

# EPIC ULTRAS NEWS



## Welcome From Epic Ultras Founder, Eric Steele



Welcome to our 21st issue of Epic Ultra News! Spring is here and race season is in full swing. We were excited to host our 3rd Annual FlatRock 101K nearly two weeks ago and had 32 out of 44 starters, from eight different states, finish the toughest trail race in the state of Kansas. Amazingly, over half of our finishers, 18 total, finished the second leg of our FlatRock Triple Crown and will now just have to complete our FlatRock 50K in late September to be honored with this most esteemed recognition and award recognizing their Kansas' Trail Ultrarunning Badassery. Check out the side bar on page six for a complete update on all of our potential FlatRock Triple Crown Honorees and congratulations to all of these individuals, as well as to ALL 44 competitors who even showed up to take on a "double dose" of The Rock in the first place. Next up in just three weeks, at the end of May, is our 2nd Annual Flint Hills Trail 40 Mile and Marathon, which we

still have plenty of spots available for! Plus, this year we are making a donation to the Down Syndrome Guild of Greater Kansas City, based on the number of entries we receive, and right now we are at \$430, however, if we receive another 57 entries between now and the close of registration on May 25th, our donation will escalate to a very substantial \$2,000... AND on top of that we are giving you a \$20 discount on your registration between now and this Sunday evening at Midnight...complete details below. Just six weeks after our Flint Hills Event, is our own little version of the legendary Badwater Ultra and the second leg of our 2015 Kansas Grand Slam, the Honey Badger 100 Mile Ultra Road Race, scheduled for July 11th in Kingman, Kansas. If you've ever even "thought" about going to Badwater at some point in the future, this is the perfect race to put your collective mettle to the test and see if you can handle the heat of our little fun-run here in the Kansas Desert. In this month's issue our "featured runner" is Oklahoma ultrarunner AND Overall Winner/Male Champion of our recent Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile Ultra Race, Justin Franklin, along with an outstanding first person account from Andrew Olsen of his very first 100 Mile finish at our Prairie Spirit Trail Event, as well, and of course, our Epic Ultras Blogger, Zach Adams usual witty insight about his 3rd (and MOST EPIC) finish of the toughest trail race in Kansas...our FlatRock 101K. 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!



# UPCOMING EVENTS



2nd Annual Flint Hills Trail  
40 Mile Trail Ultra Race & Marathon  
May 30, 2015 / Ottawa, KS

Take advantage of a \$20 discount now!  
Click Here To Register Using The  
Discount Code Below Good Through  
Sunday, May 10th, 2015!

Enter Code At Checkout to receive a  
\$20 discount:  
**20NEWSBUCKS**  
(All one word, no spaces)

## Flint Hills Trail

EPIC ULTRAS: FLINT HILLS TRAIL 40 MILE & MARATHON DONATING TO DOWN SYNDROME GUILD OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

Kick your summer off right by joining us for a scenic jaunt in late May, along the gorgeous Flint Hills Trail, in southeastern Kansas AND help an outstanding non-profit charitable organization too! Epic Ultras will be donating \$10 per entry for ALL entries we receive between March 1st and the close of registration on May 25th to the Down Syndrome Guild (DSG) of Greater Kansas City. Founded in 1984 by a group of parents whose children had Down syndrome, the DSG currently serves 37 counties in Kansas and Missouri, providing support to over 1200 individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and the professionals who serve them.

PLUS, if we register 100 spots during our fundraising drive for DSG, Epic Ultras will match that first \$1,000 (\$10 x 100 entries) with another \$1,000...making our total donation a minimum of \$2,000 because we will still donate the \$10 per entry over and above the initial 100 entries. Please read on for complete event details.

Whether you are ready to bridge the gap between running roads and trails, a rookie ultrarunner looking to increase your distance PR, or a competitive racer looking to set a new PR, the Flint Hills Trail 40 Mile & Marathon are very possibly the races you have been looking for! Our courses primarily travel a forgiving surface of crushed limestone, wide enough to run 2-3 runners abreast, on the gorgeous Flint Hills Nature Trail between Ottawa and Osawatomie (KS). Our flat, fast out-and-back course(s) are excellent for every runner's ability level, from the first time ultrarunner to seasoned veterans. Shade is plentiful on the course with a wide variety of early summer foliage in full-bloom by late May that gives runners plenty of visual stimuli as they cover their mileage.

