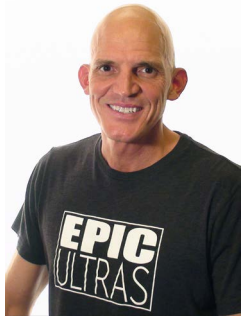


EPIC ULTRAS NEWS



Welcome From Epic Ultras Founder, Eric Steele



First off, we sincerely hope you had a most memorable Thanksgiving Holiday with your family and friends! Here at Epic Ultras our 2014 race calendar has been officially complete for a little over a month now, and was by all accounts and measurement, an EPIC success! We hosted, staged and directed a total of seven different events, with six of them offering at least one true ultra distance - a 50K or greater. Compiling statistics from our races that were at least a 50K, ranging up to 100 miles, we ultimately saw 430 total finishers cross under our signature Epic Ultras Arch in 2014. Compared to the top three other organizations COMBINED (who host ultras in our state), we finished 48% of the 896 total finishers to run at least a 50K in 2014...not to mention introducing over 150 individuals to their very first ultrarunning experience! In addition, we launched and witnessed two very hardcore individuals (really nice guys actually) complete the FIRST EVER Kansas Grand Slam of Ultrarunning, along with another eight

exceptional ultrarunners EARN and take possession of the FlatRock Triple Crown while proving they truly are trail ultrarunning badasses. By the way, if you consider yourself ANY kind of trail ultrarunning badass in the Midwest, let alone the state of Kansas, and you have yet to take on our FlatRock Triple Crown...well, we'll just continue laughing at your self-deluded state...no disrespect intended...ha! As magnificent as 2014 turned out to be, it will be but a benchmark of comparison for what Epic Ultras has in store for 2015. A new and improved Kansas Grand Slam (which will include the new Rail to Trails 100 Miler in late October) and the Epic Ultras Race Series are just a couple of the things we are rolling out in 2015. How many have what it takes to complete the Kansas Grand Slam, or the FlatRock Triple Crown? How many ultra-maniacs will put their mettle to the test just by attempting to take on the Honey Badger 100...especially any future Badwater hopefuls? Only time will tell, of course, but I personally can't wait to find out! This month's issue of our outstanding newsletter features Kansas ultrarunner, recent Overall Winner AND new Female Course Record Holder of the Heartland 100 Mile, April Calaway. Matthew Perkins offers up an incredibly sublime insight into his recent 2nd place 50 Mile finish at our Prairie Spirit Trail Fall Classic Race and Zach Adams' gets "all serious" with his usual comical flair, of course, about what to do when you are suffering from ultrarunning burnout. 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!





EPIC ULTRAS

epicultras.com

All New 2015 Slam

Complete All Three Epic Ultras 100 Milers

There are two parts to earn the title of 2015 Kansas Grand Slam Honoree. You will need to register and complete all three Epic Ultras 100 Mile events, to include Prairie Spirit Trail 100, Honey Badger 100 and the Inaugural Kansas Rails-To-Trails 100. This new event will take place in our Fall Ultra Extravaganza on October 24th 2015. Please be on the lookout for more details in future newsletter issues on the Kansas Rails-To-Trails 100 as well as the Fall Ultra Extravaganza!

KANSAS
GRAND
SLAM

hosted by
EPIC ULTRAS

The Choice is Yours

In addition to our three Epic Ultra 100 Milers, you will need to complete EITHER the Hawk or Heartland 100. This is the new twist on the 2015 Kansas Grand Slam – complete ALL three Epic Ultra 100 Milers and CHOOSE between Hawk or Heartland 100 to earn the coveted title of Kansas Grand Slam Honoree!

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 3, 2015
SOLD OUT
Winter Rock
25K/12K

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

April 25, 2015
FlatRock 101
101K

May 30, 2015
Flint Hills Trail
40M/Marathon

July 11, 2015
Honey Badger
100M

Sept 26, 2015
SOLD OUT
FlatRock
50K/25K

October 24, 2015
Ultra Extravaganza
100M/50M/40M/50K

All EPIC ULTRA events
sponsored by:



