

Arizona Women's 100 miler and 6-day Race Report

Douglas, AZ April 11, - April 17, 2010 Race Director – Gary Cross

I found out about this race by accident and after talking to, hmmm, I mean listening to the race director, Gary Cross, I somehow ended up entering the 6-day. The race director has a heart of gold and knows no strangers, and actually, after this race, there were no strangers !!! I knew zip about a 6-day race and since Deborah and Lorrie were entered in the 100 miler, I sort of had to figure this out on my own.

This is a bare bones, basically self-supported run, with water, ice and personal lap counters provided. Showers are provided at the Aquatic Center with sparse opening hours. The loop is 0.75 miles through a city park, on various surfaces, which Gary and many others say changes 10 times, but Jerry Schuster is adamant that it changes 11 times. You have to listen to Jerry or he'll tell you again

– well he'll tell you again anyway. Surface changes from grass to dirt to gravel to road to bumpy grass to sidewalk and back again and not necessarily in that order. Run / walk techniques don't work here Gary told me and unless you can run well on any surface, one is likely to change depending on the surface at



Deborah & Lorrie getting the table ready



the time. There are a few sharp turns also that hinder a good running pace. Just ask Jerry!!! The altitude is just over 4000 ft. according to someone's GPS (oh, and Jerry). Events and temperatures also change in the park from the quiet of the cool night and morning to the start of school and kids crossing the course to get to school and then a bit later to get to gym and then later for lunch and later to go home. The sun is hot and still or sometimes it's hot and very windy in the afternoon. Later in the evening the baseball starts and then there are kids running everywhere, bright lights for nighttime running and super baseball distractions !!! Some of those young girls can pitch and catch !!! The distractions

and changes are actually sometimes good for someone like me, but for serious runners it may be total aggravation. The race started at noon on Sunday, so day one is actually noon on Sunday to noon on Monday, day two, Monday to Tuesday and on and on.

Day One – I got there at about 8 a.m. to put up the tent then went back to the hotel to finish there and check out, to get back at 9:30 to set up our table. Our table looked like an aid station for the entire race. I think we brought too much food !!!

Most of the people who were going to run the race were at the starting line. After we were called by name to get our handmade, hand painted race numbers, we were off. The racers varied from highly experienced and well known John Radich in the 6-day and Kat Metzger in the 100, to a few locals who figured a progression from 5K, their first race,



Lorrie & I in front of our way too many resources

to 6-day sounded good to them! Also, Gary was so laid back that some people came out either before or after work, before or after school, or just during the nighttime, if the heat bothered them. It was

literally for everyone.

I wanted to take it leisurely as I had no clue how I would hold up for 6 days. And it started out bad. I had one cooler with one bag of ice and by the time the race started pretty much all the ice was melted. Lorrie and Deborah had



Women's 100 mile start – missing a few

something like 6 coolers and 9 bags of ice, so I felt like I had about 1/9th of a clue and I wasn't in with the in crowd. I was feeling totally ignorant as I didn't understand the ice situation and convinced myself at 6 miles I was going to take the tent down leave the race and just tour Arizona for a week. And I wasn't going to tell anyone - I was just going to pack up and go. As it was I had no business in this race anyway. The night before when I went for a cooler and a chair amongst other things I was so tired I drove down some pedestrian walkway instead of a road and that totally freaked me out and as one could surmise, I was not totally competent when I was buying the one cooler. It was two hours earlier than Texas time and way, way, way past my bedtime. Well, the mood was very bad for a very long time, but there was ice sometime later, though I feel like a turd right now, about the whole ordeal. After all that, I made it to the end of day one with 54 miles and I was sicker than a dog during the nighttime. So, I had to lie down early that evening to fix my stomach problems. Too much simple sugars probably.

Day Two (Mon. – Tues.)— I sort of rested and got up about 4 a.m. (I think – I can't remember that far back now) to get going again. My stomach was better and I made it to 94 miles, which was pretty much the plan – get 40 miles the 2nd day. I talked to many people but had not met them all yet. I was doing a 3 hr. run and a 15 minute feet up and sometime feet soak in ice water rest pretty much on schedule. The rest included drinking and eating while resting. Aunt Lisa, Gary's relative somewhere down the line and Blaize, his niece fed us well Monday night. Bed about 10, which rarely meant sleep and up in time to be going by 2 or 3 or 4.



Kat and Phil, who ran and crewed Kat

Kat Metzger who was blazing the trail up to 50 milers, finished in a bit over 24 hrs. for the 100 miler win. She's a medical doctor and I think 30 years old, but when I first saw her running I thought she was in her teens!



Gary with finisher Deborah



Lorrie finishing strong !