So, whether you are looking to set a PR, or run your first ultramarathon, come join us for our 2nd Annual Flint Hills 40 Mile & Marathon, on May 30th, in Ottawa (KS), while automatically helping us raise funds for an outstanding charitable organization, too! Click below now to get registered and kick your summer off right, along with helping us hit our \$2,000 donation goal!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

May 30, 2015  
Flint Hills Trail  
40M/Marathon

July 11, 2015  
Honey Badger  
100M

Sept 26, 2015  
FlatRock  
50K/25K

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

January 2, 2016  
WinterRock  
25K/12K

April 2, 2016  
Prairie Spirit Trail  
100M/50M

April 30, 2016  
FlatRock 101  
101K

All EPIC ULTRA events  
sponsored by:





# Newsletter Bios



## 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!



## Justin Franklin - Featured Runner

*In his own words.*

I started running regularly in 8th grade to get in shape for basketball. I ran a local 5k in the summer before my freshman year after that race the Owasso track coach (Jim McFadden) looked up my number to ask me to come out and run for the track team. I was a mid pack runner for all 4 years of high school never reaching my full potential. I ran a little after high school but by 2008 I had quit training regularly.

In January of 2012 told my wife I wanted to start running again little did she know it would lead to this ultra running madness. I quickly got back into shape and started running short road races. I ran my first marathon at the end of 2012 (1/2 and 1/2 marathon in Tulsa) at that race I learned about the TATURS (Tulsa area trail and ultra runners). I started doing a lot more training on trails where I met a bunch of crazy trail runners and became one of them. I ran my first ultra in 2013 at Midnight madness 50 miler it was a awful experience but once the soreness faded i was ready to go again. I signed up for Turkey and Tatur 25k the night before at the bar my friend (Aaron Ochoa) talked me into running the 50k. I ran a lot smarter race than I usually do and was able to come in 1st place in the 50k. Since then I mostly sign up for ultras on trails. I've had a goal for awhile to run 100 mile race before I was 30 I wanted to run pumpkin holler 100 in October but spent a good part of 2014 injured. Despite not being able to train very much I ran well in shorter trail races. This January I signed up for Prairie Spirit 100 with the goal of just finishing under 24 hours. I upped my weekly mileage and started doing back to back long road runs on the weekends. I really had no idea how my body would handle running all day and night. I brought a great team with me to Prairie Spirit to get me through the 100 miles. They kept me fueled and motivated the entire race. I finished way faster than I ever imagined in 17 hours and 24 mins. I'm not sure what my goal is now but I'm going to keep training hard for my next adventure.



## Andrew Olsen

*In his own words.*

I started running cross country in high school to stay in shape for soccer, I never really considered myself much of a distance runner. After graduating high school, I continued to run regularly but never with any specific goal in mind. In 2008 I saw an ad for the Louisiana Trail Marathon and thought to myself "that sounds like fun!" So, like any good first-time marathoner, I signed up Friday night for the race the next day.

Remarkably enough, I made it through the race in one piece (even finishing third!) and was hooked. I became a Marathon Maniac in 2009 (#2152). In 2010, I ran my first ultra (a 50K in Fort Worth in July called "El Scorcho") and in 2012 completed my first 50-miler (in San Antonio, in June). Have I mentioned that I may not choose the smartest way to jump into a new distance? In March 2015 I attempted and completed by first 100-miler at the Prairie Spirit Trail 100-miler in Ottawa, KS. Since 2008, I've completed over 110 marathons/ultras, in 29 states and 3 countries. PR's Half-Marathon: New Orleans Half-Marathon - 1:38:50 Marathon: Bob Ardrey Marathon 2012 - 3:28:09 50K: Louisiana Trails 2012 - 6:12:44 50-mile: Grasslands Trail Run 2013 - 10:37:07 100-mile: Prairie Spirit Trail 2015 - 25:34:19

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

Thank You!