Newsletter Bios



Matt Perkins

In his own words

My name is Matt Perkins...Matthew if you are pissed, or Matty if you know some secrets. I began running in junior high and continued in high school with track and cross-country. I hated every minute of it. When I graduated, I promised myself I would never run again. But, when my wife was pregnant with our first daughter, I decided I needed to become physically, intellectually, and spiritually healthy again. I started running, but swore off racing. Somewhere along the line though, I was coerced into a half-marathon. The experience led into a desire to run a marathon. But the intensity of road racing quickly clashed with my running mantra: running must be fun. Subsequently, I broke my foot, bought some Luna sandals, and found the greatest enjoyment in the history of running through ultramarathons. I haven't yet found the words to describe how I feel about ultras, except to say I am overwhelmed with gratitude. Running doesn't define who I am, but it is a necessary part. And I love it! My wife and kids think it's crazy to run so far, but if I can impress them, it's worth it. If you see me at an Epic Ultras Event (and you will), I am the slightly tattooed runner sitting quietly in the corner. I'll see you in March.



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!



April Calaway - Featured Runner

In her own words.

I'm a tired single Mom to a darling 7 year old daughter! In my secret night life I work as a paramedic for Sedgwick County EMS in Wichita and then play normal adult during the day. I ran a little bit of track and cross-country in high school but quickly was much more interested in smoking and otherwise looking for trouble. After the birth of my daughter I was tired of being chubby and a smoker so I tried running again. At first it was a mile a day, but quickly escalated from there. It soon became, and still is, my way of coping and sorting things out, as well as my most prayerful and spiritual times. I'm exhausted most of the time, and almost always have my trusty sidekick so spend a lot of time running on the treadmill in my dining room or running circles around either my trusty sidekick's school or my EMS posts during the 4 AM lull. My first few years of running were focused on marathons, but when I ran my first ultra at Psycho Wyco in 2012 I was instantly hooked. My first 50 miler was at Prairie Spirit in March 2013 during the famous blizzard and I loved it. My first 100 miler followed later that year. I am still a bit of an ultra novice but I love the community, the feel, the people...everything about it. This is an incredible sport, and each race really is a journey and an experience. Ultra races always break me down to a certain point--emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually, and the journey of working through that breakdown is something I value each and every time. All the amazing people I have met and continue to meet each time make every journey unique and special. I have been inspired and amazed again and again by the folks I have met in this crazy sport! I have seen a lot of community, selflessness, camaraderie, and triumph. It really is amazing!

Epic Ultras Needs Your Help

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.

Thank You!



EPIC ULTRAS

Prairie Spirit Trail Fall Classic 50 Mile

By Matt Perkins

The man's hands tremble slightly upon his face, as he bows his body with arms on knees. There is no crying, no grimace of pain. Those have been shed over the long miles he has traveled. Sweat and salt-stained skin are his reward. And as he steadies himself upright, the last remnants of weakness abandon him.

The delicate combination of misguided exuberance, shiny awards, and celebration of a humbly accepted gift led me to ultrarunning. The latter is my impetus for running. All other elements prove less valuable and fall by the wayside, as pain is juxtaposed with spiritual awareness during a Saturday of fog and bright blue sky that was the Prairie Spirit Trail Fall Classic 50 Mile race.

Nervous energy battles with nature's calm, dark morning as uniquely-crafted athletic bodies move toward the line. It is not the start, but the beginning of the end of months of training, procrastination, injury, and courage. Ten seconds of foreplay are more than enough before we plunge into what we believe we know, but are soon aware of which we know very little. There is no abstract thought to take my mind off what lies ahead. In fact, there is no focused thought at all. I spend five miles recalibrating for the unknown. It is foolish to jump into the ocean while wondering how to swim...unless you are a shark. Unfortunately, there are no mirrors for the shark to look into for confirmation – only nature's assurance of an environment in which it belongs.

The light from my flashlight rebounds off the morning fog, but my legs pay no attention. Forward into the dark, I run alone. I am ill-prepared for the miles and pain awaiting me, but I am fully prepared to accept both. It is a concept easier said than done, as I will quickly discover. A mere fifteen miles after we start, a hiccup: my right knee begins to tighten, and then feel weak. It is not my foot, which was broke over a year ago. It is not my left knee, which was strained a few weeks ago. It is not my mental strength, which is regularly defeated. Something new...and unwelcomed.

Over the course of twelve additional miles I run with an altered gait, straying from a form as flexible as an oak tree. It hurts, to put it simply. It hurts badly. Aid stations provide the water with which I wash down the energy gel and salt tablet medicine. Apple provides the musical distraction. But none of this can overcome what I know lies ahead – untested pain. No, untested grit!

