



KOTH HK Island Mountain Marathon

3 March 2018. From squally rain to bright sunshine, 19-24 degrees.

(Sai Kung, New Territories, Hong Kong)

Not another thunderstorm warning!

For the second year in a row, our March race has been affected by thunderstorm warnings. This one went up at 0710 with a forecast to be lowered at 0930. This caused a thirty-minute delay to the race start, forcing runners to find some innovative hiding spots to keep dry. Once the thunderstorm warning was lowered the race started without hitch and temperatures stayed cool under occasional drizzle until after one PM when the sun came out – just in time to warm the souls of the full marathoners ascending the Twins.

The sun did make the race finish on the beach very pleasant and a good crowd hung around to chat for several hours (though the early morning rain did result in a disappointingly small starting field.)

Full Marathon – Same as it ever was

Reigning KOTH Jeff Campbell shook off an early challenge from 2016 KOTH Mike Skobierski (“M-Sko”) to record the second fastest KOTH HK Island time ever 2:54:28, locking up the KOTH title again this season. Jeff has now entered a total of 9 KOTH races in his life and been first across the line in all nine.

M-Sko finished second 3:02:11 in a fine effort, but did not complete enough races to place in the series. Guillaume Perrot (3:09:14) finished third in the race and third in the open category.

For the series, the final placings in the male open category were 1) Jeff Campbell (KOTH); 2) Guy Connell; 3) Matt Leung.

Open racers captured the first 6 places in the race before M40 Guiseppe Mollica (3:22:59) broke the ice for the veterans. M40 Andrew Graham (3:24:24) was 7th overall and 2nd in the category and William Davies (3:26:45) was 10th overall and third in the category.

For the series, the final placings in the M40 full marathon were: 1) Andrew Graham; 2) Guiseppe Mollica; 3) William Davies.

In the M45 race, Mathew Kennedy enjoyed his first victory of the season (3:28:07), finishing more than ten minutes ahead of Ezra Emerson (3:39:14) who had been the form runner in the age group all season. Peter Bachman finished third (3:56:42) in a fine effort after racing 50 km the previous day.



For the series, the final placings in the M45 full marathon were: 1) Ezra Emerson; 2) Mathew Kennedy; 3) Peter Bachmann.

Thomas Hardcastle finished just outside the top 10 and first in the M50 race (3:27:32). William Hayward made his first appearance in KOTH this season and showed that he has been training, finishing second in a fine time of 3:44:20. Chu Ming (3:57:42) finished third and Nicolas Gontard (3:59:03) fourth.

For the series, the final placing in the M50 full marathon were: 1) Thomas Hardcastle; 2) Chu Ming, 3) Nicolas Gontard.

M55 Hau Ping blazed through the course in 3:51:21 to win for the second straight time. Unfortunately, Hau Ping did not complete enough races to qualify for the series title. Chan See Kau just missed the 4-hour mark to finish second in 4:00:25 and capture first for the series. KK Choi finished third in the category (4:12:41).

For the series, the final placings in the M55 full marathon were: 1) Chan See Kau; 2) KK Choi; 3) Kwan Ka Po.

To no one's surprise, Christopher Gunns was victorious again in the M60+ race (4:02:15). It has now been 3 years since anyone besides him has won a race in this category. Chan Wai Lam (4:24:47) was second, followed by Chan Chi Kin (4:27:25).

The final series results exactly mirrored the race placings on the day in the M60 full marathon category: 1) Christopher Gunns; 2) Chan Wai Lam; 3) Chan Chi Kin.

The women's race saw a fantastic battle between Trailwalker teammates for Queen of the Hills. Whoever won between Janice Chiu Man Cheung and Chris Kwan Yee Ting would claim QOTH bragging rights. Spicing things up, Fredelyn Alberto led the race until the Twins. Janice passed there and Chris made her move to catch up with Janice. Janice was only 5 seconds ahead after the last steps coming down the Twins, but then gritted her teeth and increased the lead to 37 seconds at the finish line. Janice finally won in 4:02:25 to claim the open title and Queen of the Hills. Chris was second overall, second for the series and first in the F40 category – a remarkable achievement one month after completing the 4 Trails Race in 65 hours.

Fredelyn Alberto finished third overall (4:08:32) and still had the energy leftover for a lengthy interview with the New York Times after the race. The New York Times is doing a story on domestic helpers and their trail racing passions. This KOTH race should feature prominently and I can't wait
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to see the article.

Jeannette Wang (4:10:07) was 4th across the line and in the mix at the front the entire race. This helped her to garner third overall in the series and second overall in the open category.

Tsang Woon Ming (4:31:44) finished in fifth place overall and second in the F40 category. Jo Eades (4:43:45) finished third in the F40 division – her last KOTH F40 race ever.

For the series, the female open rankings were: 1) Janice Cheung Chiu Man (QOTH); 2) Jeannette Wang; 3) Zhang Tianyuan.

For the series the F40 rankings were: 1) Chris Kwan Yee Ting; 2) Tsang Woon Ming; 3) Joanne Eades.