# EPIC ULTRAS

# 2015 Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile Race Report

By Andrew Olsen

**Note: I've received a lot of questions about my 100, what worked/didn't work, etc, so I'm going to break this review up into two parts. The first section will be a brief review of the race for those interested in the typical race review. Below that, I'll provide a more detailed review for those who are interested in more of the specifics pertaining to running 100 miles.**

Running 100 miles is stupid. And it hurts. Having said that - there are two major factors that made my 100-miler successful: 1) a fantastic crew and 2) great race organization. Those two things helped me to overcome a lot of other obstacles.

Breanna and I had a blast last year running the 50-miler at Prairie Spirit, which was why we chose this event for my first 100-miler attempt. We had high expectations for the 100 mile event this year. We arrived in Ottawa on Friday afternoon in time to attend packet pick up and the pre race dinner the night before the race. Eric Steele, the race director, was at packet pick up greeting each runner, many by name, as they picked up their packets and provided them with a little encouragement and ego boost before the big day. Since we hadn't corresponded with Eric since the event the year before, we were pleasantly surprised that he remembered our names. After packet pick up we hung around and enjoyed a delicious pre race meal of beef brisket (or chicken), potatoes, vegetables, salad, and cake! After the meal we headed back to the hotel (a five minute drive away) to go through a last minute check of supplies and brief run through of the strategy for the next day and then it was time for bed.

The race started at 6AM Saturday morning with a pre-race briefing at 5:30. We arrived at Celebration Hall, next to the starting line, right before 5:30. Parking was very easy and convenient. After the briefing we had a few minutes to hang out and talk to our crew before it was time to head out to the start line. Breanna, Sean, and Wesley (who would arrive later in the day) had thankfully agreed to crew/pace me. The race started promptly at 6:00AM with a small out and back of about a mile north into the sleepy neighborhoods of Ottawa before we turned around and began the long journey south to Iola. The first few miles of the trail are paved but once the trail passes under the interstate it turns into a soft bed of crushed gravel. The course is pretty straight and mostly flat as you would expect an old railroad bed to be. The race follows the old railroad bed that parallels the highway so it makes it very easy for your crew to get to the next aid station well in advance and have everything set up for you. The manned aid stations are conveniently placed about every 8-10 miles with unmanned stations in between. The manned aid stations were wonderfully well stocked with all sorts of delicious goodies. Every aid station also had a "special" item that they made - chocolate covered pretzels, quesadillas, and so on. The volunteers were amazing, energetic, and extremely helpful. This was slightly less important on the way out but on the way back after 60, 70, 80 miles in the dark and cold, it was huge to occasionally drop in on these wonderful people who seemed thrilled to help you out and fill you with any and all food that you wanted. The unmanned aid stations offered water jugs to re-fill your bottles. The race also allowed runners to have pacers starting at the turnaround point in Iola which was quite the blessing because when it gets dark out there, it gets REALLY DARK. Pacers could be switched out at any manned aid station on the way back so I rotated my pacers at each manned aid station on the return trip. It was really nice to have someone to talk to at 3AM after I'd been up running all night long!

I finished the race shortly after sunrise Sunday morning and Eric and the rest of his crew were at the finish line blowing air horns, ringing cowbells, and making a general racket for everyone as they came down the home stretch and crossed the finish line. After crossing the finish line I was immediately handed my well earned belt buckle and took some pictures with Eric and my crew who got me through all 100 miles. We ventured back into Celebration Hall for a little while to wind down, grab a few things to eat, etc before heading back to the hotel and beginning the recovery process. All race participants received a gender specific cotton shirt and finishers received a belt buckle, fridge magnet, and a sticker with race logo and distance on it. The race also has a pair of professional photographers that take pictures all along the course and at the finish line which they post online free to all the runners.

**Bottom Line:** This is a fantastic event with some of the best organization/support out there - we can't say enough good things about this event for both experienced and inexperienced ultra runners - we highly recommend it.