Deborah finished strong, with her signature cartwheel and Lorrie made it under the 48 hr. wire in spite of all the horrible issues she had (which you can read about in her race report), with a little push from Gary. But, she truly did it on her own ! Pat Young also finished in between Deborah and Lorrie. The rest of the women's 100 milers still had until 3 p.m. on Thursday to run.

Day Three (Tues. – Wed.)–

We picked up a new woman runner, Raquel, I think it was Wednesday afternoon sometime. It was a little sad with Deborah and Lorrie gone, but we had become one big family now, interspersed with Gary's real family: Teresa, his wonderful sister who put in tons of time and ran also, Aunt Lisa and niece Blaise who fed us well and the beautiful twins, with more relatives to come. I would miss his older brother Vernon, when I would be at the motel on Wednesday. The night still brought baseball and more kids and they sure liked grazing at my table. I guess the saying 'Mi casa es su casa' was really true here ! I don't think there was an official dinner Wednesday night, but now my memory is failing, because at some time the locals just kept bring more food. We never knew when to expect it, or not expect it.

I think it was day three that I had the incredible pleasure of meeting and talking to Mike Allen, a 74 yr. old who had plans on 100 miles total. He is an Olympic cyclist but his first true love is running. He had such wonderful stories to tell about his past and experiences, this time was the first of three times that I would stay with him to hear about his many adventures. Time would fly and I would learn much about a wonderful hero and compassionate man. He was one of many that were at this race. John Radich is also a patient, kind, wonderful man, who is so calm and polite, while running us all into the ground. I finished day 3 with 136 miles.

Day Four (Wed. – Thurs.)- This was my 'off' day. I had school assignments due and I knew ahead of time that I would have to take a break, go back to the hotel, and get the work done. But, also, a shower waited, a soak with muscle relaxing salts in the tub, and a super good rest in a real bed. So, at noon I started packing stuff that I needed to go to the hotel. It wasn't as exciting as I had hoped. I couldn't focus and wanted to be back on the course. I missed all the people and camaraderie out there. Boy was I glad I hadn't packed it in at 6 miles ! I thought maybe I would rest and read and so I lie down in bed to read, turned the wrong way and kinked my back !! I sort of rolled out of bed to see how bad it was and it was bad enough that I knew I wouldn't even be able to pick up my luggage to get back in the car to get back to the race. I got a call from Tammy who said to soak in cold water – yuck – but I did it and then put an ice pack on my back. I guess in two hours it was better. How awful would that be to not be able to go back? I can sleep on the ground in a tent, but can't even manage a bed ! But, because it wasn't totally ok and I wasn't sure how it would react so I didn't get up at midnight or 2 a.m., but more like 3:30 a.m. to go back to the course to get a few miles in by noon. Also, when I took my socks off, I had yanked about 15 layers of skin off from a blister I didn't know I had. So I had taping to do also. When I got back Bill Dickey, age 71 I believe, had passed me up never to be caught again! And Rick, the 5K-er to 6 day-er was getting close. I told Gary I may need to borrow some larger shoes sometime soon and he said he would get some of his for me to try.

Late morning Gary's ESL class arrived with a picnic lunch !!! And interviews in English. I had a group of three, and I think they were more nervous than I was. I thought it was fun and started asking them questions. After the loop interview, we had a feast!!! It was a little early for a picnic lunch, but when you are up before 4:00 a.m., lunch can be anytime after 9:00 !!

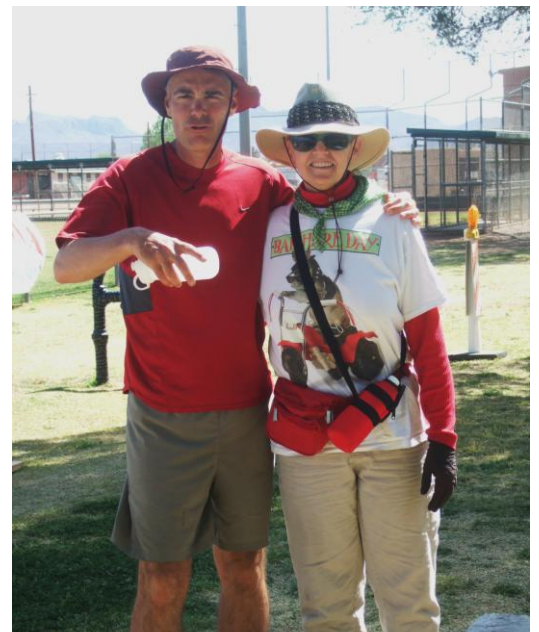
I think it was on this day that a guy from the neighborhood, Rick, who had watched John R. run years before came to say hi to John. He had been in a wheelchair when he first saw the race. He was now walking with a cane and had assisted breathing with supplied oxygen.



