

# EPIC ULTRAS NEWS



## Welcome From Epic Ultras Founder, Eric Steele



Though we are running a few days behind on publication, I am “super-pleased” to bring you our latest issue of Epic Ultra News. Our most recent and final event of 2014, the 2nd Annual Prairie Spirit Trail “Fall Classic” 50 Mile & 50K Ultra Races, held in Ottawa (KS) a little over two weeks ago, was a smashing success and we doubled our number of entrants from last year, with runners representing 16 different states...some as far as Arizona, California and Utah...and though the day was unseasonably warm, all competitors were treated to an absolutely stunning plethora of incredible fall foliage along Kansas’ Premier Rails-to-Trails Project. We also had our first two official finishers of our “new for 2014” Kansas Grand Slam of Ultrarunning wrap it all up a few weeks ago in the middle of October AND have announced a new 100 Miler in late October (the 24th/25th) of 2015 – The Kansas Rails-

To-Trails 100, which will be run on two different Rails-To-Trails courses. Additionally, we will, once again be hosting the Kansas Grand Slam in 2015, with a small modification in what’s required to complete it, PLUS, are adding an Epic Ultras (Point Based) Race Series to the mix in 2015, as well... many more details on all of the upcoming 2015 action over the next couple of months...stay tuned, and please know that here at Epic Ultras we are perpetually striving to “take it to the next level” as race organizers/promoters to consistently give you the opportunity to come “Be Epic” and constantly push yourselves to new levels in our beloved sport, as well...AND we are VERY passionate about it! This month’s issue of our outstanding newsletter features Missouri ultrarunner and recent Overall Winner/Male Champion of our 20th Annual FlatRock 50K, Nathan Sicher, an interview about our Kansas Grand Slam of Ultrarunning with two MOST EPIC Kansas ultrarunners, Elden Galano and William Sprouse, who were the only two individuals to complete our Slam in 2014, and Zach Adams’ smashes the mold of a stereotypical ultrarunner in his latest insightful and quite comical (as always) article/blog post. Enjoy!

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!





# Newsletter Bios

## Epic Ultras Needs Your Help



### 2014 Kansas Grand Slam Honorees

Epic Ultras, once again, extends a HUGE CONGRATULATIONS to two MOST EPIC Midwestern ultrarunners who officially completed the 2014 Kansas Grand Slam of Ultrarunning! Elden Galano from Wichita (KS), and William Sprouse from Enterprise (KS). Elden and Will definitely embody all of the values that Epic Ultras and our Kansas Grand Slam stands for. Don't miss their Q&A starting on page 4.

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!



### Zach Adams - Blogger Extraordinaire

Zach's been competing in ultras since 2010 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!



### Nathan Sicher - Featured Runner

*In his own words.*

Hello friends! My name is Nathan Sicher. Before 2008 people didn't think of running when they first heard my name. That started shortly after my buddy Ryan Kramer got me into distance running/racing. (Thanks Kramer!) While growing up I only ran casually for exercise.

Now I enjoy running everything from 5k to 100miler with a main focus being marathon and beyond. I still really like road running, but have gained a real passion for trail running and ultras over the last few years. I have also been very fortunate to have met my girlfriend, Jenna, who shares this same love for running that I do. That said, enough about me...I would like to talk about you. I have to say the biggest thing I have been amazed with since 2008 is the quality of people I have met through this sport from newbies to elites. Especially with the ultra-running world where even in a race you are just as worried about helping your fellow runners as you are about reaching your own personal goals. For those that of you that I already know, I have greatly enjoyed our friendship. For those that I haven't, I look forward to getting to know you in the near future.

# EPIC ULTRAS



# A Q&A With 2014 Kansas Grand Slammers Elden Galano and William Sprouse

## What was your first 100 mile race?

**Elden:** Heartland 100 in 2007.

**William:** My 1st 100 mile race was Rocky Raccoon in 2012.

## How many times have you attempted the 100 mile distance? How many completed?

**Elden:** 16 attempts with 14 finishes. Two DNF's were at Ozark Trail 100 in 2009 and Prairie Spirit Trail 2013 (blizzard).