After running my first couple of 50-milers, I started wondering if I could do a 100-miler. With that in mind, last year we went up and ran the Prairie Spirit Trail 50-miler ( [ <http://www.racenreview.com/#/race/25/comment/> | Read our review here] ) as a test run of sorts for the course and the race organization. We loved it so when registration opened, I immediately took the plunge and signed up to make the 2015 edition my first 100-miler. It turns out I was the 6th person to register since they assign bib numbers based on when you sign up :-P

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# Featured Runner - Justin Franklin

## The Basics

**Date of Birth:** 07-28-1986  
**Place of Birth:** Owasso, OK  
**Currently Residing:** Collinsville, OK  
**Marital Status:** Married (4 years)  
**Job(s):** Office manager at Mark A Franklin DDS. P.C. Companies, Inc.  
**Children:** 2 boys , Gunner (8 yrs old) Landon (4 yrs old)  
**Height:** 5'9"  
**Weight:** 138  
**Shoe Size:** 10  
**Best Physical Feature:** The beard.  
**Worst Physical Feature:** Arms  
**Religion:** Christian  
**Political Affiliation:** None  
**Educational Background:** Owasso High School  
**Personal Strength(s):** Endurance  
**Personal Weakness(es):** Bad attitude  
**Make Of Car You Drive:** 2002 Dodge Ram  
**Make Of Car You Would Like To Drive:** Newest fastest mustang out there.  
**Pets:** None

## Ultra Stuff

**# Years Running Ultras:** 3  
**# Ultras Finished:** 7  
**Best Ultra Performance(s):** 1st place at prairie spirit trail 100.  
**Most Memorable Ultra:** Barkley book fair 2014: team blazin J's.  
**Typical Training Week(s) Before A Major Race:** Depends on race distance but I try to run 50 miles a week or more if longer race is coming up.  
**Injuries:** IT band, sprained ankle.  
**Ultrarunning Idol:** Kathy Hoover  
**Why Do You Run Ultras:** I was made to run far.  
**Advice For Other Ultrarunners:** Get as much advice as you can from veteran ultra runners.

## Achievements / Goals / Memories

**Personal Hero:** Jesus Christ  
**Personal Philosophy:** Always try to do your best.  
**Short-Term Goal:** Continue to chase and lower PR's in all distances.  
**Long-Term Goal:** Take a few months away for run across the US.  
**Most Prized Possession:** Stupid iPhone.  
**Most Proud Achievement:** Being married.  
**Happiest Memory:** When my two sons were born.  
**Secret Ambition/Fantasy:** Own a running store/bar.  
**Greatest Adventure:** Running the Athens Big Fork 2015 cancelation run (unauthorized run to blaylock creek).

## Spare Time

**Book Currently Reading:** Whatever my kids are reading.  
**Hobbies:** Running, fishing, biking.  
**Collections:** Smelly old running shoes.

## Favorites

**Favorite Author:** Don't read books.  
**Favorite Book:** I run instead of read.  
**Favorite Non-running Magazine:** Sports Illustrated  
**Favorite Movie:** I Love You Man  
**Favorite TV Show:** Sports  
**Favorite Actor/Actress:** Jason Segel  
**Favorite Music:** Little bit of everything.  
**Favorite Musical Performer:** None  
**Favorite Artist:** My children.  
**Favorite Spectator Sport:** Thunder basketball  
**Favorite Subject in School:** Science  
**Favorite Game:** Phase 10  
**Favorite Vacation Destination:** Minor league baseball games.  
**Favorite Time Of Day:** Early morning.  
**Favorite Item Of Clothing:** Black short shorts.  
**Favorite Non-Running Leisure Activity:** Fishing  
**Favorite Running Shoe:** Nike Pegasus  
**Food/Drink During An Ultra:** Bananas/water  
**Favorite Food/Drink Before An Ultra:** Eggs/coffee  
**Food/Drink After An Ultra:** Beer/beer  
**Favorite Crew Person(s):** John Nobles/ Desiree Franklin/ Dad  
**Favorite Pacer:** Trace Heavener  
**Favorite Place To Run:** Running somewhere I have never ran before.  
**Favorite Type Of Running Surface:** Hilly single track.  
**Favorite Famous Quote:** "Only those who risk going to far know how far they can go"

## Dislikes / Fears

**Least Liked Subject:** Politics  
**Least Liked Household Chore:** Laundry  
**Pet Peeve:** When people don't even try.  
**Greatest Fear:** Losing loved ones.





