



FLUT 100K: Race Report

By Clay Kleppinger

The FLUT 110k race was a big step up in difficulty for me. Up to this point, I had only run a handful of 50k races.

I really started to increase my training in early May, which was enough time for a 16 week schedule, plus another 2 or so for tapering before the race. Most of my training was weekday evening runs of about 5-8 miles, long weekend trail runs, and the occasional GVH Tuesday or Thursday runs. My work offers a 9-80 work schedule, so I was able to take advantage of every other Friday to get long trail runs in and then do another long trail run Saturday or Sunday depending on schedule. It was great participating in some of the FLUT training runs that Christine and Chris helped to organize as well!

My girlfriend, Jenaë' was planning on crewing for me throughout the race, which was also a huge effort for her to take on. The day before the race I started to pull all of the race food, drink mixes, and other gear together and organize them all into bags labeled with the aid station where my girlfriend would meet me. I also made up a rough pace chart and pulled all of the directions needed to get to each of the aid stations. There's quite a bit of logistics involved in these races (for everyone involved)!

On the day of the race, we woke up around 3 AM, quickly got ready, got coffee and made the trip to Beals Point. I met up with my pacer, Justin, shortly after we arrived. He was planning on pacing me from Salmon Falls to the end of the race back at Beals Point. He was also volunteering at the race until about noon (check in, Rattlesnake Bar aid station, and No Hands Bridge aid station). Here's my rough, abridged race report.

Start - No Hands Bridge (0 - 25.7 miles)

The race started right on time at 5 AM. I quickly settled into a nice, easy pace and made an effort to take it pretty easy early in the race. The first chunk of this race out to No Hands Bridge really went by pretty quickly and enjoyably for me. I was definitely looking forwards to meeting up with my girlfriend and some other buddies from work at the No Hands Bridge aid station. Seeing them really gave me a good mental boost and helped me attack the next big climb up to Cool.

No Hands Bridge - Salmon Falls (25.7 - 46.6 miles)

This section contained a big chunk of road miles (mile 33 to mile 43-ish), and these were going to be pretty hilly miles as well. This was definitely on my mind as I was working my way up to the Cool aid station, but, that being said, I felt really good as I came into the Cool aid station. It was also nice seeing a few more familiar faces from GVH. I kept a solid pace as I approached the start of the road section and managed to pass up a few people during this stretch. The road section was a bit of a grind. Overall, I made good progress through this section, only having to hike some of the long climbs up to road and made it into Flagstaff aid station fairly easily. Now, back onto the trail, the next 6 miles to Salmon Falls went really well.

Salmon Falls - Finish (46.6 - 68.5 miles)

I met up with Jenaë' and Justin here at Salmon Falls and I took a bit of extra time to change my socks and drink some extra water. It was getting later into the afternoon and it was getting warmer out. We left



the aid station and headed back the way we came, running past Christina and Mike maybe just a mile or so behind me. We made good progress for the next 4 miles or so, but that's where the wheels started to fall off... Between the heat (which really wasn't too bad), the lightly rolling hills, and all the other previous miles, I really started slowing down. There was a lot more hiking and a lot less running for me from here on out. Albeit slow, we were able to keep moving forwards, and I just focused on getting to the next aid station. About five hours later, we had finally made it to the last mile of the race. All of a sudden, four or five other runners came up behind us. Most of the last 10 miles we had been alone, but now, with the other runners coming up quickly behind us and the finish so close, I started to shuffle a little faster, eventually speeding up to around a 7 min/mile pace that I didn't think would have been possible after 67 miles. Nothing like a little more adrenaline and competitiveness to help get you moving again!

I ended up finishing 13th overall with a time of 14 hours and 42 minutes. This was a great experience and a great first 100(ish)k race to take on. I am so appreciative of all the help that I got from Jenae' and Justin throughout the race, and it was great to share with some other crazy trail runners from GVH!

