

25 YEARS AT THE AC100

HARD WORK PAYS OFF IN THE LONG RUN

CHRIS PRICE WINS, KEIRA HENNINGER IS 9TH OVERALL

By: Hal Winton Co-RD

With the AC100 scheduled for July 21st this year we kept informing the runners to do heat training. Most seemed to comply. With elevated temps the finish rate was still in the acceptable range at 60% under these conditions. Shirt sleeve weather at the 5 am start in Wrightwood made it pleasant for support people but caused runners to struggle with the heat conditions. It certainly added to the problem for runners who were not prepared for higher temps or were struggling with other physical problems.

However our 1st male and female winners of the race seemed less affected and were able to stay on pace for the race to the finish line. Eventually Chris Price from San Diego (age 31) pulled away from Jorge Pacheco (age 43) and Ruperto Romero (age 48) finishing in a good time of 19:46:06. Jorge and Ruperto finished in that order at 21:12 just 14 seconds apart. Jorge with 4 previous wins here earned the bronze Cougar statue trophy (30 to 75 years) and Ruperto with 5 prior bronze awards here earned the bronze Rhino statue award trophy (40 to 75 years)

In the end twelve young and strong or gifted runners in their 40's managed to reach the finish line in Loma Alta Park in Altadena in less than 24 hours for the traditional Sterling Silver Belt Buckles. Three more following runners, Angela Shartel, Mark Flores and Peter Cross received our unique 2nd Sunrise belt buckles for finishing after 24 hours but before 24:56.

The AC100 course is unrelenting which is reflected in the fact that seldom is there as much as 20 silver buckles attained and the finish line cutoff was set at 33 hours to allow a finish rate in the 60% range from our 1st year in 1986. If you can finish the AC100 you will have well earned it. Not for the "faint hearted" so to speak.

Keira Henninger (age 36) was back in top form after last year's hip muscle injury and displayed a lot of control with her steady pace, finishing in 9th place overall in 23:17 and like Chris Price received the bronze Ram statue trophy (18 to 75 years). The Ram trophy has been around since 1993 when Fred Shufflebarger insisted that he get something more than the silver buckle to show that he had won the AC100 for his 2nd time. 40 AC100 Ram trophies and the same number of Cougars, Rhinos and other AC100 bronze trophies have been awarded so far. That is a lot of bronze AC100 trophies out there somewhere.

After Keira came Angela Shartel (age 38) from San Diego just missing the Silver Buckle time by about 6 minutes. Her 24:05:55 time is a remarkable performance on this course under these conditions. She earned the women's bronze Cougar statue trophy award (30 to 75 years). Sada Crawford (age 46) led the women's race to Newcomb Saddle (mile 68) finishing in 17th place overall and 3rd woman in 25:04 earning the women's bronze Rhino statue trophy (40 to 75 years). This is a remarkable age 46 performance.

Other noteworthy finishes were Mike Stephens from Simi Valley (age 54) completing his 10th AC100 run for the bronze Elk statue trophy award. The Elk award trophy is for 10 years, no

years time limit, and the Eagle trophy is for 10 consecutive finishes. Mike stated that the Elk award represents his retirement from the AC100 race. We hope to see Mike as a run supporter in future years like many other of our retirees. Many attempt the 10 finishes of the AC100, but few succeed. Congratulations goes to Mike and all who have completed 10 AC100 runs in the past. And of course as anticipated Garry Curry (age 58) and Jussi Hamalainen (age 66) amazingly completed their 25th consecutive runs here in our 25 year history. Both are well known to represent what endurance running and racing is all about as well as being real gentlemen at the same time.

Also we were pleased to see Fenton Cross our eldest runner (age 67) and his son Peter (age 33) both finish to become our 1st father and son team since our beginning back in 1986 at our initial run (to the Rose Bowl). Adalberto (Flaco) Mendoza finished his 9th time here, so next year he will be in line to receive the Elk bronze trophy award so highly sought after but not often obtained.

A special treat for us was seeing the last four (women) finishers, who we RDs did not see how they could possibly make it into the finish line before the 33 hour cutoff time, come running in with just minutes to spare. The 4 were from BC, AZ, OR and CO adding to the exciting experience for all of us onlookers. We celebrated them altogether as a group at the awards.

It requires a small army of support people such as helpers at Wrightwood coordinating our set up, check in, briefings including the Wrightwood fire folks checking runners BP & Wt. and their fire truck at the 5 am start plus the run's large number of aid station workers, Ham Radio operators, S & R crews as well as runner's crews and pacers plus agencies and park staff and so on to make a run like this happen. The overall team effort and cooperation was again obvious for our 25th year. The AC100 run organization is deeply in debt to all who have helped make it a success through the earlier years and especially the recent more difficult years. The 2012 AC100 run while still recovering from the 2009 Station Fire aftermath effects such as falling trees and Poodle Dog bushes was admittedly one of the more difficult years, but rewarding to be able to complete it satisfactorily. Hard work pays off in the long run.

The So Cal AC100 Runners worked extremely hard again on the AC100 course this year (another 1,000 hours on our course) to make the burned over trails (from the 2009 Station Fire) OK to run on. We were still removing the troublesome PFPD (Purple Flower Poodle Dog) bushes from our burned over 10 miles of trails and plan to be more aggressive removing it for next year's race.

Our AC100 web site continues to show updated information including that the run date will move to the 1st weekend in August (August 3rd 2012) for future years to accommodate other race venues. The AC100 fills its limited entries now by year's end or sooner, so do not wait too long to enter. As a matter of fact in just a few weeks after the 2012 run we have lots of runners signing up for the 2013 run. At this rate the race will more than likely fill well before the end of this year. When the run fills we have no waiting list.

Gary Hilliard (Assist. AC100 RD and 2012 Medical Coordinator) and I are trained and certified by the USFS to remove fallen trees from our forest trails and run courses using chain saws in most places and 2 person crosscut saws in the rather new to us PVRW (Pleasant View Ridge Wilderness). USFS fire crews help us by felling snag trees on the burn areas as well. Horse

packers and others remove fallen trees in the higher elevations of our course for us. David Ledford with the BSA crew removed trees using the FS crosscut saws in the PVR Wilderness for us. It takes a lot of FS certified sawyers and their crews to keep the trails cleared for the AC100 and other recreationists use.