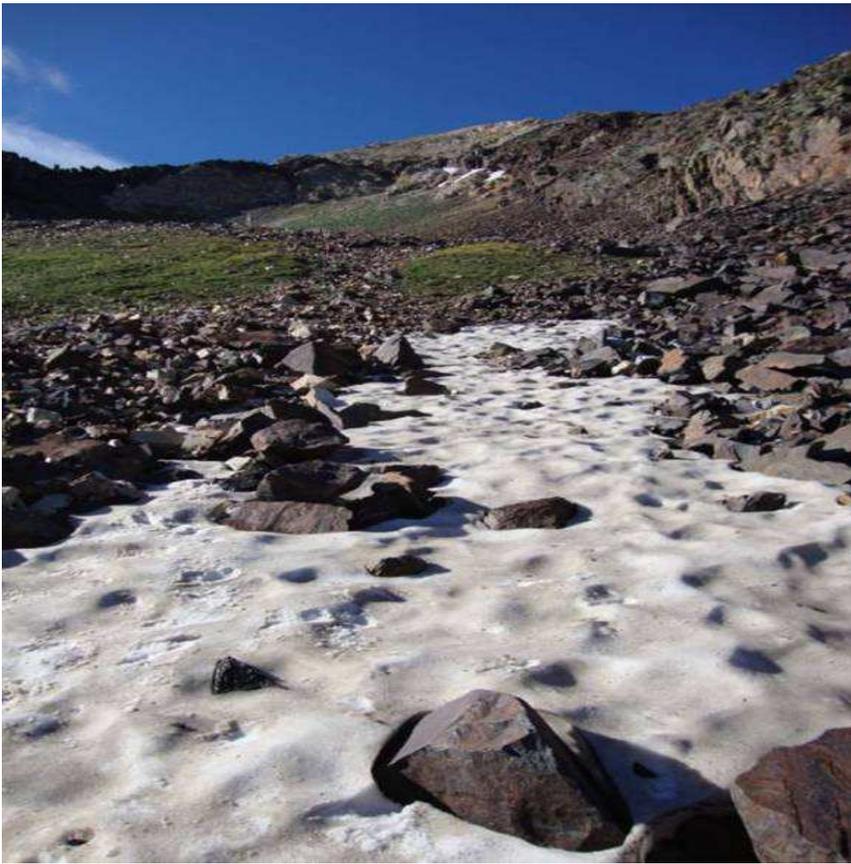


Hi everyone!

I wanted to give you a quick recap of a race that I did this weekend – it might spark an interest for some of you looking for a nice, challenging run or for those of you training for some of the tougher mountain 100's. The race I ran is the Speedgoat 50K – the race director is Karl Meltzer and it's claimed to be one of the toughest 50K's around – and I would have to agree : -) I originally found the Speedgoat because I had planned on visiting my sister and her fam that live in Sandy, UT which is about a 20 minute drive from the start/finish at Snowbird Ski Resort.

The race was limited to 200 runners and was full about a month ago – so there was a fairly sizeable crowd at the Creekside Café at the base of several chair lifts at the ski resort. After a quick race briefing from Karl – which included warning us about an area on the trail where there were quite a few moose – we were off and on our way. The first 8 miles have 3500 – 4000 of elevation gain as you climb from the Creekside Café at just under 8000ft to the top of Hidden Peak at 11,000ft. The majority of this section of the course is on gravel roads – but there are sections of trail further up the mountain that cross some talus slopes – there were still a few patches of snow on the course as well!





Once at the top of Hidden Peak (11,000ft) – the first major aid station and drop bag location (also at mile 26) – the course traverses across to another adjacent peak Mt Baldy and then down the backside of the mountain. The views from the top of Mt Baldy are nothing short of spectacular – and the first part of the descent into the valley below nothing short of intimidating as the trail has about a 30% - 40% grade on loose rock and gravel – so steep that Black Diamond was there with ropes for us to hold onto as we more or less slid down the trail. Although the remaining 6 miles to the turnaround at mile 15 weren't quite as steep – it was still very difficult to run this section as we ran down a ditch filled with rocks. I danced and danced and danced around the rocks – my feet and ankles really took a beating as the footing was sketchy in many places.









After the aid station at 7500 feet – which had great volunteers that placed an ice cold towels on my neck to cool me down and served popsicles and chicken broth – it was time to go back up the mountain. This section was the toughest part of the entire course. Midday at 7500 feet in the canyon it was hot and around 90 degrees – and the sun was out and there was no breeze – and the trail went up – for miles and miles we went up – it was a road to the sky that simply wouldn't end. This section of trail was open to ATV's – so in addition to battling hot temps and the steep climbing – every so often an ATV would fly by and give a mouthful of dust as a present. After 6 – 7 miles of climbing – we were back towards the top of Hidden Peak at a tunnel that connects one side of the mountain to the other during the ski season. The tunnel was paved and flat – and this was just about the only 200 yards of the course that was truly runnable! After the tunnel – the trail heads back down the mountain – connects to a ridge that takes you back to the top of the mountain (1400 ft climb in about 1.25 miles) for the final aid station at mile 26 – before a final 5 mile descent to the finish line.





The Speedgoat was definitely mentally and physically challenging – isn't that what we enjoy about our sport though? Karl Meltzer promises that this won't be your fastest 50K – and my 11 hr 40 min finish was a far cry from my usual 5 hour-ish 50K pace – so maybe it was more of the Slowgoat 50k! This race was a great learning experience for me though as it was only my 2<sup>nd</sup> race at elevation (other than Jemez). Nutrition wise I had zero issues – I alternated AccelGel (16g carb/4 g protein) and Gu (25g carb) every 20 mins and was strong throughout – with the exception of the last climb where my legs simply didn't have a lot of climb left. Recovery wise I'm in better shape than I expected – zero blisters – tired legs but not really sore legs – I've already had a couple of short runs and feel pretty strong. Since I was up in Utah nearly a week before the race – I had some time to acclimatize to the altitude – and I could definitely tell a difference vs. Jemez when I went up to Los Alamos the day before and ran the next morning.

Anyways – I hope this gives you an idea of what the Speedgoat is all about – maybe some of you will have a chance to run it if you're ever in Utah towards the end of July!

Happy Running,  
Brian