

# EPIC ULTRAS NEWS



## Welcome From Epic Ultras Founder, Eric Steele



Each Epic Ultras Event leaves me speechless (imagine that) for a short period of time as I struggle to process the massive amount of personal energy output that it takes to head-up and put on the highest quality ultra-events in the Midwest and the greater ultrarunning community at large. What keeps me "totally dedicated" though, is that I consistently and unfailingly continue to reap an exponentially higher amount of sheer joy for my efforts when I get to witness, firsthand, the undying courage and raw determination poured from the hearts and souls of runners into the accomplishment of their ultrarunning goals -- and the satisfaction, along with the "personal transformation" that they achieve upon crossing our finish line(s). I am truly grateful and humbled by all of our EPIC competitors each and every time they even "toe the line" for one of our events...reaffirming our company's vision that we are absolutely in the business of CO-CREATING EPIC ULTRARUNNING EXPERIENCES OF A LIFETIME! The 2nd Annual FlatRock 101K (held a little less than two weeks ago), due to its daunting "graduate" difficulty level, only amplified and underscored this FACT. Thanks to ALL who registered and actually "showed up" to compete and an even BIGGER thanks to the Epic

Ultras Brigade for their "outstanding hospitality" in helping us co-create our latest Epic Masterpiece! The FlatRock 101K IS, mile for mile, HANDS DOWN the most difficult trail ultra in the state of Kansas and most likely the entire Midwest and proved, once again, that our beloved "little gem" loves to eat her young and old alike, and most importantly, that all runners who showed up are "Most Epic" and totally badass trail ultrarunners for even taking her on in the first place. I will also humbly, yet boldly, state that if you consider yourself "any kind" of trail ultrarunning badass in the Midwest (I'll refrain from mentioning names) and you have yet to even TAKE ON a double-dose of "The Rock" that you ain't shit...other than "full of it" of course...I'm certainly looking forward to seeing how many "self-proclaimed legends" step up next year!!!

We are confident you'll enjoy all of the "outstanding content" in this month's Epic Ultras Newsletter. Scott Demaree provides short, but detailed, information on how and where body fat is stored, along with significance to health as HOW much is actually stored. Our "Featured Runner" this month is ultrarunning STUD, John Cash, who is our 2014 Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Champion and new course record holder. Zach's latest race report covering the FlatRock 101K is, as always, very entertaining and paints a "colorful" written picture of how his race went - complete with copperheads and baby armadillos....AND, just because the 20th Annual FlatRock 50/25K is "sold out" and has been since last October, doesn't mean you can't get into an Epic Ultras event in 2014. Be sure to check the promo page for a great last minute deal to get into the Epic Ultras Inaugural Flint Hills 40 Mile and Marathon, scheduled for May 31st - which already has nearly 90 entrants. Also, if you are even THINKING about Badwater in the future, you may consider putting yourself to the test with a mere 100 miles at the Inaugural Honey Badger 100 Mile on July 12th. If that doesn't suit your skill set (or insanity level) please consider our 2nd Annual Prairie Spirit Trail "Fall Classic" 50 Mile & 50K on Oct 25th. Until next month...enjoy, and, of course...Be Epic! -- Eric

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## Our Mission

The primary mission of EPIC ULTRAS is to organize, manage, facilitate and deliver the highest quality ultrarunning events in the world. Our vision is to provide an environment that strongly encourages runners of ALL ability levels to discover, nurture and maintain their own personal greatness and "Be Epic" while co-creating EPIC "ultrarunning experiences of a lifetime" with us!



# UPCOMING EVENTS



Inaugural Flint Hills Trail  
40 Mile Ultra & Marathon Trail Races  
May 31, 2014 / Ottawa, KS

Click Here To Register Using The  
Discount Code Below Good Through  
Monday, May 12th, 2014!

Enter Code At Checkout to receive a  
\$15 discount:  
15EUNEWBUCKS  
(All one word, no spaces)

Buckle & shirts guaranteed until the 12th.

## Flint Hills Trail

Come join us for our late spring little “jaunt through the woods” along the gorgeous Flint Hills Trail. The trail will be in “full bloom” by the end of the month and the trees will be providing a spectacular shaded canopy over many portions of this very scenic “rails-to-trails” trail in mid-eastern Kansas. We currently have nearly 90 runners registered from eleven different states...the question you should be asking yourself is: “Am I one of them?”

