



Swire KOTH Sai Kung Mountain Marathon

1 December 2013. Blue skies with temperatures of 16-22 degrees.

(Sai Kung, New Territories, Hong Kong)

A perfect day to start the new season

Beginning its 16th season, KOTH celebrated new title sponsorship (Swire Properties and GigaSports) a new timing service provider and some of the nicest running weather we've seen in a long time.

Approximately 600 runners started on the day and were treated to low humidity, clear skies, great views and food and drinks catered by Swire at the finish. The timing system worked well and it was a pretty relaxing day of race directing .

Full Marathon - Ritcey's back

Leading from start to finish, Jeremy Ritcey announced his return to top form with a personal best 3:48:19 on this course. The course is more overgrown and bushy than in previous years so his time would likely have been faster had trail conditions been similar to previous years.

Will Davies was second overall and the highest ranked of all the Swire employees in the race. Will has recently done Trailwalker, is planning to run a 50 km race next week and then a 100 km race the week after. His Xmas wish list includes new shoes, new knees and new hips.

Barely a minute plus behind Will came 47-year old Arnaud Picut in another fabulous display of age-not-being-a-limiting-factor running. The only reason Arnaud didn't set a new course record on the day was because he already set the age group record a couple of years ago. Arnaud, Will and Jeremy were the only runners to finish in under four hours on the day.

Leung Chun Keung was 4th overall and third in the open category. Then came two more 45ers, Peter Lee and Anthony Davies in second and third place respectively, followed by Bad Water finisher Law Chor Kin who was clearly just getting warmed up when he crossed the line.

Old friend Bob Shorrocks showed he still has it, placing 8th overall, and winning the M50 race with a new course record time of 4:17:06. Open category runner Chan Wai Yiu was next in before Hau Ping rounded out the top 10 and claimed second in the M50 age group.

Ezra Emerson grabbed the top podium position in the M40 race, with fellow M40s Michael Orniston and Richard Scotford close behind. Chan See Kau, who claimed the third M50 prize, was next in.

The top three women came in bunched together with Mathilde Heaton just in front of Denvy Lo and her pooch, with Linda Russel amazingly running in five-finger shoes close behind. Verlie Bunao made a

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smooth transition from track runner to trail runner to capture the women's F40 title. Yuen Kit Shan was second, but had to show her ID to the incredulous race director to prove that she really was over forty. Olivia Luk rounded out the podium in this category.

Chan Hoi Nam was first in the M55 race, followed by Lee Chi Ming and Charles Hawley.

Line honors in the new M60 category went to Law Kwong Chow (5:33:19), followed by Bob Whitehead and Leung Kam Yuen. Meanwhile, Cecilia Chan Kit Fong claimed line honors in the new F50 category (6:32:58).

Half Marathon – Is that Brad Pitt?

Before the race people pointed at a “Movember” guy who they said looked like Brad Pitt. It turns out that it was Romain Riche and he just happened to win the race in 1:42:11 – his first KOTH triumph. My statisticians inform me that Romain averaged 11.2 kph over a course that is far from flat and pretty overgrown in places. Not sure who his Angelina is, but that person should be suitably impressed. David Woo finished close behind after only deciding to join the race that morning.

Flying the flag for the M45s, Mark Western came in third overall. He was followed by the third open runner, Anthony Arthur, and then another M45, Charles Bedford. Dwyfor Evans struck a blow for the M40s, coming in 6th overall and first in the category, just ahead of fellow M40 Jeremy Sutch. Open runner Iurgi Ruiz de Gauna Itza was 8th in the race. Marcus Giles came in 9th overall and 3rd in the M45s, but rushed off before collecting his prize.

Then, to everyone's surprise, last year's Queen of the Hills, Olya Korzh crossed the halfway line and announced that she was only running the half marathon that day. Her 1:49:29 put her in the top 10 overall.

J.B. Ras-Smith was the fastest Swire employee on the half marathon and his 1:51:19 allowed him to claim the M50 victory in decisive fashion. After years of battling in the M45 division, JB has finally found a reason to be happy about turning 50.

Joe Wong Cho Kwong rounded out the M40 category winners, followed by M55 Leung Ping, enjoying his first year in the M55 category by doing what he always used to do in the M50 category – win. Choi Fu Loi was second in the category, followed by Leung On.

Emma Bruce also bested the 2 hour mark to finish second women overall, with Ann Cheng-Echevarria finishing third, just seconds ahead of Rachel Jacqueline.



Mark Adams was the second M55 finisher, with Mark Leeper third – no doubt motivated by a commitment to do the barbecuing at his girlfriend's Xmas party that afternoon.

Our Australian friend Chris Wardlaw flew into Hong Kong and won the M 60 race, though not in course record fashion. You'll have to give it another try next year Chris. Wong Peter Chun Tong was second not far behind and Tsui Pak Long was third.

Lise Harrow won the ladies F40 race ahead of Anja De Pree (2nd) and Mary McNaughton (3rd). Mary Evelyn Daniels won the ladies F50 race, followed by Janis Yuen (2nd) and Evelyn Fowler (3rd).

Frank Pilkington won the inaugural John Lane Prize for being the oldest runner on the day to finish the race. Frank is 70 years old.

Podium finishers were pleased with the excellent prizes provided by GigaSports and all the racers and I are also grateful to the fabulous marshals who supported and encouraged throughout and for the beverage support provided by Swire Coca-cola and the food catered by Swire Ambassadors.

The next race in the series takes place on January 5th, 2014 on Lantau Island. See www.seyonasia.com for details.

Keith Noyes
Race Director