The F50 series came down to the last race to decide. Eva Lo and Yeung Mei Lun started the day with equal series points with Eva needing to win after finishing second to Mei Lun the previous two races. In the event, Eva stormed home in 4:33:50 to capture the race and the series title. Mei Lun (4:41:40) finished second in both the event and the series. Bonny Cheung (4:56:12) was third on the day, but left before collecting her prize.

For the series, the F50 rankings were: 1) Eva Lo; 2) Yeung Mei Lun; 3) Cheng Wai Chung.

Half Marathon – Clean Sweep for Ryan

After the final race in Sai Kung last season, I wrote, “Ryan Whelan jumped up several positions from his previous finishes to capture second overall – a result that suggests serious potential...”

If only I were as prescient with stock picking! Ryan completed a clean sweep of the half marathons this season with a terrific win (1:44:40), recording the second fastest time ever on the KOTH HK Island half marathon course. Ryan won the series convincingly and is now considering a move up to the full marathons next season.

Rudy Bottin finished second (1:46:09) for the third race in a row to lock up second place in the series. Jan Littlewood (1:46:51) used his superior downhill skills to finish third overall. This allowed him to place third overall for the series – a remarkable achievement because he was also first overall in the M45 category.

Paul Byrne (1:47:13) was fourth in the race and third in the open category for the third time in a row.

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Male open half marathon final rankings: 1) Ryan Whelan; 2) Rudy Bottin; 3) Paul Byrne.

6th place went to M50 Mo Develin (1:48:36). Mo won every race in his category this year and placed 4th in the series overall. This is terrific senior running.

Mo had to be this fast because fellow M50 Michael Galligan (1:51:35) was hot on his heels. Ng Yuk Ping (2:20:24) rounded out the M50 prize winners on the day.

Overall M50 series rankings were: 1) Mo Develin; 2) Michael Galligan; 3) Olivier Streun.

Olivier Jacquot (1:56:34) won the M40 race, a bit ahead of Mark Redfern (1:57:48), though Mark secured the overall series prize. Daniel Cole (1:57:57) was third on the day, but it was 4th place Frank Riehm (2:00:27) who finished third for the series.

M40 overall series rankings: 1) Mark Redfern; 2) Olivier Jacquot; 3) Frank Riehm.

Returning to the M45 category, Joe Wong (2:02:05) finished in second in the race and for the series. Steve Kite (2:15:53), while Chow Kai Yan place third for the series.

M45 overall series rankings: 1) Jan Littlewood; 2) Joe Wong; 3) Chow Kai Yan.

Wong Tze Wan continued his dominant ways in the M55 division (2:04:23), this time ably chased by Steve Wong (2:07:39) and Eric To (2:11:14). The three of them ended finishing in this order for the series.

M55 overall series rankings: 1) Wong Tze Wan; 2) Steve Wong; 3) Eric To.

M60 Hung Wai Chun improved every race of the series, finishing 4th in the category, then 2nd and finally 1st on this day (2:32:59). This was his maiden KOTH win and he certainly looked happy at the finish line. Wong Peter Chun Tung finished second (2:35:11) and managed to win the overall series title yet again despite being 69 years old. Wong Yun Ming was third on race day (2:36:18), but it was Tsui Pak Long and Hung Wai Chun who grabbed the full series hardware.

M60 overall series rankings: 1) Wong Peter Chun Tong; 2) Tsui Pak Long; 3) Hung Wai Chun.

In the ladies' race, Wendy Porterfield made it three wins in 3 tries (2:07:13). Wendy attributes her success to a tough labor and lack of sleep caring for a young one – running mountains is easy in

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comparison. Back from injury finally, Emillie Saint-Pe finished a strong second place (2:09:35), followed by Suzanne Gifford (2:10:32).

For the series, the female open rankings were: 1) Wendy Porterfield; 2) Suzanne Gifford; 3) Stephanie Mak.

F40 Vivian Lee made it a clean sweep of the series with her fourth straight victory (2:12:13). Chiu Wai Yin was second (2:15:52), followed by Nathalie Webster (2:26:47).

Overall F40 series rankings were: 1) Vivian Lee; 2) Nathalie Webster; 3) Catherine Chow.

Camilla Fernstrom also made it a clean sweep of the series, winning the F50 category in 2:25:42. Ada Chan was second (2:33:11) and Wong Kit Mui third (2:43:51).

Overall F50 series rankings were: 1) Camilla Fernstrom; 2) Ada Chan; 3) Kate Martin.

Old and Young

Now 77 years old, Frank Pilkington was the oldest person to complete each of the four races this season and a deserving repeat winner of the John Lane Prize.

On the other end of the spectrum, my daughter Luka became the youngest person, at 9 years 3 months, ever to complete the KOTH HK Island Half Marathon. She says she prefers Lantau...

This annual KOTH awards dinner will take place on Thursday, 28 March so please mark your calendars. We are returning to Café 8 at Pier 8 in Central. Space is strictly limited to 90 people. The buffet dinner includes two standard drinks and the prize ceremony 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