## Course Description

Starting/Finishing at Celebration Hall in Ottawa, Kansas, and following the Prairie Spirit Trail two miles north before intersecting with the Flint Hills Trail, this (out & back) course will take you outbound southeasterly to the quaint little towns of Rantoul for the Marathon and the western edge of Osawatomie for the 40 Miler, and then back to Celebration Hall in Ottawa. Crew and/or drop bag access at both of the events turnaround points in Rantoul and Osawatomie. Come join us for a late spring/early summer “jaunt through the woods” on crushed limestone, along the far eastern section of the gorgeous 120 Mile Flint Hills Trail. The trail will be in “full bloom” come late May and the trees will be providing a spectacular shaded canopy over many portions (on this particular section) of this very scenic “rails-to-trails” trail in mid-eastern Kansas.

May 31, 2014  
Flint Hills Trail  
40M/Marathon

July 12, 2014  
Honey Badger  
100M

Sept 27, 2014  
FlatRock  
101K/25K

October 25, 2014  
Prairie Spirit Trail  
“Fall Classic”  
50M/50K

January 3, 2015  
WinterRock  
25K/12K

March 28, 2015  
Prairie Spirit Trail  
100M/50M

April 26, 2014  
FlatRock 101  
101K

All EPIC ULTRA events  
sponsored by:



# Newsletter Bios

## Epic Ultras Needs Your Help



### Scott Demaree - Newsletter Contributor

With a diverse past as a computer programmer, graduate student researcher, personal trainer, shoe salesman, and physics teacher, one pursuit has dominated Scott Demaree's life like no other: high performance distance running/walking. To date, he has accumulated over 104,000 miles on foot, including nearly 10,000 miles in competitive races (113 ultras and 49 marathons). He won 26 ultras and 1 marathon. Two wins were National Championships: 1989 24-Hour run and 1986 100K racewalk. Some of his personal bests were not even wins, including 230.4 miles for 48-Hours, 143.4 miles for 24-Hours and 14:57:32 for 100 miles. Fascinated by the difficulties of these events, he went back to school to earn Masters degrees at Wichita State University and Texas A&M University, involving extensive study/research in nutrition and exercise science. He currently challenges Texas high school students to high achievement in physics and AP physics.



### Zach Adams - Blogger Extraordinaire

Zach's been competing in ultras for about three years and is most certainly an EPIC ultrarunner. He loves running and has the sense of humor that Epic Ultras thrives upon! He's been our blog contributor since our inception and has a true passion for this sport. If you're easily offended, well, read his blog and get pissed, or don't! He "calls it like he sees it" and has no shame in doing so. Visit page six to "get a taste" of Zach's most Epic humor about our sport!



### John Cash - Featured Runner

*In his own words.*

I've been physically active my entire life, but I honestly hated running. Throughout school, I played basketball, baseball, and even raced BMX bikes for a couple seasons. After school sports, I got into weight lifting and mountain biking. Eventually, that led to road cycling which led to running which led to triathlon. After completing an Ironman, a friend of mine talked me into hitting the trail for the first time and I enjoyed it a ton! That was when I discovered the world of ultra-running and I've been doing that ever since. That was

5 years ago, and since then I've completed 30+ ultras including 8 - 100 mile races and 2 - 24 hour races. In ultra-running there really are no limits and that fuels my passion to see what I am capable of in this sport!

Epic Ultras needs YOUR HELP! With the expansion of events on the EU race calendar and the increasing popularity and participation in our beloved sport of ultrarunning, we need to add to the Epic Ultras Brigade. Just because you may not be able to run every event you would like does not mean you can't be a part of Epic Ultra's mission to "co-create experiences of a lifetime". It takes amazing people to pull off the absolute BEST events you will find ANYWHERE. By working at an aid station and assisting in other race day duties, not only will you be a part of the Epic Ultras Brigade, you may even earn your way into an Epic Ultras event. To find out more go to:

[www.epicultras.com/brigade](http://www.epicultras.com/brigade).

Thank You!

