



KOTH Taipo Mountain Marathon

5 March 2017. Overcast and 18-22 degrees and mostly overcast.

(Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong)

Finishing the Season in Style

From my vantage point it has been a great year to organize KOTH. The vibe among the runners has been fantastic and we have managed to remain a competitive racing event with strong community values. Luck smiled on us and we had no serious injuries this season – though we certainly have had lots of scrapes and bruises. Even today with 85% humidity heralding the arrival of spring, it remained overcast for most of the race and this kept the suffering to a minimum.

The biggest challenge to putting on today's race was a trail marking vandal in Sha Lo Tung. I received a friendly email on Saturday, that basically said, "Out hiking near Sha Lo Tung. Someone has cut down all of your signs and ribbons all the way to Hok Tau." Thanks to this wonderful head's up, our fore runner, Eva, departed at 7 AM race morning loaded down with fresh signs and was able to remark the trail. Even so, it appears that the Sha Lo Tung vandal may have gone back out behind our fore runner to cut down the fresh signs and ribbons. In the end, most found the right course while a few wandered a few hundred meters off course at times. Our sweepers reported finding signs cut in half and thrown onto the ground. Hopefully by next season, this vandal will have become a decent human being.

Full Marathon – The Skoberskinator

Austrian native Michael Skobierski won this race in 2016 and has been in great form this season. It was therefore little surprise that he stamped his authority on the race early and cruised to victory in 3:45:07. This time was ten minutes slower than 2016 and can be attributed to the aforementioned humidity. Michael also took line honors in KOTH Lantau and has deservedly won the King of the Hills Crown this season. T

Jacky Leung Chun Keung took an entirely different path to the podium. Jacky lurked in 5th place overall at CP 4 in Lai Chi Wo before making a strong push to move up to second by CP 5 at Kuk Po and then sped home in 3:50:47 to claim second place in the race and in the series. Tom Wong Hong Hei looked effortless in finishing in third (3:52:33), but just missed accumulating the necessary points to medal for the series. Instead, third place for the series went to Pierre-Andre Ferreire who managed 5th place on the day (4th in the open category), but had a better overall point total after winning the Sai Kung race.



William Davies came in 4th overall (3:58:17) and won the M40 competition every race he entered this series. No doubts on his podium position for sure. Ng Kwok Lun finished 6th overall and 2nd in the M40 category. This gave him just enough points to edge out Jeremy Ritcey for second in the series (Jeremy who was a no show on the day finished third in the series). Fernando Marco was third in the category on the day.

In the M45 category, Siu Yip had his best race of the series (4:25:57) to win the category on the day and secure third place overall for the series. Close behind him was Rupert Chamberlain, who's second on the day was enough secure the category title for the series. Pang Kin Sun finished third in the category in the race, but just missed series hardware as Alger Cheng Sai Kit had already secured enough points for third place, despite an uncharacteristically rough 8th place on the day.

Luigi Hayashibara won his second consecutive M50 race (4:53:04) to lock up the series title. KK Choi was second on the day, but did not enter enough races to compete for the series title. Instead, it was third place Andy Churn who captured second in the series. Yuen Kwok Man finished third in the series despite not racing on the day.

Wong Tze Wan upset the popular form to win the M55 race (4:38:57) and was even surprised himself when given the first-place envelope. Wong did not complete enough races to enter the series sweepstakes. Pre-race favorite, Chan See Kau, came in second and this was enough to lock up the series title. Chan Wai Lam came in third on the day and second for the series, while Leung Pui Sun came in fifth on the day and third overall in the series.

In the M60 division, Christopher Gunns stayed true to the form he has shown all year. Chris won in 5:16:15 to wrap up a clean sweep of the races this year and the series championship. Chan Hoi Nam came in second in both the race and the series. Lai Shu Tai came in third on the day, but it was 4th place Wong Wai Yin who took third in the series.

Amongst the ladies, Marie McNaughton put an emphatic stamp on another successful Queen of the Hills campaign. Marie won going away (4:19:08), placed 8th overall and won the F40 age group to boot. Marie is the rare individual who can race long and hard every weekend without any drop in form or injury. Truly a super woman!

Returning to KOTH for the first time this season, Elsa Jeandedieu showed she still had the form to place second (4:23:57) and win the open race. Sadly Elsa did not accrue sufficient series points for the overall title. Emily Woodland was the second open female on the day and this proved enough to wrap up the age group for the series. Returning from injury, Chow Pui Yan place third in the female open category and reported happily that she ran pain free. We look forward to seeing Pui Yan back to

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full strength. Irene Montemayor place fourth on the day and third in the open category for the series. Tsang Woon Ming finished second amongst the F40s on the day and for the series. Vivien Cheng placed third on the day, but it was Tam Kar Bik who took third in the series despite not running.

Evergreen Yeung Mei Lun found the fountain of youth to win the F50 race (5:25:46) in dominant fashion, but had to settle for third in the series. Poon Yuk Pui was second on the day, but lacked sufficient series points. Eva Lo was third on the day, but had to settle for fourth for the series. Instead, Yeung Chan Au won the series title on the back of a victory in Lantau and second in Sai Kung and Sophia Kennelly claimed second on the back of a third in Lantau and first in Sai Kung.