# 2015 FlatRock 101K Race Report

By Epic Ultras Blogger Zach Adams

Why do I love FlatRock? It is hard as hell. It freaking hurts. It is brutal. That's exactly why I love it! This is MY course. The FlatRock trail is where I cut my teeth (and other parts) on trailrunning. It is essentially in my backyard – so it is my go-to trail. FlatRock pictures from 2002 are what steered me away from the roads essentially changing me and turning me into a trail running fanatic. This year's FlatRock 101k marks my 3rd time running the 101k distance and my 9th official race on "The Rock", having previously completed the fall FlatRock 50k four times, WinterRock 25 twice. I have earned one FlatRock Triple Crown (one WinterRock finish away from two) and will be going for a second trophy in September. Hell, I even got engaged at the finish line – yeah... me and FlatRock, we got a history. I love it. It is beautiful. It is rugged. It is tough. That is why I keep going back for more.

The 2015 version of the 101k would surely be a massive challenge regardless of weather conditions, but the forecasted storms and rain the week of did give me some flashbacks of the 2013 mudfest. As it turned out, the rain stayed away, the trail was perfect, and it even got nice and hot – just like I like it. I had been training hard and racing a ton since January, even dropping a few pounds. 2015 had seen some PR's at the 50K and 50M distance. I had lined up a most kickass pacer for the last 50.5K in Micah LaPointe and I felt as ready as I could be. As ready as I could be until Tuesday that is, when I came down with a nasty ass head cold. GRRREEAAAT. WONDERFUL. Just like the weather, I decided I would just make the best of it.

Candi and I arrived at the Friday night pre-race dinner and had our typical rununion of ultrafamily and friends. We hung out and shot the shit and I felt a bit better after Dave and Max hooked me up with some of "grandpa's old cough medicine" in the form of some American Honey whiskey. Candi and I got to bed early in the back of the van at the finish line and enjoyed the cool night and some decent sleep.

The race started as it always does, with Eric counting down and hollering at us as he drove down to the trailhead to send us up the trail. My goal was simple – PR this race or DNF trying. I had survived the first year and been conservative the second year. The way I had been training, it was time to unleash the dogs of war and see what happened. I was shooting for a sub-15 hour finish and was planning on doing it with a 7:00 first half and sub 8:00 second half. My headcold quickly became a non-issue as my body temp raised and I left a gallon of snot on the jagged rocks that make up the trail. The first 25K was mostly uneventful, including a few superman maneuvers but no falls and an even pace. Inbound to Oak Ridge the first time it really heated up and I fell like total burnt up assholes. Coming into the aid station I had basically convinced myself that I just didn't have the energy (due to the cold) and that I was going to pack it in and call it an early day. I didn't feel bad about it, I just knew that my body was busy fighting this cold and that I just didn't have enough extra to use to finish this monster of a race. I came in quiet and I knew that Daron Pratt knew I was feeling bad. He kept trying to help me out, but I just wanted to sit, and quite honestly, take a nap. This is where two things happened that that saved my day. The first was not quitting on a whim in a moment of weakness. I told myself that I had 20 hours to decide to quit, so I might as well just chill for a while and eat, drink, and just hang out. I took some food and cold ginger ale and just sat in a chair in the shade. I kicked my shoes off and just relaxed. The second saving grace was that about 10 minutes later, Daron said to me, "Brother I love you, but you stink, get the f\*ck

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## 2015 FlatRock Triple Crown

The 2015 FlatRock Triple Crown Series was 2/3 of complete and we currently have 18 hard core trail runners still on track to receive the title of: "2015 FlatRock Triple Crown Honoree" They are: Zach Adams, Dave Box, Shay Caffey, Polly Choate, Krystle Dalke, Carson Galloway, Joseph Galloway, Dennis Haig, Matthew Hall, Dave Meeth, Michael Mora, Debra Norman, Candi Paulin, Tom Rogers, Ken Schramm, Ryan Schwatken, Brian Smith, and Henry Yount. Upon completion of the 50K at our SOLD OUT Flagship event - FlatRock in September - each will receive special recognition, an award, and be only the third group honored into the "FlatRock Triple Crown Series"!