# EPIC ULTRAS



# More Where Than How Much

by Scott Demaree

Many of you might have picked up on this years ago, when the evidence began to accumulate, but it is worth going over again. It is not a major problem for people who train regularly for long distance races, but if you have ever had a significant break in training due to life's intrusions, it could apply to you.

In general, not all body fat has the same health effects. Fat accumulation above the waist carries a higher risk of heart disease especially in men. Furthermore, hidden fat in the abdomen is related to both pre-diabetes and heart disease.

One particularly revealing study was conducted on 140 untrained adults divided into four groups. Each group was assigned supervised exercise ranging from no activity to the equivalent of 17 miles of jogging. After eight months, the inactive group had gained 8.6% in visceral fat, while the most active group lost 8.1%. Researchers found women gained fat twice as fast as men. And the most active group lost significant fat from every part of the body where it was measured. This matches the long-known fact that weight loss takes fat equally from all body sites – you can't spot reduce.

Another thing to note is how quickly the inactive group gained abdominal fat. Because this fat is hidden and inactivity is usually accompanied by loss of muscle tissue, these people would not have been aware of this gain. This is the common experience in sedentary people as they move from their twenties into their thirties. For years they seem to be able to lounge around and eat whatever they want without gaining weight or showing the fat. This goes along with that feeling of invincibility young people exhibit. You know, the laws of physics just don't apply to them! But when they reach a critical loss of muscle mass, usually in early middle age, fat gain begins to accelerate.

The other key from this study was the effectiveness of the most vigorous aerobic exercise in taking out the dangerous abdominal fat. This too, may not have been apparent to those in the exercise group, other than a firming effect on the body.

The study results are not unexpected, as they reinforce the many positives of exercise. As I continually point out to people, it's never too late to get on your feet and reap major benefits. The minute you begin to exercise regularly, you begin to reclaim your health. Likewise, the minute you quit an exercise program, you begin to give your health away. You always want to be on the plus side of this equation!

**BE EPIC**

# Featured Runner - John Cash

## The Basics

**Date of Birth:** 06/22/1973  
**Place of Birth:** St. Louis, Mo  
**Currently Residing:** Washington, Mo  
**Marital Status:** Happily married  
**Job(s):** Quality Control Tech/Inspector  
**Children:** 2 daughters, Megan – 16 and Melissa - 14  
**Height:** 5' 10"  
**Weight:** 145 lbs  
**Shoe Size:** 11  
**Best Physical Feature:** My wife says it's my eyes/eyelashes.  
**Worst Physical Feature:** That list would be too long.  
**Religion:** I like to spend my Sundays on the trails in the woods surrounded by nature.  
**Educational Background:** Some college.  
**Personal Strength(s):** I'm 100% all in on anything that I do; very goal oriented.  
**Personal Weakness(es):** Lazy; Addictive personality.  
**Make Of Car You Drive:** Jeep  
**Make Of Car You Would Like To Drive:** My old 1969 Pontiac LeMans.  
**Pets:** 3 sketched out cats.

## Ultra Stuff

**# Years Running Ultras:** 5 **# Ultras Finished:** over 30  
**Best Ultra Performance(s):** Winning the 2014 U.S. 24 Hour National Championship.  
**Most Memorable Ultra:** My one and only DNF at Bighorn 100, it taught me a lot about myself and why I run.  
**Typical Training Week(s) Before A Major Race:** Build weeks at 80-120 mpw with 2 sessions a week of speed/hill work. Back to back long runs on weekends, with one being a hilly run and the other being a pace session. I try to train specifically for the upcoming type of race and terrain. Typical taper is 10-14 days prior to the event.  
**Injuries:** Thankfully no serious injuries (finding wood to knock on).  
**Ultrarunning Idol:** Yiannis Kouros  
**Why Do You Run Ultras:** The challenge of pushing my mental and physical limits. I love being around passionate, driven, positive people that are part of the ultra culture. I'm also very competitive and enjoy the aspect of racing as well.  
**Advice For Other Ultrarunners:** Learn proper biomechanics of running, eat well (including eating lots of raw foods), get lots of sleep, be patient with your progression whether it be distance or speed or both, and enjoy having the ability to move through our world under your own power.

