

# HURL Elkhorn 50K...a Runner's Perspective

Bob Johnson

RACE DAY. 7:00 am-Saturday, August 2, 2014. Crystal Creek Campground in the Elkhorn Mountains. Beautiful morning and the culmination of many months of training is about to be tested. My #1 goal for today's 50K race to complete and hopefully come in around the 8 hour mark.

The race course is beautiful and this year is a special treat because everything is so green and lush. The meadows are full of blooming mountain wild flowers, Elk grazing intently on green grass, creeks are running clear and cold, sky is clear and not hazy from wildfires. Mother Nature is truly in a good mood this morning. Fellow runners from Idaho, Washington, Canada, Michigan and other locations too numerous to list are also anxious to see if this could be their day for a PR and are just as awestruck with the beauty of the Elkhorn Mountains as I.

Throughout the day, time seems to melt away, not really as important as it was just an hour ago. The body gets into a rhythm and the brain accepts it all for what it is. The stress and worries from wondering if the training was good enough, did I wear the right shoes, am I eating enough, drinking enough, drinking too much, disappears and each obstacle the trail presents (there are many) are welcome challenges. The course is a unforgiving playground of challenges, yet fun at the same time. I feel fortunate to be here, at this moment in time and would not trade it for anything.

As I approach the finish line I see friends, fellow runners, and the race director cheering me in. Words cannot describe the overwhelming feeling of pride and accomplishment. Those endorphins are pretty wild for the emotions. As I recover at the finish line and think back of the days challenges, I realize that what I accomplished today could not have happened without the total support given by the volunteers at the well stocked aid stations and their words of encouragement. The Elkhorn Race is a real jewel for trail running. I didn't make my time goal but no worries, gives me something to shoot for next year.