# 2015 Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile Race Report

...continued from page 4

Knowing that this would be the hardest thing I had ever attempted, I wanted to make sure I had a crew I could rely on. Breanna, Wesley, and our friend Sean graciously agreed to be on my crew and take care of me during the race. One of the agreements I made with my crew was at what point they could pull me during the race if they thought I was in trouble. We made this decision early on and I think it was really helpful that everyone knew at what point it would stop if things went poorly. The two major occurrences that we agreed I could be pulled for were hallucinating and vomiting before mile 90 (after 90 miles, we figured we could probably get me to the finish without doing too much damage).

As the race got closer, I paid particular attention to a couple of friends who were also attempting their first 100's in the months leading up to my own. I tried to pick their brains to figure out what did/didn't work for them and I also talked to a couple of people I knew that had attempted/completed several 100's. The biggest piece of advice I was given was to eat early and often and try to keep my body supplied with as many calories as possible. We looked up some information on endurance running and got an estimate of how many calories per hour I should consume as well as roughly what percent of my calories should come from protein. Knowing this would be a big deal, we spent a considerable amount of time in the week before the race picking snacks that I thought would work and bagging them into "1 hour snacks." We figured this would be the best way to keep up with how much I was eating and prevent trying to calculate calories as the day (night) got later. My snacks of choice were: Munchies, Cheez-its, Dark Chocolate Peanut M&M's, Beef Jerky (delicious!), peanut butter crackers, applesauce, and pineapple. We also packed a box of salted caramel GU's for when/if I reached the point where I didn't really want to eat solid food. I tried to make sure I left every aid station with a couple of bags of different snacks that I would eat as I made my way to the next station. My only chances to get good were at the manned aid stations where my crew would be able to access me.

The night before the race we attended packet pickup and the prerace dinner. In prior years the prerace briefing was held during the dinner but this year Eric decided to try something new and recorded a video that was posted online for runners to watch on their own. The expo was small but packet pickup was quick. Packets included your bib and a tech shirt with the Prairie Spirit logo on it. I had also preordered one of the Prairie Spirit sweatshirts so I picked that up as well. After the dinner and taking a few pictures, we headed back to the hotel (just 5 minutes away) to finish getting a few things together, go over any last minute details, and try to get to bed early since we knew the next day would be a long one. One of the decisions we made was that I would attempt run 9 minutes and then walk 1 minute to keep from going out too fast and also to make sure I took an opportunity to eat every so often. This would, in theory, allow me to run what felt comfortable but also make sure I kept from burning myself out too early.

The race started at 6:00am with last minute prerace instructions at 5:30. We arrived at the start line at Celebration Hall a few minutes before 5:30. After the briefing, we had about 15 minutes before the race was due to start. We took a few last minute pictures and I sat down for what was almost certainly going to be the last time for many, many hours. At a few minutes to 6, Eric, the RD, led the runners out to the starting line and the race started promptly at 6:00. The race started with a short section to the north before we turned south for the long journey to Iola and the turnaround. Sean and Bre waited for me to reach the turnaround and come back by the start line before they headed out to the first manned aid station. Wesley, being the maniac he is, decided to do a race in Missouri on the way up so he didn't arrive until Saturday afternoon. Luckily for all of us, it decided to start raining almost immediately after the start of the race which was about the last thing I wanted/needed to happen for my first 100-miler. Thankfully it stopped after about 15 minutes and other than one or two other brief showers early that morning, the rain passed us by.