## Favorites

**Favorite Author:** J.R.R. Tolkien  
**Favorite Book:** Running with the Buffalos  
**Non-running Magazine:** Quality Mag (work related, I'm a dork)  
**Favorite Movie:** The Lord of the Rings movies.  
**Favorite TV Show:** Cosmos  
**Favorite Actor/Actress:** Denzel Washington  
**Favorite Music:** All kinds, it varies from day to day.  
**Favorite Musical Performer:** Don't have a favorite.  
**Spectator Sport:** Football  
**Favorite Subject in School:** Math  
**Favorite Game:** Clue  
**Favorite Vacation Destination:** Yosemite National Park  
**Favorite Time Of Day:** Afternoons when I go for a daily run.  
**Favorite Item Of Clothing:** Mark Twain 100 hoodie.  
**Non-Running Leisure Activity:** Playing drums, though I'm not very good.  
**Running Shoe:** NB 1400 road shoe  
**Food/Drink During An Ultra:** Grapes  
**Food/Drink Before An Ultra:** Race morning - Almond Butter and Raisins on Ezekial Bread.  
**Food/Drink After An Ultra:** Candy bar and a soda.  
**Favorite Crew Person(s):** My wife is my amazing crew.  
**Favorite Pacer:** I prefer to go it solo.  
**Favorite Place To Run:** The Taum Sauk section of the Ozark Trail.  
**Favorite Type Of Running Surface:** Trail  
**Favorite Famous Quote:** "To give anything less than your best, is to sacrifice the gift." – Steve Prefontaine

## Dislikes / Fears

**Least Liked Subject:** English  
**Least Liked Household Chore:** Weed trimming  
**Pet Peeve:** People that throw their cigarette butts out of their cars. And littering in general.  
**Greatest Fear:** I have an irrational fear of large dogs, or more specifically, being attacked by them.

## Spare Time

**Book Currently Reading:** Book 5 of Game of Thrones  
**Hobbies:** Reading, playing drums.  
**Collections:** I guess race buckles, medals, and t-shirts.

# 2014 FlatRock 101K Race Report – Heat Wave

By Epic Ultras Blogger Zach Adams

## 2014 Triple Crown Series

Last year at the Inaugural FlatRock 101K, the mud and water turned an already challenging course into a muddy Slip n' Slide of doom. The smells of mud and blood hung in the misty fog while sounds of falling bodies and runners shouting obscenities filled the air. This year, however, was much different. This year, after only a few scattered storms that barely knocked down the dust, the clouds fled and runners were treated to clear skies, gusty winds, and unseasonably warm temperatures. When you have done most of your training in sub-zero weather it was downright hot.

My lovely and talented girlfriend and running partner Candi and I were up well before the rooster, and managed to get on the road and make it to Elk City Lake at about 6am. We drove through a pretty nasty thundershower that treated us to a badass light show that rivaled those of the glory days of 70's acid rock concerts. The lightning was intense and beautiful and ended up being somewhat of a storm before the calm – which was fine with me. We chatted with our friends, reorganized drop boxes for the 37th time, did all our other normal pre-race routines, and basically just paced nervously until Eric called us up to the starting line. Once the race was UNDERWAY, I realized I had somehow lost the visor I was wearing, and instead of just taking off, I TURNED AROUND went back to the van and looked around for it. Candi and Ron-Micah LaPoint waited on me and we started out handicapped by at least 2-3 minutes... and no, I didn't even find the piece of shit. This seemed like an odd way to start a race, but hey, I have never been afraid to buck 'the norm' in an ultra!

The first 25.25 kilometers were pretty uneventful. Candi and I ran and chatted as we have many times before, not allowing the urge to 'race' split us up before it was really necessary. I had really hoped to stay with her for the first 50.5K when I figured she would be running much faster than I could keep up with. Candi is an extremely strong 2nd half runner and can get close to even splits even in very long runs. We made it out to Sean's Sanctum aid station and I was feeling really good. The temperature was really starting to rise quickly, but this was expected, so I had made a concerted effort to stay ahead on hydration and nutrition from the very start and had taken in a ton of water and electrolyte in the first 15 miles. The first ¼ of a race is almost always the easiest for me, and today was no different.