**William:** I have had 13 attempts and 11 finishes. Single DNF was because I had an unplanned abdominal surgery due to infection one week before Heartland, and by mile 25 my incision had burst open and my shirt was all bloody. I wanted to just put duct tape on it and keep going, but I didn't want people to think I was a fool, so I listened to everyone and dropped. After that drop, I felt bad because I know if I could have controlled the bleeding, I would have easily finished. I made my mind up that I would never drop again. Then the Prairie Spirit 100 blizzard happened - but I do not consider that a drop or DNF I could have and would have finished but was pulled when the course was closed.

## Describe your best and worst performance at a 100 mile race and what made it that way?

**Elden:** I think my best performance was at Prairie Spirit Trail this year. Though it wasn't a PR or my highest finish, it was an unexpected "sub 24". I ran the first 50 conservatively and sitting at the half at 11 hrs, I realized if I could keep close to this pace I could get in under 24. I really had to chase that one all the way back from lola to Ottawa. I felt really good about that one.

**William:** Best performance was HB 100 because I felt good all through the race as I had trained in the heat hard for that race. I paced myself for a 30 hour finish and felt strong through the night and at the end finished strong over 3 hours ahead of goal. My worst performance is also heat related - Lean Horse 100 in 2013, the race had extremely high temps, while temperatures were mid to low 70's all summer - so I did no heat training. On the day before the race, highs were just below 100 and combined with running one mile above sea level, I really thought I would die the last 15 miles. I could not carry enough water to make it from aid to aid (68 oz bladder). The race had only a 39 percent finish rate - I believe by far the most miserable 100 due to lack of heat training.

## Why did you take on the Epic Ultras 2014 Kansas Grand Slam?

**Elden:** It's hard to resist a good challenge!

**William:** I signed up for the Kansas Grand Slam because my strength is endurance multi ultras and not speed.

# BE EPIC

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# Featured Runner - Nathan Sicher

## The Basics

**Date of Birth:** 4/9/1981  
**Place of Birth:** Denver, CO  
**Currently Residing:** Joplin, MO  
**Marital Status:** I have a wonderful girlfriend, Jenna.  
**Job(s):** Commodity Manager at Leggett & Platt, Inc.  
**Children:** None  
**Height:** 6'2"  
**Weight:** 157 lbs.  
**Shoe Size:** 11.5  
**Best Physical Feature:** Beard  
**Worst Physical Feature:** Biceps - What biceps?  
**Religion:** Confirmed Lutheran  
**Political Affiliation:** Libertarian/Republican  
**Educational Background:** Bachelor of Science Degree  
**Personal Strength(s):** Determination  
**Personal Weakness(es):** Over analyzing things.  
**Make Of Car You Drive:** Toyota Camry  
**Make Of Car You Would Like To Drive:** I'd like to get a truck someday.  
**Pets:** Two brother cats – Artie and Oscar.

## Ultra Stuff

**# Years Running Ultras:** Since September 2011.  
**# Ultras Finished:** 9  
**Best Ultra Performance(s):** 2013 Dogwood Canyon 50k / 2013 Hillbilly Half a Hundred / 2014 Flatrock 50k  
**Most Memorable Ultra:** Pumpkin Holler 100  
**Typical Training Week(s) Before A Major Race:** You can't gain anything within two weeks of the race. I put in one quality paced 10-15miler one week out (for my head) and then cut back mileage 50-60% up to the race. I always run a couple miles the day before to clear my head out. Usually I'll take one or two days off during the week of the race and stretch a lot.  
**Injuries:** I've had Achilles Tendonitis as well as an abductor strain once. Both were unfortunate, but great learning experiences of why and how to take better care of myself.  
**Ultrarunning Idol:** Too many to list. I've been amazed how friendly/personable all running folks are even up to the top elites.  
**Why Do You Run Ultras:** To continually push myself outside my comfort zone. I know I can finish a marathon no matter what. A longer distance ultra is full of too many unknowns.  
**Advice For Other Ultrarunners:** Always run your own race. There's always someone faster and slower. It just depends on who shows up race day.