Through town and fields I run, just like everyone else. We are all on the same course, but with unique experiences, and toward unique ends. For some it is the finish line or a sticker on the car. For others, it is a battle with a private demon. For me, the end is unknown. Twenty-seven miles I ran to stand inside a building, to eat a snack and drink flat Coke. A warrior's meal. But with a single step, my knee falters. Unbeknownst to the volunteers, I fall onto the bench. My mind is racing, determined to figure out a way to overcome what is a seemingly insurmountable obstacle...a leg that refuses to work. I am offered ibuprofen...I take four. And with an embarrassingly ugly limp, I return to the course.

Perspective is my enemy. But the enemy does not realize that while my body looks vanquished, my mind is hidden behind it, giving me strength that cannot be refuted. I grit my teeth, and I pray. Why I don't pray for my knee to be healed, I don't know. I pray to be a better person, to be the man God wants me to be. I pray for my family. I grit my teeth...and I just pray.

BE EPIC

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Featured Runner - April Calaway

The Basics

Date of Birth: 36 years old as of November.
Place of Birth: Alamogordo, New Mexico. Moved a lot. Army brat.
Currently Residing: Wichita, KS
Marital Status: Single
Job(s): Paramedic
Children: 1 beautiful 7 year old daughter.
Height: 5'1"
Weight: 105-120. It ranges. I struggle with it. I have to convince myself I can still do well when it hits the upper end. I always want to think I would be faster if I was thinner and lankier, which is ridiculous, because I'm just not built that way.
Shoe Size: 6
Religion: I believe in my Creator. Religion is personal.
Political Affiliation: I hate politics.
Educational Background: I'm an RN and a paramedic. I doubt I will go back to school again.
Personal Strength(s): I'm stubborn. I really like everybody.
Personal Weakness(es): I'm stubborn. Sometimes I get depressed and anxious for stupid reasons.
Make Of Car You Drive: Hyundai
Make Of Car You Would Like To Drive: If it runs I'm good with it.

Favorites

Favorite Author: John Irving
Favorite Book: A Prayer for Owen Meany
Favorite Non-running Magazine: JEMS
Favorite Movie: Too many to count.
Favorite TV Show: Orange is the New Black
Favorite Actor/Actress: Will Smith. He's solid and he keeps it real in his real life.
Favorite Music: Anything that stirs emotion.
Favorite Musical Performer: It changes, currently loving Bastille, Ambassador X, One Republic, AWOL nation
Favorite Artist: My daughter
Favorite Spectator Sport: College Basketball
Favorite Subject in School: English
Favorite Game: Spades
Favorite Vacation Destination: Vacation? What is that?
Favorite Time Of Day: Any time that I am sleeping.
Favorite Item Of Clothing: Sweatshirts
Favorite Non-Running Leisure Activity: Reading
Favorite Running Shoe: Brooks PureFlow
Food/Drink During An Ultra: Mountain Dew and soup
Food/Drink Before An Ultra: Donuts
Food/Drink After An Ultra: Beer
Favorite Crew Person(s): Never had a designated crew before, all volunteers and friends have been great. Jason Dinkel and Barry Smith are pretty memorable--they convinced me to go 100 miles the first time and I couldn't have done it without them.
Favorite Pacer: April Reed and Kodi Panzer
Favorite Place To Run: Anywhere outside. I get stuck on the treadmill too much. I whine about it a lot.
Favorite Type Of Running Surface: Nice smooth singletrack

Ultra Stuff

Years Running Ultras: 3 **# Ultras Finished:** 6
Best Ultra Performance(s): Heartland 100
Most Memorable Ultra: Heartland 100
Typical Training Week(s) Before A Major Race: Last two weeks I pretty much slack and just jog around whenever I feel like it.
Injuries: Haven't had an overuse injury for over 3 years. I got hit by a car in April 2013 and broke my leg. It healed fast. When I first started running I had everything--stress fractures, plantar fasciitis, but after the stress fractures in March 2011 I haven't had any running related injuries. I had to learn to slow down and take recovery days seriously. I'm good for two hard days a week and the rest have to be easy. Seriously easy.
Ultrarunning Idol: Anna Frost
Why Do You Run Ultras: I'm running from demons and it's working. It's liberating to keep pushing my limits. Ultras are a spiritual experience.
Advice For Other Ultrarunners: Accept and embrace whatever your body is willing to give you each day. Run with joy--it's the best feeling ever!

