



KOTH Sai Kung Mountain Marathon

12 February 2017. Beautiful blue skies with temperatures of 12-17 degrees.

(Sai Kung, New Territories, Hong Kong)

Gorgeous day not to be on the road

We tried really hard not to clash with the Standard Chartered Marathon. However, AFCD permits are applied for 9 months in advance while Standard Chartered doesn't release its race date until 5-6 months before its event. This led to unfortunate scheduling conflict, but the 376 people who showed up were treated to sublimely beautiful weather and much emptier trails than usual. Like me, no doubt, these people would rather be in the hills on a day like this than running through the Western Harbor Tunnel.

Full Marathon – Apres vous Monsieur Ferriere

Pierre-Andre Ferriere showed that his fine TNF 50 result was no fluke. In control from early on, Pierre-Andre cruised through the fast first half and then widened his lead to finish in a new record time for this iteration of the course (3:44:28). Clement Dumont gave valiant pursuit after a fine Valentine's race the day before, but came up 4:35 short (3:49:04). Jacky Leung Chun Keung rounded out the top three (3:54:36), passing and breaking the hearts of 3 runners over the last few sections of the course. Anthony Rocher was fourth and Tommy Wong Hon Hei fifth in a clean sweep for the open category runners.

Jeremy Ritcy was sixth overall and 1st in the M40 category (4:10:32). M40 Ezra Emerson cruised in with a fine 4:34:40 time to grab second in the age group and 10th overall. Olivier Joubert was the third-place prize winner in the category.

Just ahead of Ezra in 9th place overall was the remarkable Mary McNaughton (4:31:28). We say remarkable not just because Mary won yet another KOTH race as a veteran, but because she had completed the 9 Dragons race the week before and by all rights should have been tired. Most people burn out or get injured racing ultras every weekend. Mary just adds to her prize collection each week.

M55 Chan See Kau (4:35:03) had a terrific race to finish 11th overall, 10th male and first in his age group. Chan Wai Lam was second and Leung Pui Sun third in the age group.

Emily Woodward was the first open female across the line (4:42:44) and immediately approached the race directors to say "hand over the loot."

Emily was followed closely by the first M45 runner Cheng Sai Kit Alger (4:44:08). Pang Kin Sun

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and Yip Su grabbed second and third respectively amongst the 45+ year old gentlemen.

A competitive M50 race saw Luigi Hayashibara (4:54:49) beat Pak Wah and Barry Hung Fan Tai for line honors.

Christopher Gunns once again revealed himself the master of the M60s with a blistering 5:22:06. Just as impressive as Chris' time was his enthusiastic encouragement for the people with whom he ran and finished in similar times to him. Chris has wrapped up the series with this victory. Wong Wai Yin was second in the age group and Law Kwong Chow, who must have been having an off day, third.

Returning to the ladies' race, after Mary and Emily came regular KOTH stalwart Tsang Woon Ming (5:13:16) in second in the F40 category. She was in turn followed by open runner Irene Montemayor (5:22:15) who professed to being new to trail running, but showed great aptitude. Christine Arnold was third in the open category and Habiba Benahmed third in the F40 category.

Sophia Kennelly had a fine run to win the F50 category (5:34:49). Yung Chan Au was second and Eva Lo third.

Half Marathon – “Souped” up

Minus the “Movember” facial hair and now a daddy, Jeff Campbell recovered from an early wrong turn to win going away in 1:36:29 to claim his second victory in the series. Jeff was followed closely by fellow open runner Mitrani Sebastien (1:37:58).

KOTH legend Bob Shorrock crashed the open runner party to come in 3rd overall in 1:41:18. Bob is now 56 and had hoped to break Olympian Chris Wardlaw's age group record. The early wrong turn of the lead pack and the overgrowth of the trail section just after Hoi Ha combined to put him about 3 minutes off this quest, but Bob was still super stoked to be out trail running on such a gorgeous day.

Japan Express Fujio Miyachi (1:41:53) finished 4th overall and rounded out the open category podium, with Romain Demare fated to finish 4th in the category yet again.

M40 Tim Marchant was 6th overall and first in his age group (1:42:48) despite a few obvious cuts and bruises. Frank Riehm and Paul Ketterer both broke the two-hour barrier to finish second and third respectively in the category.

Mo Devilin found the fast Sai Kung course to his liking and sailed home in 1:44:13 to win the M50 race. Anthony Davies (1:54:54) came in second and secured just enough points to ensure a winner



take all final race in Taipo between these two for series honors in the age group. Keith Hemshall was surprised and pleased to finish third in the age group.

Thomas Hardcastle (1:44:55) had a fine race to win the M45 division, ahead of Peter Bachmann and Carson Chan.

Steve Wong (1:56:58) had won the previous two KOTH races in the M55 age group and was initially surprised and disappointed to learn that he had only placed second this race. However, after learning the faster runner was Bob Shorrocks, he said, "Oh, it is okay to lose to the legend." Eric To Hoi Lau was third in the category (2:03:55).

Visiting from Colorado, outdoor equipment impresario Buzz Burrell flashed a clean pair of heels to his fellow 60+ year olds for a fine 2:04:28 finish. Buzz was less than a minute off of Yiu Kam Sing's 2011 course record. 67-year old Wong Peter Chun Tung was second in the age group (2:17:58) and Tsui Pak Long third.

After recently turning 75, Frank Pilkington ran 2:41:59 to throw down the gauntlet to future septuagenarians. Frank doesn't seem to be slowing down much with age as he ran 2:31 in 2013 to set the M70 record for this course.

Chris Kwan Yee Ting ran strongly to win the ladies' race, as well as the F40 division (2:06:01), just 15 seconds ahead of Jeannette Wang in the open division. Well done ladies! Antonella Banzsky was second in the open race and third overall (2:10:53), followed by Francis Lai 2:13:25.

Nathalie Darbon (2:14:26) was second in the F40 division, followed by Nathaie Dubresnes Maitre.

Kate Martin was the clear winner in the F50 race (2:17:27), Followed by Ada Chan (2:21:36) and Susan Milfsud.

Once again, we express thanks to the Kin Hang Hiking Club for the course marking and to the fabulous marshals, fore runners and sweepers who supported everyone today. We also thank the Swire group of companies for the prizes, the drinks and the great finish line cheering squad.

The last race in the series takes place in Taipo on Sunday, 5 March (see www.seyonasia.com) for details. This race will serve as the tie breaker for any racers who finish the season with the same number of points in their category.



Than annual KOTH awards dinner will take place on Thursday, 30 March so please mark your calendars. The restaurant where we held the event the past two years suddenly cancelled our reservation this past week so we are working on a new venue that will be announced as soon as possible.

Keith Noyes
Race Director