## Favorites

**Favorite Book:** No favorite, I'll read anything of interest - usually running/health related.  
**Favorite Book:** No particular favorite.  
**Favorite Non-running Magazine:** Men's Health  
**Favorite Movie:** The Big Lebowski  
**Favorite TV Show:** Psych  
**Favorite Actor/Actress:** Woody Harrelson  
**Favorite Music:** Blues/Country  
**Favorite Musical Performer:** Bob Dylan  
**Favorite Artist:** My father  
**Favorite Spectator Sport:** Baseball  
**Favorite Subject in School:** History  
**Favorite Game:** Words with Friends  
**Favorite Vacation Destination:** Boston Marathon Week - Boston, MA  
**Favorite Time Of Day:** Morning  
**Favorite Item Of Clothing:** North Face running shorts.  
**Favorite Running Shoe:** Road - Asics DS Racer / Trail - New Balance 1210  
**Food/Drink During An Ultra:** Bananas  
**Food/Drink Before An Ultra:** Chicken Alfredo and Ice Cream (routine the night before).  
**Food/Drink After An Ultra:** A good burger.  
**Favorite Crew Person(s):** Jenna (girlfriend) and Mark Plucinski (my "running dad").  
**Favorite Pacer:** Anyone  
**Favorite Place To Run:** In the woods.  
**Favorite Type Of Running Surface:** Technical trail  
**Favorite Famous Quote:** "Everything you need is already inside."  
Bill Bowerman

## Achievements / Goals / Memories

**Personal Hero:** Anyone who gives 110%  
**Personal Philosophy:** Keep it fun. If it's not, it's not worth doing.  
**Short-Term Goal:** Run 2nd 100 miler  
**Long-Term Goal:** Western States 100 miler  
**Most Prized Possession:** College degree  
**Most Proud Achievement:** College degree  
**Happiest Memory:** The day running became fun and not a chore.  
**Secret Ambition/Fantasy:** To tackle/complete the Ultra Trail du Mont-Blanc.  
**Greatest Adventure:** Moving away from home and becoming self-sufficient.

## Dislikes / Fears

**Least Liked Subject:** English  
**Least Liked Household Chore:** Folding laundry  
**Pet Peeve:** Litter (especially on trails)  
**Greatest Fear:** A DNF

## Spare Time

**Book Currently Reading:** "Once a Runner" by John L. Parker, Jr.  
**Hobbies:** Mainly running  
**Collections:** Race medals and bibs

# The Stereotypical Ultrarunner

By Epic Ultras Blogger Zach Adams

## 2014 Triple Crown Series

In the five or so years I have been running ultras, I have seen quite a few changes. The first, and most noticeable, is the massive increase in popularity. In 2010, ultras (in the Midwest anyway) were somewhat few and far between. A runner might have to travel 6 hours or more to find a race at all, and there were very few options through the course of the year, even if you were willing to travel. In 2014, one must pick and choose based on courses, buckles, distances, course support, and a zillion other factors. It seems as though there are new races popping up all over the place every weekend! The massive rise in popularity has increased both participation and public exposure – in both traditional media and social media. Between my runner friends, runner pages, and groups, my Twitter and Facebook feeds read like an AD/HD version of about 12 issues worth of UltraRunning Magazine.

