Kin Hang for terrific course marking, as well as to the fore runners, marshals and sweeps, all of whom did a brilliant job. The next race takes place in Sai Kung on 12 February. Race details will be posted to [www.seyonasia.com](http://www.seyonasia.com) and to Friends of KOTH Facebook page.

Happy trails.

Keith