

OZBALDY 50K 2008 RACE REPORT

By Debbie Kolp

Way back last fall, when we set the date for the 2008 Ozbaldy in late March so as not to conflict with the World Masters in McCall, Race Director Paul Kaald and Race Secretary Joan Nordheim figured there was at least an even chance there wouldn't be enough snow to hold the race. Not this year, though, in the Mother of All Snow Years! Our huge base of snow is still solid, and it even continued to snow in the week before the race. That left a race course that was firm and very fast, but too icy to include Ozbaldy, and gave us record-setting times for both the men and women winners. A total of 45 men and nine women finished the race under bright blue skies and quickly warming sunshine.

Kent Murdoch led the pack from the beginning, but the lead pack diminished with each lap, from eight to four to two, until he finally cruised in to the finish all alone in 2:00:41. Just like last year, his race was masterfully paced, with each lap just a little faster than the previous one. Less than a minute back was Warren "Kenyon is not next to Uganda" McDermott, from New York, and Jon Fewster was third in 2:02:54. On the women's side, Ginny Price, healthy again after the bug that hit her at World Masters, was the decisive winner in 2:25:10, followed by Linnea Rooke, from Waterville, Maine, in 2:28:08 and Leavenworth's Barb Kelly Ringel in 2:30:02.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who make the race happen, from Angie Greig and Keith Ritland and the ever-increasingly-indispensable Caleb Spiegel-Ostrom handling timing duties, to Kare and Aase Gjolmesli and their posse in the kitchen (including Sam Baker, who came all the way from Port Angeles to help out!), to Susie Main, Joan Nordheim, Neil Bransfield, and Jeff and Apollo Hashimoto taking care of registration, to Odd Moen, Gunner Unneland, Vidar Waerness, and Koll Hagen monitoring the course, to Ozzie Nordheim and David Newton setting up the course and finish area, to Val Karas, posting results quickly on the website, to Anne Johansen, Terry Hiatt, and Natalie Afonina manning the feed station, and finally to junior servicemen Evan Turner, Hayden Evans and Magnus Melbourne, keeping their respective dads hydrated and fed on the race course!

A great big thank you goes out to our wonderful and generous sponsors, Marmot Mountain Works, Second Ascent, Pro Bar and Nuun for on-course nutrition and hydration, Essential Baking for post-race-feed bread, Nordic Ultratune, Winthrop Mountain Sports, Suunto, and Bridgedale Socks. Thank you also to the Nordic Ski Patrol, for keeping us safe, and to groomers R&R Lind, for preparing a great course.

And thanks most of all to all the racers who made it up to Cabin Creek this incredible snowy winter! This is the last Kongsberger race of the season, and we appreciate your participation. We'll fire up a new race schedule in December and post it on our website, so check back then. In the meantime, have a great summer of training, stay healthy and injury-free, and we'll see you next year!