

Holiday Lake 50K++

Feb 15, 2014

The winde is great upon the highest hilles;
The quiet life is in the dale below;
Who tread on ice shall slide against their willes;
They want not cares, that curious arts should know.
Who lives at ease and can content him so,
Is perfect wise, and sets us all to schoole:
Who hates this lore may well be called a foole.

- Thomas Churchyard, "Shore's Wife," xlvii

I seem to remember...

Driving up: two tractor trailers on their side off I81. Passing through the Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. Gotta go back there. Meeting great people around a table at registration/check-in. Getting tips and encouragement... although there were signs of concern about trail conditions. A great pre-race meal from the folks at the 4-H camp. Lots of lasagna (veg and meat), spaghetti, salad, and cobbler. David Horton's entertaining, free-association pre-race briefing, and his special discussion for first-timers. "It will never always get worse." "You can do this." "Finish!" Bunking with thirteen other grown men. I don't remember sleeping, but I did get to hear some interesting snores. The buzz and runners compulsively downing a pre-race breakfast... trying not to be nervous. A jovial, polite line waiting for the single bunkhouse toilet. You'd



take a spot on the bench and slide down as the line uh... progressed. Noticing that it was going to rain for the first part of the race, but not feeling that it was a big deal. And snow. A great deal of snow. Discovering that my drink tube wasn't firmly seated into the bladder... it pulled part-way out, cutting off a carefully concocted Gatorade & water mix. Fortunately the aid stations were only four miles apart, and were staffed by friendly, energetic, encouraging people. Going by Amy Albu as she lay by the creek, her leg broken. Runners already surrendering their time to give expert assistance and get her to the hospital. Ditching my Yak Trax at the turnaround... they would NOT

stay in place on my shoes. Didn't need 'em anyway. Talking to other first-timers along the way... giving each other strength. Almost tumbling downhill into the lake while making way for the leaders on their second loop. The return trip through the snow troughs, which were then filled with freezing water. Going down into a puddle on both hands and one knee. Shouldn't have tried to go around... The last five miles or so... pain! Pain! Pain! from frozen feet but knowing that I was going to finish. Seeing the painted snow marker for "1 Mile to Go" that John Price had measured off. Sprinting as best I could and crossing the finish line. Finally. Upright. Able to know where I was, more or less. Seeing my buddies from Tri-Cities Trail Runners... helped me get here. The long drive home. No details... but involves unhappy glutes.



Jon Reynolds

First-time HL, first-time 50K, but now a grizzled veteran