Half Marathon – Campbell Super

Jeff Campbell wrapped up a terrific KOTH campaign with three victories in three races. Despite the humidity, Jeff led from start to finish in an impressive 1:36:51. Jeff is without doubt the half marathon champion this season and in need of someone to push him a bit harder next year.

Sebastien Mitrani finished in second (1:42:23), but did not qualify for the series prize.

Third place overall went to M55 Bob Shorrock in another jaw dropping display of veteran running (1:43:42). Sadly, Bob has only just found his form after recovering from injury and did not complete enough races to qualify for the series title.

Brendan O'Boyle finished in a near dead heat with Bob to claim the third open runner prize and 4th overall.

Mo Develin started the day facing stiff age-group competition from Anthony Davies and Charles Bedford, but rose to the challenge in what he called the most technically demanding race of the year to cement his victory in the M50 division (1:45:12) both on race day and for the series. Moe also finished 5th on the day in what turned out to be an impressive day for veteran runners.

Kevin Scallan followed next in 6th overall and earned enough points to secure second place overall for the series in the open category. Romain Demare managed to finish third for the series after coming in 8th in the category and 13th overall on the day.

Continuing the veteran onslaught, Tom Hardcastle won the M45 race (1:47:47), coming in seventh overall and wrapping up the category for the series with his third 1st place finish out of 4. Peter Bachman finished second in the category again for the race and for the overall series, with Carson Chan third in the race and for the series in this age group.

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Charles Bedford entered only one race this series, but that resulted in his coming in 8th overall and 2nd in the M50 category. Anthony Davies managed third in the category on the day and second place for the series and Kwok Ching Po came in fourth on the day and third for the series.

Frank Riehm broke through to win the M40 category for the first time (1:58:45) this season and this allowed him to secure second overall for the series. Tim Marchant was second on the day, but first for the series. Jean-Francois Raymond was third on the day, but it was 4th place Alan Zagury who captured third in the series overall.

Returning to the M55 category, Steve Wong (2:02:40) won every race this season that Bob Shorrock didn't enter and came in second to Bob in the others, including this one and took the overall series title easily. Yeung Kwok Keung skipped this race, but accumulated enough points to come in second in the series. Eric To Hoi Lau came in third in this race and third for the series.

Wong Peter Chun Tong (2:24:49) returned to his customary place at the front of the M60 pack. Peter is 67 so it is remarkable that he is still dominating the 60+ category. Peter won the series again and probably has the largest collection of KOTH victory mugs of anyone in HK. Ray Yuen Tak Shing was second in the race and second for the series with Tsui Pak Long third on the day and third for the series. Meanwhile, Frank Pilkington set a new over 75 record of 2:45:50. Lots of great results from the senior gentlemen in the race.

Chris Kwan Yee Ting ran her heart out (2:07:08) to win the women's race. She enjoyed great form this season while winning the F40 age group and proved to be the fastest half marathoner overall for the series. Vivian Lee was close behind (2:09:24) to capture second in the age group and for the series. Camilia Fermstrom was the third in the age group on the day, but it was fifth place Nathalie Darbon who came in third in the series.

Jeannette Wang (2:10:20) was the third fastest woman in the race and the first open female, but sadly did not accumulate enough series points. Likewise for second place open female Charlotte Taquet and third place Anotella Banský. Instead, it was Delphine Rich-Franz who won the series, followed by Sharon Koelewyn and Claire Mordet in third. Hope to see you ladies at the awards dinner.

Kate Martin completed a clean sweep of the F50 races with another fine run (2:25:02). Kate has been in great form all series and well deserves the series title. Ada Chan finished second (2:28:54) on the day, but also failed to enter enough races to compete for the series title. Leung Shiu Fung



finished third in the race and also captured third in the series. Susan Milfsud, who was missing on the day, came in second for the series on the strength of her fine results on previous races in the series.

The annual awards ceremony will take place on Thursday, March 30 at Pier 8 Café. Space is limited to 100 people so please go to www.seyonasia.com to download the registration form and sign up. We will hand out top 3 prizes from GigaSports and Columbia, as well as personalized KOTH mugs, to all of the category winners as well as distributing free photos from the races. This is a great opportunity to meet your fellow runners in a different setting and share tales of the trail.

Finally, I cannot give enough thanks to the Kin Hang Hiking Club for the course marking and to all of the fabulous marshals who have fore run, manned checkpoints and swept the trail this season. Due to their efforts, we have been able to send to AFCD pictures that show that we have left checkpoint areas cleaner after we left than when we arrived and to show large volumes of garbage that our sweepers collected while taking down our markers. My sincere thanks also to the Swire group of companies who have provided the prizes, the drinks, the enthusiastic volunteer cheerleaders and support through all of the race course changes imposed on us by AFCD.

Happy trails!

Keith Noyes
Race Director