



KOTH Taipo Mountain Marathon

24 November 2019. Sunny and 22-27 degrees.

(Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong)

Hot Start to King of the Hills Ultra Mountain Marathon Series

Over 450 started the race despite the recent unrest, hot weather and need to vote today. The unseasonably hot weather led to slower times and a lot of tired faces, but everyone was happy about the return to “normalcy” of an event going ahead without cancellation and to be out on the trails with such clear views. The cold beer at the end also proved quite popular.

Full Marathon – Campbell pushed

Jeff Campbell has returned to the trails after running 2:29 something at the Berlin Marathon and jumped out to an early lead as expected. However, at the halfway point Guillaume Perrot and Paul Fornier had caught up with him and many sensed a possible upset. This was not to be, however, as Jeff then roared ahead on the next section and finished in first (4:01:37) despite a serious tumble with about 8 km to go. Guillaume held steady to finish in second (4:04:23) with Ryan Whelan (4:07:59) moving up to third and Mat Leng (4:08:01) right behind in fourth. Paul Fornier faded at the end, but still managed fifth place (4:18:46) with George Major sixth (4:30:36).

M45+ William Davies was the first veteran to finish (4:31:20), first in his age group and 7th overall. Ezra Emerson (4:59:06) was second in the age group and Chan Ming Fai third (6:04:55).

Peter Bachman was the first M50+ runner across the line (5:09:15), followed by Lai Tai Shing (5:32:17) and Eric Yum (5:37:53).

Hats off to the M60s who put on a fine display. Wong Tsz Wan ran a superb 5:15:17 to claim line honors with Chan See Kau (5:17:41) breathing down his neck and Wong Hon Wing finishing third (6:04:01).

Times in the M40+ division were a bit slower than expected and this group looked generally heat worn. Johann Peter Santer (5:22:33) finished first, followed by Marco Law (5:45:28) and James Meenan (5:59:13).

Similarly, the normally super competitive M55+ category was less so this time for some reason. Kwan Ka Po (5:55:43) finished clear of Yu Hon Cheung (6:12:11) and Lam Wa (6:41:03).

Sayaka Matsumoto grabbed poll position in the Queen of the Hills competition with a well-earned



5:31:19 victory in the women's division. It appears that Sayaka was trying to catch up with her boyfriend, not aware that he had dropped down to the half marathon distance. This was a fine win for Sayaka and should give her confidence heading in to TNF 50 in a few weeks.

F40+ Tsang Woon Ming ran consistently to finish second overall (5:42:12) as well as being the first vet. She was chased closely by third-overall Fredelyn Alberto (5:43:36), who was also the second open runner. Aigui Safulina was 4th overall (5:58:13) and third in the category.

Natalie Rie (6:15:59) was the second F40+, followed by Chan Wing Ngaut Charis (6:20:25).

Eva Lo (6:30:37) grabbed line honors for the F50s, followed by Freda Cheng (7:21:30).

Half Marathon – Breakthrough Win for Kitwood

Thomas Kitwood has been near the top several times the past few years and put it all together today to survive the oppressive heat, pace it well, blow past the people who went out too fast and win the race in 2:00:36. This was Kitwood's first victory and even he seemed a bit surprised.

Leo Hui ran strongly to finish second (2:03:11), followed by the first veteran, M40+ Lee Chun Yin (2:04:41), who also finished third overall and looked really chuffed at the finish. Well done!

M50+ Michael Galligan finished 4th overall (2:04:41) and first in the age category in a very quick veteran time. Rudy Bottin lead early, but faded in the heat and finished 5th overall and third in the open category.

Au-Yeung Man Nga finished 6th overall (2:10:55) and also finished first in the M55+ category, another great veteran result. In fact, veterans would end up capturing five out of the top 10 spots as Olivier Streun finished 9th overall and 2nd in the M50+ category and Frank Riehm finished 10th overall (2:13:52) and first in the M45+ category.

Joe Wong finished second in the M45 category (2:20:34), followed by Mark Redfearn (2:22:15) who was noticeably struggling with the heat.

Po Ka Lai was the second M40+ runner (2:22:22), followed by Chan Wing Sum (2:25:38).

Eric To (2:22:23) passed Jon Gilchrist (2:23:33) on the final descent to finish second in the M55+ category, with Jon third.



Chan Wai Lam (2:33:34) led the charge of the M60s with Derek Irwin (2:34:37) second after spending the previous week of school camps hiking many of the same trails. Tsui Pak Long finished third (2:48:19).

The women's race was a tight battle between Lauren Decoff and Tan Poh Hiang. Lauren eventually won (2:21:03) with Tan second (2:21:24).

F40+ Nozomi Gaffney (2:30:58) finished third overall and first in her category, followed closely by Natalie Webster (2:33:51), second F40+ and 4th overall and Tara Oakhem Perrin (2:34:47), who was third F40+ and fifth overall. Mia Bennet (2:35:38) finished 6th overall and third in the open category.

Camilla Fernstrom ran superbly (2:39:45) to win the F50 race, ahead of Kate Martin (2:44:22) and Nathalie Maitre (2:48:06), whom we are happy to welcome back from her battle with illness.

The next race is scheduled for Sunday, 5 January 2020 beginning and ending on Repulse Bay Beach. Hopefully both the political and ambient temperatures will have cooled by then and people will return from the holidays happy to be out on the trails. Please see www.seyonasia.com for details.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the marshals for great checkpoint support, forerunning and sweeping, to Kin Hang for the course marking and to GoneRunning and Swire Coca-cola for making the race possible.

Happy trails!

Keith Noyes
Race Director