



## The North Face KOTH Taipo Mountain Marathon

16 December 2011. Sunny and humid; temperatures between 22-28C.

(Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong)

### Sweltering Conditions Challenge Runners

Following so many weeks of unseasonably cool or rainy weather, luck would have it that HK was do for a some warm weather and the worst of it unfortunately coincided with the first race in the annual The North Face King of the Hills Series. This caused many to abandon the full marathon in favor of the half marathon course and for slower times overall.

### Full Marathon – Sea Saw Battle

Stong Tsang and Jeremy Ritcey exchanged leads several times during the race. Jeremy was the “in form” runner, though both were battling nagging injuries. Stone led following the steep downhill to the halfway point only to be overtaken by Jeremy by Lai Chi Wo. Jeremy then led to the top of the last hill where a moment of uncertainty at an intersection where course markings appear to have been removed. (Editors note: These vandal hikers are going to get caught one day and they will deserve whatever verbal abuse they receive. It is dangerous sending runners off course in the wilderness.) Stone was able to catch up and use the following down hill to gain a bit over a minute advantage on the way to winning in 3:55:54. Jeremy then made the outstanding sporting gesture of going back out to pace is wife at the end of the course and also brining additional course markings to the problem intersections.

New comer Wong Ho Chung loped through the race and then eased past Peter Lee and Eric LaHaie to come in third overall and third in the open category. Ho Chung appears to have a lot of upside potential based upon how fresh he looked at the end. Eric managed fourth overall, shortly behind.

Peter Lee had an easy time of winning the M40 category (4:25:17). Fellow age grouper AJ Silbernagi was ten minutes off this pace and Rupert Chamberlain a further 16 minutes off.

Reigning Queen of the Hills Olya Korzh probably had the run of the day. Olya not only won the women’s race handily (4:33:57), but also managed 7<sup>th</sup> overall. Siberian ice in the veins may explain why she doesn’t feel the heat. F40 Tsang Woon Ming was the second woman across the line and first in her age group while Tam Kar Bik, cramping badly, managed a brave third. Jo Eades was fourth and second in the F40 group.

Chan See Kau bested Hau Ping in the M50 division and Chan Hoi Nam had a terrific race to beat Chim Yiu Cheung in the M55 category. For unexplainable reasons, M45 struggled on the day, with Yip Chun Fai claiming line honors ahead of Tim Hallworth and Kwok Ching Po.



### Half Marathon – Dumont on Top

The heat seemed to bring out the best in Clement Dumont, much as it does with the best French grapes. His 1:40:45 victory time was nothing short of remarkable under the conditions. Clement was gamely chased by M45 Jo Koster who suffered an impressive cut above the eye on the final down hill. No one is running better age group times than Jo at the moment.

Jan Littlewood was registered for the full marathon, but dropped down to the half when his internal thermometer went into the red zone. This wise decision allowed him to claim third overall and second in the open category.

Leung Ping came in fourth overall and once again showed that he reigns supreme among the M50s in hill running. Leung Ping was also on the record setting M50 Trailwalker team this year so it's not just the short events that he's good at. Mark Adams and Mark Leeper rounded out the age group on the podium but were never a threat to catch Leung.

Breon Gravatt used his hash trail running experience to good advantage to finish a mere second behind Leung Ping and win the M40 race. One year removed from Achilles surgery, M45 Andrew Thomson made a strong return statement, finishing a mere second behind Breon and second in his age category.

Lee Quane captured the final podium position in the open category, followed by M45 Anthony Davies, third in his age group and M40 Adrian King returning to KOTH following several years of combat training, second in his category. Jeremy Sutch eventually finished third among the M40s.

9 months after giving birth, Claire Chapman stormed to victory in the ladies' race, finishing 11<sup>th</sup> overall (2:09:31). Claire was hotly pursued by Denvy Lo who ran very well despite what she described as a training regime of "romance and booze" following Trailwalker. Claire Price dropped down from the full marathon to be the first F40 across the line, followed by F40 Aya Noyes, who also didn't fancy another couple of hours running in the sauna on the day.

Wong Peter Chun Tong picked up where he left off last season, winning the M60 race easily in 2:22:58. Peter simply doesn't seem to feel the heat. Cho Yan Kwong and Bob Whitehead rounded out the podium in the category, but never threatened Peter for first.

Martin Cubbon was one of the heroes of the race in 2011 when he sacrificed his own race to help an injured runner. With no such need for heroics this time, Martin raced to top spot on the M55 podium (2:34:22) with Law Kwong Chow less than a minute behind.



F50 Yeung Mei Lun won her age group handily (2:35:37) in an event she dominates. Poon Yuk Pui was second.

As always on KOTH races, the marshals did a fantastic and enthusiastic job of providing support. The North Face prizes were well received and the drinks provided by Swire Coca-cola were greatly appreciated. Our new chip timing system also worked, and will work even better once we master its intricacies.

The next race in the series takes place on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 on the beautiful trails above Sham Tseng and around Tai Mo Shan. See [www.seyonasia.com](http://www.seyonasia.com) for details.

Keith Noyes  
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