The second 25k leg marked the beginning of transition from nice spring weather for a trail run to entering the portal to hell covered in gasoline. The temps jumped dramatically and the gnarly wind gusts were blowing up tons of dust, ash, pollen, and small mammals. Candi and I made it inbound to Dana's Aid Station at about the 21 mile point and I was really starting to feel shitty. My legs felt like lead, I was hotter than a Colorado piss test, and I was seriously starting to think that running the 40 miler at Free State Ultra the previous weekend might have been a marginally terrible idea. My experience at FlatRock helped me at this point, because instead of feeling sorry for myself, whining, and acting like a giant pussy, I kept eating and drinking and reminding myself that I ALWAYS struggle at this point. I don't know what it is, but EVERY SINGLE TIME I run on "the Rock" I struggle after leaving Dana's inbound. I just kept telling myself I would feel better and kept putting left in front of right. Candi was still running strong and I didn't want to sabotage her time, so I told her to go ahead and run her race, kick some ass, and that I would see her at the finish. We both put in our earbuds, and she was out of my line of sight within minutes. I cranked tunes and eventually passed the first place runner headed back for his second 50.5K – I think he was "only" about 8 miles or so ahead of me. A rough-looking, pale Ron-Micah LaPoint was second place and headed outbound and only wanted to know how far it was to the bench on the bluff. I lied, as trail runners do, and said, "Close. Around the next corner maybe?" He was nauseated... as were many at this point. It was past 1 pm and

The 2014 Triple Crown Series is 2/3 of the way complete and we currently have nine courageous trail running badasses still on track to receive the coveted title of: "2014 Triple Crown Honoree" They are:

*Zach Adams, Candi Paulin, Melissa Bruce, Josh Watson, Carson Galloway, Joseph Galloway, Robert McPherson, Marcus Needham, and Mike Rives.*

Upon completion of the 50K at our SOLD OUT Flagship event - FlatRock in September- each will receive special recognition, a personalized golden goblet, and be only the second group honored into the "FlatRock Triple Crown Series". Want to know how YOU can qualify in 2015? Simply COMPLETE each of the three FlatRock events for 2015: WinterRock (12K or 25K), FlatRock 101K, and the FlatRock 50K.

To ensure your "Triple Crown" the first step is to register as soon as registrations are open – these races will fill to capacity very quickly. The first rounds of registration links will always be sent out as INVITATION ONLY to prior competitors. If you did not participate in the 2014 events, make sure to subscribe to Epic Ultras [email list](#) (sidebar) to ensure that you are immediately notified of the opening of general registration.

*Want to see the 2014 honorees receive their awards and recognition?*

Join us for the celebration at the conclusion of the 20th annual FlatRock 25/50K on September 27th in Independence, KS!

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## 2014 FlatRock 101K Race Report – Heat Wave

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closing in on 85 degrees with ludicrously high humidity. I made it to the end of the 50.5K in about 7 hours and 30 minutes – pretty much right on target. ½ done.

At the start/finish turnaround I was handled magnificently by some totally badass Epic Brigade Staff Members, including Libby Eddings and Polly Choate, as well as my unofficial crew Reina Probert and Kodi Panzer. It was like a spa day... with extra suck. These ladies were bringing me food, drinks, ice, filling my pack, and probably would have massaged my legs had I asked. They are the pinnacle of course aid. Thanks ladies! I crammed as much real food and cold liquid into my stomach as it would hold and my awesome pacer Kodi and I set out for the 3rd and hottest 25k leg of the race. Ignoring the desert-hot wind gusts that were blowing street dust in our face, we set a course for awesome and trekked back to the trail. It took a while to get my ass moving, but eventually my legs began to feel more like an ultrarunner's tools than frog legs roasted over an open fire. I bitched and moaned a little, but mostly ran and was totally entertained by the hilarity of Tank's (the English translation for the German word "Panzer") stories as well as her choice in trail music (played on speakerphone for the world to hear). While I wasn't feeling like a million bucks, I was feeling at least worth about \$12.78 and a warm Jolly Rancher – so I kept on. My time with Tank went pretty fast, and we were at Dana's in no time. Ron-Micah was here and it was pretty obvious by the puke all over his shirt and the fact he was on his back in the shade that he wasn't doing well. The race leader came back inbound at this point, as well, and they were talking about how hot and hard the day was. On the upside he was still ONLY 12ish miles ahead of me, so I didn't have to totally abandon my hopes of winning the race... Bahaha!! Kodi and I heard that lots of runners were having dehydration and breathing issues and that quite a few had dropped, including my good friend Justin Chockley who had some sort of respiratory episode where he could barely breathe AT ALL. We also found out that Candi had not been feeling great and was only about 10 minutes in front of us. She had started feeling sick to her stomach at about the 50K point, but being the barbarian warrior she is, she kept hammering out the miles. After some food and several cups of ginger ale over ice, we set back out. One of the fun things about trail running is the wildlife. In this race I got to chase a groundhog, pet a baby armadillo, kick a possum, and hurdle multiple copperhead snakes. I got pics of the armadillo to prove it, but the groundhog was too fast. And the copperheads, well, I didn't really want to get close enough for pictures. Kodi and I strolled leisurely covered in dirt, salt, and sweat into Sean's Sanctum for the second time capping off the 3rd 25.25K leg of the race. 75% done.

