



KOTH Sai Kung Mountain Marathon

4 March 2018. Foggy, 20-24 degrees, and 95% plus humidity.

(Sai Kung, New Territories, Hong Kong)

What a strange day!

None of my usual pre-race weather checks suggested anything untoward this morning. Therefore it was a big surprise at 8:57 to hear the sound of thunder and realize that the thunder storm had been hoisted at about 8:50 and was not forecast to come down until 10:45. Thankfully, the entire first half of the Sai Kung course takes place under the canopy and we decided to start on time at 0900, after announcing that we might need to cancel the second half of the course (which has exposed sections).

At 10:00 it seemed the thunder warning would come down at 10:45 and this would be perfect timing for continuing with the full course unaltered. Then at 10:20 it was suddenly announced that the thunder storm warning was extended to 12:45. No choice at this point, but to close the full course at CP 4 at Chek Keng and send the full runners back to the finish on Maclehorse section 2 to Pak Tam Au and then down road and we began making this announcement to the full marathon runners.

The first full marathoner arrived at 11:07 and before 11:20 several full marathon runners had already stopped at Chek Keng when the weather service abruptly canceled the thunder warning. I can only conclude that fate did not want KOTH runners to run the last two sections today in the humid conditions, though one intrepid full marathoner completed the course himself. Most seemed relatively happy about the abbreviated course and skipping the two big hills at the end.

Overall times were slower than usual due to the humidity and slippery conditions.

Full Marathon – Former KOTH shows how it's done

Last year's KOTH Michael Skobierski cruised to victory in 2:07:53. Michael has recently been making a name for himself in the ultra-distance races so he must have felt a bit cheated by the shortened course (though he was polite enough not to show it.). Sadly, Michael did not compete in enough races to contest the series title this season.

William Davies finished second 2:15:28 to win the M40+ age category for both the race and the series. Bob Shorrock finished third overall (2:16:05) to take line honors in the M55+ category and wrap up the series with three first place finishes.

Giuseppe Mollica finished 4th (2:16:35) which was also second in the open category and secured enough points to finish the series in third place in the open division. (For the record Jeff Campbell is the KOTH and John Ellis finished second in the age group). Robert Turnbull (2:20:33) finished third

SEYON ASIA LIMITED, House G, Ah Kung Wan, Clearwater Bay, Hong Kong

<http://www.seyonasia.com>



in the open category in the race but was also short of series points.

Luk Siu Hong blazed home in 2:24:22 to claim 6th overall and 1st in the M50 category. I believe that this is Mr. Luk's first season of KOTH and he has proven a force to be reckoned with. He finished first in his age group in all 3 races he started and is the undisputed category winner. Yip Chun Fai (2:34:02) finished in second in the race in the age group but lacked sufficient series points. Thomas Lai (2:50:56) grabbed third in the race and secured enough points to move up from 5th to 3rd overall for the series. Andy Andy was only 5th in the race, but this was enough to hold on to second place for the series.

Ezra Emerson won the M45 race (2:25:59) and also the tie breaker to win the M45 series, with Peter Bachmann second in the series after not racing today and Ingo Wende third in the series and second in the category today.

Hau Ping (2:37:31) finished second in the M55 category and second for the series with Chan See Kau (2:42:45) third and third.

Christopher Gunns (2:49:15) won the M60 race and celebrated by being the only participant to complete the entire course after the closure. Some people just can't say no to exquisite torture. Chris won each of the races in the M60 division this season for his second consecutive series championship. Lai Shu Tai (3:22:30) finished in second on the day but this was not enough to move into podium position for the series. Chan Hoi Nam finished third (3:25:23) on the day and easily took second for the series, having placed second in all the other races. Richard Ho took third for the series after finishing in 5th on the day.

Beyond the aforementioned William Davies, the M40 division was fairly complicated. Jeremy Ritcey won Translantau the previous day and elected not to race and thus did not achieve sufficient series points. Andrew Graham came in second in the category but lacked sufficient series points. Ditto for Johann Peter Santer who finished third on the day. Instead, fifth place Tony Ng finished in second for the series based upon tie breaker with 6th place Alan Oates.

Emily Woodland had already wrapped up QOTH and did not race on the day. Second place series winner Irene Montemayor also didn't race (hey, it has been a busy few weeks with 9 Dragons and Translantau). That left Chiu Wai Yin in pole position and she did not disappoint, winning the women's race in 2:49:23 and securing third place for the series. Ms. Chiu was no doubt pushed by Cheung Chiu Man who finished in close second (2:50:27) but also lacked sufficient series points. Up and coming Mhalou Pellerin finished in 4th overall and third in the open category, but also needed one more race result to qualify for the overall series.



Tsang Woon Ming (3:01:25) finished in third overall and first the F40 category to capture the series crown. She was closely pursued by Natalia Watkins (3:09:50) who finished in second both on the day and for the series. Bonnie Chung (3:11:20) finished third in the race, but also lacked sufficient series points. Instead, third place overall in the series came down to Vivien Cheng edging out Bei Hu due to higher position on the last race.