## The All New Epic Ultras Mobile App



Be sure to check out the ALL NEW Epic Ultras mobile app on the iTunes Store and Google Play store! You can easily access race information, Epic Ultras social media sites, as well as special discounts and a TRULY UNIQUE Customer Loyalty Program. For each Epic Ultras event you run, you will get your virtual card "digitally punched" eventually earning yourself a totally FREE entry into ANY Epic Ultras event. Learn more today by downloading the app to your IOS or Android smartphone or tablet!

*When downloading our app PLEASE REMEMBER to ALLOW "push notifications" along with "geo-locating" if you want to receive ALL of our special offers and important messages we send to you. Download our new mobile app now to take full advantage of substantial current and future savings into our events!*

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# 2015 Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile Race Report

*...continued from page 7*

Before I knew it I was at the first manned aid station and being greeted by Bre and Sean. They had every possible food and drink option ready for me and we quickly filled my bottle and pockets and sent me on my way. The first couple of aid stations were pretty much a blur since I felt great and was moving well. It also helped that this was all familiar territory from running the 50-miler the year before. It wasn't until I reached the train station in Garnett that what I was attempting to do really started to sink in. I greeted Bre and Sean at the train station, took some pictures, fueled up and got ready to head back out. The decision to force myself to take walking and food breaks was working really well but I still felt like I was hyped up and moving too fast (I was well ahead of even my "everything is perfect" scenario) so I decided at Garnett to shift to an 8 minute run, 2 minute walk schedule. I held this plan to the turnaround at Lola but even so I hit the 50-mile marker ahead of my 50-mile PR.

Reaching the turnaround at Lola was a fantastic moment. I knew that I was over halfway done and was going to get to pick up some company for the journey back. The stretches between the last couple of aid stations had started getting pretty lonely as the runners got more spread out so I was excited to have someone to talk to. I was ahead of my best hope scenario and the game plan was just to make it back to the start line and successfully record a 100-mile finish.

Before leaving the turnaround I took a few minutes to sit down, switch shoes, get an update on Wesley's progress (he was still an hour or so away), eat a little something, and then load up for the return trip. Sean was the first one up to pace me so once we were ready we started out for the trip home at a nice brisk walk. Knowing I had over 19 hours to get back to the start line, I made the decision not to push it. I was going to walk the first couple of sections back and if I still felt good enough to run when I got back to Garnett, then I could run. I wasn't about to jeopardize my finish to try for a better time – especially not on unknown ground.

By the time Sean and I reached the first manned aid station on the way back, Wesley had finally showed up to join the group. Bre switched places with Sean and back out I went. The sun set not too long after Bre and I set out and it got VERY dark. It was incredibly nice to have someone out there with me. I know some of the runners did the entire race without pacers, and some even without crews, but I can't imagine even attempting to do it on my own. My crew kept me sane!

During the first half of the race I pretty much blew through the aid stations without spending much time. I'd check in, load up with whatever I needed, and get back on the trail. I was pretty much able to do that through the first couple of aid stations on the way back until I got back to the train station in Garnett. It was starting to get cold and the wind picked up after the sun went down. I hadn't really noticed it while I was moving but after spending sometime in the train station and arguing with my crew that I didn't need more clothes, I went outside to promptly turn around, go back in, and ask for more layers. After layering up, Sean and I started the last quarter of the race.

The last quarter of the race was by far the hardest part for me. I was tired, my feet were hurting, and it seemed like the aid stations started moving away from me. At this point it was time to just start counting down miles and aid stations. I knew that I would have each of my crew pace me one more time and then I'd be at the finish line.

While Sean and I were making the journey from Garnett to the next aid station, I realized that one of the hot spots on the bottom of my foot was finally making the transition into a blister. Sean texted ahead and got Wesley and Bre to get out some mole skin so I could apply that before leaving the next aid station. Bre sweetly helped me into the aid station and took care of putting the mole skin on my "nasty ass feet", as Eric would say. After that Wesley got the joy of keeping me company for the next leg while I was contemplating falling asleep while walking. My calorie intake had slipped over the last couple of hours but I was desperate for something to stay awake so I took a couple of caffeine laden GU's and managed to make it to the last manned aid station before the finish.