The sun was starting to get lower and it seemed as if I just might survive the heat of the day. So far, my iron-gut was holding out, and had only very briefly felt sick after cramming it full of food. Here I thanked Kodi for pacing and get ready to head out for the final leg and trip to the finish line. Daniel Droessler, a longtime co-worker and budding ultrarunner picked up pacing duties and would take me to Dana's where another co-worker and ultrarunner Gene Dixon would pick me up and guide me through the dark to the finish. Neither had really done much trail running, especially not the technicality that FlatRock had to offer, but I knew they would be fine. They are both good dudes and are, most importantly, made up of the "right stuff" as Eric Steele calls it. I figured we would catch Candi in this section as she was still feeling VERY bad and moving much slower. We talked for a second when we crossed each other when she left Sean's – she did not look the greatest, but I knew how tough she was so I wasn't worried about her dropping. As a matter of fact, I told Dan that there was a better chance of us finding her unconscious on the trail than her quitting. Other than forgetting my water bottle at Sean's Sanctum, the race was still going great. Sure, I was stiff, hot, and tired – but really I was in a great place mentally and I knew I would kick the shit out of my time of 21:44 last year. Dan was thoroughly enjoying the trail and joking and laughing the entire time. His great energy

## Featured Runner

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### Achievements / Goals / Memories

#### **Personal Hero:**

Melissa, my youngest daughter. She has overcome so much in such a short amount of time and all with a positive attitude. When things seem hard for me, I always think of her and her perseverance.

#### **Personal Philosophy:**

Work hard, play hard, sleep lots, eat well, and spend time in the sunshine.

#### **Short-Term Goal:**

To perform respectably at the 24 hour World Championships later this year.

#### **Long-Term Goal:**

To live a healthful, high quality life and participate in endurance events as long as I live.

#### **Most Prized Possession:**

My memories, I hope I never lose them. Well most of them.

#### **Most Proud Achievement:**

Making the 2014 U.S. National 24 hour running team. I am truly honored and humbled to represent my country, even if it is in an obscure sport.

#### **Happiest Memory:**

Witnessing the birth of my first daughter, Megan.

#### **Secret Ambition/Fantasy:**

To do a trans-con run of the U.S.

#### **Greatest Adventure:**

Failed attempt at a full traverse of the Ozark Trail. Sleep deprivation, rain, snow, getting lost, and running out of food and water make for quite an adventure.