Achievements / Goals / Memories

Personal Hero: My Mom
Personal Philosophy: Be Kind
Short-Term Goal: Raise a happy daughter.
Long-Term Goal: Raise a happy daughter.
Most Prized Possession: Photographs
Most Proud Achievement: My daughter
Happiest Memory: The birth of my daughter.
Secret Ambition/Fantasy: I wanna get into Western States and tear it up. And then Hardrock.
Greatest Adventure: Life has been an adventure enough.

Dislikes / Fears

Least Liked Subject: Politics
Least Liked Household Chore: Laundry. ugh.
Pet Peeve: Cruel people
Greatest Fear: Letting the people I love down.

Spare Time

Book Currently Reading: "Dark Trade"--by my sister, Miranda Kavi. She writes fun books to read and I am super proud of her.
Hobbies: I have a passion for good beer.
Collections: Beer....

Ultra Burnout

By Epic Ultras Blogger Zach Adams

What is runner burnout?

Simply put, I think of burnout as the point at which the hobby of running, once much loved, becomes nothing more than work. You aren't running as much as you used to and when you do they suck and aren't much fun. It may even get to the point that you are only running out of a sense of obligation or habit. One may experience a general lack in motivation to go faster or farther, where once a sense of excitement and accomplishment was the predominant driving force. When you get to the point that you can think of a thousand things you would rather be doing aside from running, you are more than likely burned out. Chances are if you have been running ultras for a significant amount of time, you probably have been or will be burned out on running at some point. Maybe it will come after a long stretch of huge training miles and a very busy race schedule. It may come when you have been burning hours you could be sleeping to keep up on training because "life has gotten in the way". Whatever the cause, the point is, it happens to the best of us.

What can I do about it?

My first case of burnout came after nearly an entire year of training and racing with the ultimate goal of finishing my first 100 mile ultra. Tons and tons of miles, some hard run races, and an annual mileage total nearly doubling my previous highest had me very well prepared for the October 100 miler I had picked out. It also had me set up for a case of burnout. The strenuous year and accomplishment of my goal left me with quite a running hangover. I was kind of lost without the goal that I had been working for and when I did run it was not much fun – even after the aches and pains of the 100 went away. After a couple months of this I decided to see what I could do to pull myself out of the funk. Here are a few things that I think contributed to pulling me from the brink of nearly quitting running ultras and propelled me into an even better year than the one that had been amazing, while simultaneously kicking me in the teeth.

1. Reflect on why you started running. Was it to get healthy, compete in a race, run with a group, or scratch something off your bucket list? Taking a look at your original motivation might just help you put your current situation in perspective and help you find the passion once again. Isn't a bit of silent meditation and reflection something you normally do while running anyway?
2. Re-evaluate your goals. Do you want to PR some specific race or distance? Do you want to tackle a course of distance that has previously been unattainable? Do you want to lose some weight and get stronger? Whatever your goal is, tailoring your running specifically to the accomplishment of these new priorities may help get you back on track. It could be the new motivation you need to make those workouts feel more exhilarating than a day working in the widget factory for minimum wage.
3. Sign up for a race that scares you. By taking on a challenge of epic proportions, you might scare yourself into working harder than you would if you were just kind of

FLatRock 2014 Triple Crown Series

The 2014 FlatRock 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 FIRST 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!

Ultra Burnout

...continued from page 6

seeing what comes up. In my experience, having a particular goals race that you know will kick you square in the nuts if you don't get ready for it is a strong motivator to lay off the pizza and beer and go grab some hill repeats instead.

4. Just go run. One of the things I do when I am just not "feeling it" is to just go. Set a schedule for 14 days and follow it without question. It takes you back to when you first started running and didn't know what you were doing – you just followed the almighty schedule. No motivation required. The schedule says 4, you run 4. No motivation needed. If you are supposed to go run 16 you go run 16, without excuses. I think this works because it makes running a normal part of your routine again. Rather than trying to talk yourself into going out for a run, you do it because the schedule says so. When the scheduled days are done, you just keep with it because it has become routine and feels weird not to. Either way, you are still moving and running continues to be that important part of your life that you might have begun to take for granted.

5. Find some running buddies. Find some new people to run with. Joining a new group of runners might be very helpful in breathing some new life into your love of running. A new group means new people to talk to and share race "war stories" with. It might inspire people to tackle some of the challenges you have already taken on, or vice versa. Sharing the experience with new people may help you gain a fresh perspective on running and help you win the game of hide and seek with your own love of running.