I picked Bre up at this last aid station and said goodbye to the rest of my crew since I wouldn't see them again until the finish line. By this point I was pretty exhausted but I had plenty of time to make it to the finish line so all I had to do was keep moving. This last section was easily the longest part of the race for me. I kept looking for the overpass that I knew meant I was almost back to Ottawa but even once I could see it, it never seemed to get any closer. Bre kept reminding me that I just had to keep moving and that it would be over soon.

I was never so happy to see a finish line as I was when we got back to Ottawa. But I finished. In 25 hours and 34 minutes. Eric and the rest of the Epic Ultras crew were shouting, blowing air horns, and ringing cow bells like I was the first person to

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## 2015 FlatRock 101K Race Report

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out of my aid station." So I did. I still felt like crap, but my mind was better. I smiled and trudged out of the aid station. I thought about David Horton saying, "It never always gets worse." I am still not sure what the hell that means, but it seems pretty badass. I also thought about Dave Renfro spending 12 hours marching halfway through Prairie Spirit 50 miler while actively on chemotherapy and kicking some cancer's ass. I spit out my foul tasting mouthful of self-pity and started running again. And as usually happens in ultras, I started feeling better. Then I started feeling great. Then I got to Max and Dave's inbound a saw my buds and Micah who would be pacing me to the finish once I got to the start/finish again. I told him he better finish his beer and get there because I would be there soon.

I hauled ass across the last 3 rugged miles and came into the finish of the first 50.5K at 7:00:39. EXACTLY on target. Now it was time to do some work and see what I was really made of! I was hot and I was tired, but not surprised or discouraged by either. A quick change of socks after re-lubing the tootsies and a bit of food and drink, and we took off out of the aid station ready to finish the second half of this daunting race.

The second half was very uneventful. I ran hard as much as I possibly could. I ate and drank. Being one of the best runners in the Midwest, Micah took EXPERT care of me. In addition to pushing the pace, keeping me fed and watered, he also entertained me. Every. Single. Mile. We had a blast singing, talking, telling jokes, swapping stories of our youth and time in the military. It was one of the most fun times I had ever had on that trail and made the miles absolutely fly by! I don't have much to say about the rest of the race. I managed to make it to mile marker #2 before donning my headlamp, and I ran strong to the finish, completing my third attempt at the FlatRock 101k in 14:44 and change, exceeding my goal by over 15 minutes. Completely satisfied with my time, I hung out at the finish and watched several friends also meet and exceed their goals – and as always, it was a magical time on The Rock! Now I am 50K away from my second FlatRock Triple Crown. As always, Epic Ultras did not disappoint, providing excellent aid and energy that contributed greatly to yet another ultrarunning experience of a lifetime! Thanks to Eric and his Epic Brigade for putting on a totally over the top trail running event!

Until next time...Be Epic!

Zach Adams

## 2015 Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile Race Report

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make it back to the start line. Eric greeted me as soon as I crossed the finish line with a giant smile and my belt buckle. I took a few pictures with him and my crew and then we headed inside to wind down for a few minutes before heading back to the hotel. Once back to the hotel, I changed clothes and crashed. I didn't even bother with getting a shower until much later in the day. Other than the drive back to Dallas, the next couple of days were spent limping and resting. Bre did surprise me with a very nice belt to attach my belt buckle to so that I could show it off.

Running a 100 miles is a really stupid thing to do. It's hard, it's uncomfortable, and it hurts but if you ever decide to give it a try the two best things you can do to be successful is 1) find a fantastic crew and 2) a great race organization. Those two things can help you overcome a lot of other obstacles. My crew (Breanna, Sean, and Wesley) made sure that I had everything I needed or might need. I really appreciate everything they did and owe all of them big time. As far as race organizations go, I don't know of a more insane, energetic, and helpful group of people than those at Epic Ultras. Their aid stations are fantastic and the volunteers are amazingly helpful. Each and every one of them is an extension of Eric Steele, the race director and founder of Epic Ultras. They feed off of his energy and his spirit. I'd highly recommend running one of their races.