## 2014 FlatRock 101K Race Report – Heat Wave

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as a pacer, several nice runnable sections, and the cooling temps made this section much more pleasant. We got to the waterfall (my 4th time) and I saw Candi and her pacer Crystal on the other side and I yelled as loud as I could, “THE F&%^\*NG WATERFALL!!!!” Candi echoed my sentiment in an equally loud fashion. Dan and I caught up with them after successfully negotiating (and cooling off in) the waterfall and Candi still was feeling shitty. We all stayed together, made a lot of noise, dropped a bunch of F-Bombs, and got back to Dana’s with a good mix of powerhiking and jogging. I was HUNGRY at this point and ate a couple cups of her amazing potato soup, several sandwich quarters, chips, a cereal bar, and probably one of everything else that was there. Getting back to Dana’s before dark was one of my little goals for the day, and we did. It was still light out! There was still sunlight left, a few more minutes before we would be plunged into the colorless black of the seventh level of hell. The trail kicks your ass in the light, however, it flat out stomps your balls in the dark! Running is hard and not falling is even harder. Physically and mentally I was in a great place, I really felt like it was in the bag at this point. Every step closer was a step closer to the finish. Gene took over for Daniel and we left Dana’s for the final time. We jogged/hiked for the last remaining light but eventually got to the point where we had to turn the lights on. Candi was still feeling terrible and could barely take in any food or water and was still more concerned with slowing ME down than she was about her own race. I told her I didn’t care, and that it didn’t matter because I couldn’t catch Josh Watson (the runner that I knew was next in front of us) so there was no point in running off from her. I could have made a little better time, but at that point it was way more important to help her finish, and even better – to be able to ensure we would be crossing the finish line together! Now, I will admit, if another runner HAD been able to catch us, I probably would have ran off without a second thought to make sure that I didn’t get passed – Candi knows this and would expect no less out of me, or I from her. After all... it is a race!

Gene was loving the trail and checking it out with his headlamp every chance he could, keeping an eye out for copperheads, as they came out in force once the sun went down. We talked and hiked and sometimes stopped for a few seconds to let Candi and Crystal catch up. Gene is a very calm intelligent type of guy so we had some good conversations which really passed the time. We got back to Max and David’s (joint) aid station, where again, I was starving! They had some EPIC smoked ham stew and pulled pork that was absolutely delicious. Then, they offered whiskey, as they are known to do – according to them I was the first to accept. Twice. Gene also took a pull or two and the girls ate and drank what they could – avoiding the whiskey like the plague. Michael Mora, one of last year’s 101K finishers was here helping out after dropping due to some severe blister issues. He seemed like he was having MUCH more fun “working” than running! Honestly, I was pretty jealous. We set out to put the last 4 miles of the 2nd annual FlatRock 101K in the books. It was a steady hike with a few jogging breaks mixed in, and ultimately, our relentless forward progress was eventually rewarded by a steep descent off the side of the ridge. We hit the flat road and coasted toward the finish line. Gene and Crystal ran us up to the finish line before pulling off to the side, having completed their tasks. Candi and I slapped the now legendary “FlatRock Hand” together as we crossed the finish line, relieved to be done. A final expletive laden exclamation of thanks passed Candi’s mouth as we finished the most brutal trail ultra in the midwest (hands down), truly not a race for the faint of heart. 17:16:44 and 6th and 7th place was our official finish. She was the second female and I was the 5th male finisher. Three and a half hours faster for me than last year... I’ll take it!

This race is EPIC by any and every stretch of the imagination in any dimension of space or time. This race IS certainly the “top dog” in Kansas AND the entire midwest, relative to trail running badassery and should definitely be added to all trail ultrarunners bucket list if they think they have what it takes to conquer “The Rock”! The course is radically different than pretty much anything ever imaginable in Kansas, and it is downright just a VERY HARD trail race! The individuals who take on this race are straight-up badasses, who certainly take it way beyond a rating of TEN and actually crank it up to ELEVEN...and then some. The race director, Eric Steele, and his primary assistant, Warren Bushey have an incredible passion for ultrarunning and ultrarunners that is unparalleled compared to any I have ever been around and the entire Epic Ultras Brigade Staff is equally phenomenal in their caring and support of EVERY single runner. Food, course support, bling, shirts, and other logistics are executed with an exquisite precision that I have only witnessed at Epic Ultras Events. Take all these ingredients, mash them together, and you have a powder keg of volcanic proportions that has consistently erupted EPICNESS of truly legendary proportions. A middle-of-the-night finish line with staff and FINISHERS ringing cowbells, blasting airhorns, yelling shouts of support, a GIGANTIC BLACK ARCH, and a laser light show is the icing on the cake. If you have not experienced the feeling of crossing the wonderfully EPIC finish at the Epic Ultras FlatRock101K, you truly are missing out. Thanks to everyone, top to bottom, who had any part of putting this outstanding race together. It is a memory that will never diminish in my mind.