6. Run somewhere new. A change of venue could be just what the coach ordered. I know I personally have a tendency to run the same routes over and over and over and over... My 5 mile route has been a staple for close to as many years, and when I need 10 or 15 I just do more loops. If you look closely you can see the groove I have worn in it. If you had the nose of a dog, you could probably smell me on it. The point is, running past the same tree, farmhouse, and water tower can get just as old as a morning rush hour commute. Mix it up! Drive to a different town or trail. Go get on the treadmill of a new gym. Just changing your scenery may help you regain the elusive "fun factor". This is one instance where I am telling you to go find out if the grass really is greener on the other side!

7. Rest. Don't overlook the importance of taking some time off from time to time. When was the last time you didn't run for a full two week span? Do something different. Swim laps or ride a bike. You won't lose your massive ultrarunning base if you take a couple weeks off. I have a feeling a recharging of your metal batteries is going to help you way more than not running for two weeks will – especially if you replace the activity with something else physically demanding like pickup basketball at the YMCA or an adult soccer rec league.

You will surely notice that some of these things work better for you than others, much as everything else in ultrarunning. Ultrarunning is a sport of trial and error and what works for one may not for another. Just like fueling during a race or finding the best shoes, there is no "perfect" way to pull yourself out of a funk. I suppose if all else fails, you can just quit. While you might regret it later, I don't mind less competition in a given race. Hell, it might even help me get into one of those big lottery selection races some day!

EPIC ULTRAS

Prairie Spirit Trail Fall Classic 50 Mile

...continued from page 4



The man's chin shakes and energy moves up from his feet and legs, past his hands and chest, and smashes into his face. The wave crests over the edge, and emotion floods into a new state of being. And he begins again.

It was only fifteen minutes ago I couldn't walk. Now, I was running. There is no pain. There is humble joy. There is now a race! My hips begin to move in a way they have not before. If it was a dance, it would be laughable. This is not a dance, this is running. My head begins to bob back and forth and images of a Paula Radcliff appear. The form is ugly, unscripted, and strangely natural. With each step I feel strong...not stronger, but just strong. I don't take credit for the transformation, for it was because of something much greater than me. Perhaps the medicine was the element, but God is the reason. I know people will discount my dramatics, saying the emotions of such a trial and tribulation cause a distortion of reality. I don't care. I believe.

One might imagine the miles to just fly by, but for me they did not. Looking ahead on the Prairie Spirit Trail is like looking over Lake Michigan – you cannot see the other side, but you know it is there... somewhere...miles and miles away. I run now with greater ease of mind than I have in months. But now I run with purpose. I have been given a wonderful gift, the ability to run, and I intend to celebrate it. Over the immaculate trail, across a bridge, and past a farm house I continue to run. I am a hip-swiveling man! I keep reminding myself where I am place-wise does not matter. Finishing strong is what matters. It matters right up to the point where 2nd place is in my grasp.

Through a final aid station I take in more medicine and set off for the final seven miles. Time is against me. To finish less than eight hours will be decided now. I decide I don't care...as much. No more music, no more daydreaming. Pure focus reigns supreme. Energy gels and water fuel my body, but faith fuels my resolve. I am running 50 miles today. I AM RUNNING 50 MILES!

The course has a little less than two miles to brutalize me with its pancake flat hills and bright blue sky. I am gently reminded of my knee again, nearly falling with pain. I grit my teeth and hobble back into a slow run. Again I stumble. But again I bear down, gather up all the anger and happiness, pain and ability, and run. Across the trail, turn the corner, under the bridge, past the back of a semi-trailer, over the concrete, and into view of those beautiful orange cones. I see a child sitting on a chair, ringing the warning bell...another runner has come home.

The man stands at the end, no different than when he started, but more aware of who he is. The purity to his new reality has already settled in, and a new balance must be struck. What might seem like bad timing, can be perfect timing. What might seem like bad luck, can be great luck. And what might seem like an absence of grace, can be grace manifested in both timing and luck.

"Get off my timing mat!" The words to begin a new chapter...

Notes: The Prairie Spirit Trail is a crushed limestone surface, impeccably maintained from Ottawa to Iola, Kansas. Epic Ultras hosted the Prairie Spirit Fall Classic 50 Mile race and is the premier ultrarunning event organization in the country.