Women finishing up – Raquel, Maude and Teresa (Gary's sister)

Day Five (Thurs. – Fri.) – Things are getting a little foggy now. There were less and less of us on the course. Raquel was now gone, with 50.5 miles, but beaten by Maude who also had 50.5 miles, but had started on Sunday, and therefore finished before Raquel's required finish time of 3 p.m. Thursday. Maude and Rick were the 5k-ers to 6-dayers. Rick was slowly catching up to me. He is such a trooper and would go out of his way, even if it meant putting in more steps, just to help someone out. Rick and Maude were a blast to be around, always joking.

Sometime during the day, the local, Rick, came out and ran a couple laps with John Radich, John McGuire and myself. A few days ago he was walking with a cane and today he was running. Rick has many health problems and was never supposed to be able



John McGuire and Deb Zapata

to walk again. His story is that John Radich inspired him years ago and now he is an inspiration to others.

I knew it was going to be harder and harder to leave. I also picked up a partner, John McGuire who paced me for hours and hours, fed me good healthy food and taught me many nutritional facts along the way. It was like I was getting to know these people better than my friends back in Texas ! I ended the day with 178.5 miles.

Day 6 (Fri – Sat.)– Going into the 6th day I felt ok. We had pizza from Mexico Friday night. I won't try to spell her name, but Gary's friend went to Mexico to get the pizza and it was fabulous ! And I got to meet another of Gary's relatives, Doug, an older brother, and they were just like brothers! Something about paper towels and eye witnesses. And they were actually the paper towels I put on the 'group' table.

Instead of quitting at my desired quit time Friday night, I walked with Deb Zapata a bit at night as she was one of the few people I hadn't talked to and she only came out at night. I was calling her the Night Stalker, but don't know if that sounded good, so I quit doing that. She has a consistent fast walking pace and I had to slow jog to keep up with her. It helped me to get a few more laps .

Woke up a bit late – the legs just ache and ache when I lie down and I can't sleep! ! But it's weird that they don't hurt when I'm up. My legs had been literally intensely aching at night. Not when I was running/walking, just when I lie down. It was so intense I got very little sleep each night, but instead of getting back out and moving, I felt the ache was telling me that they seriously needed the rest. I'm now wearing Gary's size 11.5 shoes. Not for feet swelling, but for all the tape on my feet. Actually it's not that much. Two toe blisters on my left foot and two toe and one heel blister on my right. For all this time on my feet, I don't think it's actually that big of a deal. I know I can make it to 225, so that's my goal for the day. I still need coffee in the a.m., but food is another story. John McGuire says eat real food. I have fig newtons. My organic pop tarts are gone. Apples in the oatmeal is what I had for breakfast! It was soooo good!

Well, I actually ran some. It was weird, nothing hurt at all. So, to make a very long story short, I ended up with 228 miles! Maude cooked for us afterwards, much needed real food. And almost all of us had a celebratory beer.

6 days on the road . . . er . . . course and I finished it quite alright !

What I learned from this is # 1 –Ultrarunners are the greatest people to be around and that's who I want to be around. #2 – People can do way more than they think, or others think they can – just ask Maude and the Ricks. #3 – You can be competitive or not competitive and still get something out of an experience like this. #4 – I had a blast ! ! ! !



AZ. 6 DAY RACE DAY 6		100 MILE	
12:00 NOON		24-25 24 MIN	
MILES		100.5	
John RADICH	321	Karen METZGER	100.5
Bill Dickey	240.75	Debbie SEXTON	100
Karen Riddle	228	Pat Young	100
John McGUIRE	216	Lorrie Gray	100
Rick SELLARD	185.5	Maude JORDAN	50.5
Debbie ZAPATA	114	Racquel BOSCHENS	50.5
MIKE ALLEN	100.5	Ana MEVERS	9.75
Jerry SCHUSTER	85.5	Rita LONG	27
Phil ROSENSTEIN	62.25	Andrea MORENO	14
Gary CROSS	62.25	Lilia SOLORZANO	4.5
Teresa PALOMBO	60	Blaise CROSS	11.25
David MELENDEZ	30	R. CUEVAS	2.25
Margarita RAMIREZ	12	Maricela FLORES	10.5
Dominick CROSS	2.25	Cynthia FERNANDEZ	7.5
Jeordyn CROSS	2.25	A CROSS	3
Rick VOYTKO	6.2	A CROSS	3

Final Score Board



Gary Cross, race director extraordinaire



John, men's winner, me and Rick, the 5K-er to 6-day-er