This increased exposure has increased to the point that now even ‘non-runners’ are at least cognizant with the concept of ultrarunning. Guys like Dean Karnazes, Scott Jurek, Christopher McDougal, and others have made ultrarunning seem less of a fringe sport for total psychopathic sadomasochists and maybe even somewhat mainstream. Maybe... Along with this newfound recognition, I have noticed a trend among non-runners beginning to group all ultrarunners into one homogenous group tagged “ultrarunner” - a new stereotype of sorts. How awesome is that guys!? We got our own stereotype! By definition, a stereotype is an oversimplification of the group as a whole, and in a lot of cases, the shoe fits. But there are a few traits that I feel like are commonly attributed to ALL ultrarunners that I really feel are more often mostly inaccurate.

1. All ultrarunners are a bunch of hippies who just bum around and only work the bare minimum to survive. FALSE! There are a certain number of these ultrarunners living a lifestyle recently coined as “dirbag” who are out there truly living the ultra dream, but they are not the majority. Nurses, cops, small business owners, stay at home moms, CEO’s, and teachers are professionals you will find at almost every ultra. Most of the ultrarunners I know have full time jobs, families, and as many or more responsibilities as any non-runner.

2. All ultrarunners are health freaks who measure and count every

The 2014 Triple Crown Series is in the books and we have eight courageous trail running badasses who were successful in earning the coveted title of: “2014 Triple Crown Honoree” They are: *Zach Adams, Candi Paulin, Josh Watson, Carson Galloway, Joseph Galloway, Robert McPherson, Marcus Needham, and Mike Rives.* Only one, Candi Paulin, was a 2-time honoree.

Upon completion of our recent FlatRock 50K - each runner who completed the challenge received special recognition, a personalized golden goblet, and was honored as a “FlatRock Triple Crown Series” Recipient. 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](#) to ensure that you are immediately notified of the opening of general registration.

Congrats to the eight “FlatRockers” who were awarded the 2014 Triple Crown at the 20th annual FlatRock 25/50K on September 27th in Independence, KS!

# The Stereotypical Ultrarunner

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free-range, organic thing they eat and drink. Most are vegans who hang out at whole food stores and plan their next barefoot run across America. NOPE! Most of us eat what we like, because we like it, and in whatever quantity we choose. Fast food is NOT the devil and we don't mind sucking down the occasional triple cheeseburger and washing it down with a giant butterscotch milkshake. Yeah, there are a many health conscious ultrarunners out there because better nutrition does make better runners. However, most of us will never step on a podium and are MORE THAN SATISFIED just to stumble across a finish line - just before cutoffs- to collect our buckle and vanity sticker.

3. All ultrarunners suck down tons of craft beers the night before and immediately after every ultra. NADA! We will drink just about any kind of beer, wine, liquor and sometimes don't even wait until we have finished the race. And believe it or not, there are many ultrarunners who don't drink at all, although I am personally not sure why.

4. All ultrarunners hate themselves and are just punishing themselves somehow. INCORRECT! The pain of running ultras is a beautiful contrast to the Western hemisphere's push toward achieving absolute comfort in all things. Feeling the pain lets you know how great you have it in your everyday life. It is not a punishment...it is a reward! We aren't doing it because we hate ourselves, we are doing it because we LOVE ourselves enough to get out of our comfort zones and live life - in spite of the pain. To push past limits defined by others and sometimes even limits we place on ourselves.

5. All ultrarunners are obsessed with running and it is all they do. NOT TRUE. Ultrarunners by nature have a very wide range of experiences. Chances are that is what led them to the sport. Driven by the desire to take on new and exciting challenges can lead to many different activities. From my experience, ultrarunners excel in a wide variety of activities that take significant commitment - from writing, music, art, and theatre to auto body repair, hunting, gardening and motorcycle riding. Not stunted by a fear of the unknown, ultrarunners are well prepared to tackle ANY challenge. Hell I am in a group that meets bi-weekly to play old school, roll the 20 sided die roll playing game Dungeons and Dragons. (My character is a pretty badass level 2 Half-Elf Rogue). But yeah, we do run a lot - it is pretty necessary when running distances over 26.2 miles.