Chun Lun Lai (3:09:46) won the F50 race to grab the tie breaker over non-racing Sophia Kennaly, who finished second in the series. Fung Siu Ying Anita finished second in the race (3:11:24) but lacked sufficient series points and this allowed third place Au Yeung Chan (3:24:06) to grab third place and also beat Eva Lo for third place overall in the series.

Half Marathon – The Kevin Show

Kevin Scallan completed a dominant season without defeat, winning again in 1:41:46. These days it is very rare for one runner to win all four KOTH half marathons outright so Kevin's accomplishment should not be underestimated.

Ryan Whelan jumped up several positions from his previous finishes to capture second overall (1:45:22) – a result that suggests serious potential but was not enough to elevate him into the top three for the series.

M40 Ed Gumbley stormed to third place overall (1:47:27) despite leaving some blood on the trail. This was Ed's only KOTH race this season, which is a shame given what an interesting division the M40 half has been.

Sam Fletcher finished 4th overall and third in the open category (1:49:30), but also lacked sufficient series points.

Instead, Thomas Kitwood finished in 4th in the open category (1:50:59) and third in the series while Tam Tsz Hong finished 5th on the day, but second for the series. All a bit complicated I have to admit but the points do add up.

A tired Pedro Ribeiro was very happy to finish second (1:54:16) in the M40 race following Translantau the day before. Pedro ended up second in the age group for the series, losing on point



differential to Jan Littlewood, who sat out today's race. Andrew Nessi finished third in the race today (1:54:50) and third for the series.

Thomas Hardcastle finished in 5th overall (1:50:48) and first in the M45 division. This vaulted him into second place for the series, though he did not have the points to catch Tim Marchant, who sat out today's race as well. Ivan Van Eetvelt finished second in the age group on the day (2:09:05), but it was third place Justin Haik (2:15:25) who gained enough points to finish third for the series.

Olivier Streun (2:04:53) made sure that he won the M50 series by winning the M50 race and completing three wins and a second place for the season. Richard Roper finished second in the category for the race (2:10:52) but had to settle for third in the series. Gary Grant was third on the day but lacked sufficient series points. Instead, 4th place Kwok Ching Po (2:13:24) secured just enough points to finish the series in second place.

Wong Tsz Wan had already secured the M55 half marathon title and took a tilt at the full marathon instead. This opened the door for Steve Wong to win the M55 race (2:04:56) in a very competitive field and finish second for the series. Yeung Kwok Keung returned to the fast form we have previously seen from him (2:05:05) to finish second in the race and jump up the overall standings from fifth to third for the series. To Hoi Lau Eric finished third in the race (2:05:26) and second for the series. The top three times are so close (all within 30 seconds of each other) that I am sure that these guys all know each other and covered each and others every move throughout the race.

Wong Peter Chun Tong had to relinquish his M60 series crown to Yuen Tak Shing Ray, who had won the first three races in the series. This did not stop Peter from winning today (2:32:48) and serving notice that he's not done fighting. Peter finished second in the series, while Ray finished second on the day (2:35:57) while winning the series. Tsui Pak Long finished third in the race (2:40:31) and third for the series.

Emille St-Pe lives in some pretty fast company and proved she's just as capable of winning as her boyfriend. Emille flashed the course in 2:05:11 to win easily. Pity that this was her only race of the series.

Charlotte Taquet's previous results have been inconsistent (1st and 9th), but she returned to form (2:10:16) to place second today and finish the series in second place. Stephanie Mak finished in third (2:11:02), but her consistency throughout the races allowed her to finish first in the series. Jeannette Wang finished fourth in the race, but lacked sufficient series points, while Suzanne Gifford managed to overcome her phobia of technical trails enough to finish fifth in the race and third for the series.



Chris Kwan had already wrapped up the F40 series crown and completed Translantau the previous day so it was very nice of her to assist at the first checkpoint and cheer everyone on. Christina Taeck was clearly motivated and finished first in the age group (2:19:20) to take second place in the series. Natalie Maitre was second on the day and this allowed her to move up to third place for the series. Jennifer Pollock finished third on the day and 4th in the series.

Camilla Fernstrom won the F50 race (2:19:29) in a fine time, but sadly did not participate in enough series races. Second place Kate Martin (2:22:17) did complete enough races and won the category for the series. Third place Ada Chan (2:28:34) secured second for the series while 5th place Poon Yuk Pui secured third in the overall series.

Than annual KOTH awards dinner will take place on Thursday, 15 March so please mark your calendars. This year we are trying a hot new African-themed restaurant, ACT, near the Wong Chuk Hang MTR station. Space is strictly limited to 90 people. The buffet dinner includes two standard drinks, the prize ceremony and free pictures and is, as always, a great chance to share tales of the trail. The booking form can be downloaded from www.seyonasia.com.

Once again KOTH has been blessed this year with the support of GigaSports and Swire Coca-cola without whom we could not hold these races. The entire community also contributes to their success, from the Kin Hang Hiking Club marking the courses to the fore runners and sweepers and registration and checkpoint marshals who volunteer their time. It is, as always, a pleasure to put on races when working with such a great team.

Keith Noyes
Race Director