After all the time and miles I have spent on the trails with ultrarunners, I would argue that the ONLY thing that we ALL truly have in common as the group labeled "Ultrarunners" is the desire to take on the physical challenge of running an ultra as a way to living a highly fulfilled life. There are similarities among us but just like the case of the "perfect" running shoe, there truly is no one-size-fits-all personality of an ultrarunner.

# Q&A

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## **When considering the races in the 2014 Kansas Grand Slam...please answer the following: Which Race Was Easiest, Most Difficult, Favorite and Least Favorite, AND WHY you answered that way:**

**Elden:** Easiest: PST100 - The weather was perfect this year. It is a simple, smooth course, out and back (which is my favorite type of course), Epic ultras Brigade at the aid stations.

Most Difficult: This one is a tossup between The Hawk 100 and Honey Badger 100, but I think the Hawk 100 with its technical trails was harder -at least this year. Honey Badger with the HARD asphalt & July Kansas heat was hard. Even though race day was one of the hottest days of the summer, it wasn't as hot as Kansas summers can be. We were also lucky that day two was overcast keeping the temps down in the final hours of the race when we were already drained.

Favorite: Heartland 100! It was my first 100 mile race and remains my favorite!

Least Favorite: Honey Badger 100 with the Kansas heat - definitely not my favorite!

**William:** My favorite race of the slam was the Hawk due to technical trails. Hawk 100 would also be the most difficult of the four. The easiest would be Prairie Spirit, as it was my fastest time (assuming no blizzards). My least favorite was Heartland - I just don't like running on gravel and the openness of the course (however Honey Badger openness did not bother me. Go figure!)

## **Describe the most memorable moment(s) in completing the 2014 Kansas Grand Slam.**

**Elden:**

- 1) Vomiting with 17 miles to go at the Honey Badger 100, haven't done that in 20 years, (hate doing that!)
- 2) Picking up Debbie Megerson, my pacer for the last lap at the Hawk 100, (really didn't think I would make the final cutoff)
- 3) At Heartland 100, reaching Texaco Hill aid station, on the way back and having a surprise pacer (Debbie Megerson) pace me back the 6 miles to Teterville aid station, where I would pick up my scheduled pacer (Holly Phillips), for the duration of the race.
- 4) Finishing sub 24 at Prairie Spirit Trail 100.

**William:** The most memorable moments of slam were the miles I ran with Elden and meeting up with him and Karen after each finish. We were always good friends, but after the Prairie Spirit 2013 blizzard we really bonded as we ran approximately 40-50 miles together in an unforgettable experience.

## **Will you be taking on the newly revised Kansas Grand Slam again in 2015?**

**Elden:** Eric Steele is an "EVIL GENIUS." Tweaking the slam for 2015! How can you resist a challenge like that!

**William:** I will do the KS Slam again for sure but as far as 2015 will depend on gaining entrance to either Badwater 135 or Leadville Trail 100. Badwater has been my dream from the start. If I don't do the slam, I will still do the races that work around Badwater - and hopefully pace Elden in Honey Badger 100 as he will be one of my pacers if I get into Badwater.

## **Please feel free to add anything else you would like about your overall experience completing the 2014 Kansas Grand Slam.**

**Elden:** Thanks to Eric Steele and Epic Ultras for organizing/sponsoring the Kansas Grand Slam of Ultrarunning. It was a fun year of running and an awesome journey for sure. I wouldn't have been able to accomplish this without my incredible crew chief Karen "Kutie" Galano, and my friends that helped me above & beyond the call of duty. They saved me countless times during these races and I would not have finished if it weren't for them. I've been complimented as a "Badass," but in reality I'm just an ordinary guy, I just have some really Badass FRIENDS!!!

**William:** Thank you for the opportunity of the Kansas Grand Slam! -- Iron Will with the "Look of Steele".