



Since 1982

AVOHK Newsletter 03

ATHLETIC VETERANS OF HONG KONG

www.avohk.org
www.facebook.com/avohk

2023

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

AVOHK RACES

RACE NEWS

The **Malcolm Phillips 5k** has been run as a virtual race for the last 2 years and we are excited to announce that it will be back as a physical race on Saturday, 20th May this year, on Bowen Road. It is an age-graded race, which means that runners' actual finish times will be subject to an age-graded factor (see the Age Grade Factor tables on www.world-masters-athletics.com). Age-graded times will then be used in the results and to award prizes. This format means that older runners can be competitive against younger runners and it is a great way too for our members to track and compare their own performance over the 5k distance across the years, or even decades. Entries for the Malcolm Phillips will open in April and all information will be available on our website and emailed to members.

Series of 5s

AVOHK's very popular 5k Series has a new format this year. As in past years, we will kick off with the Bowen Road 5k, which will be held on Saturday, 9th September. This will be followed 2 weeks later by a 5k race on the traditional Tai Tam course on 23rd September. The Black's Link race will be held over a 5-mile course on 14th October, and we will finish the series with a relay race at South Bay on 21st October. Full details of the series will be announced on our website soon.

China Coast Marathon and Half Marathon

We will be applying for permits for the China Coast soon and will announce full details of the race next month.

HKAAA MEMBERSHIP

With HKAAA organizing more track, road and trail races this year, it is a good idea to make sure that you have renewed your HKAAA membership. As an affiliated club, AVOHK gets priority entry into a number of HKAAA races, most notably the Standard Chartered Marathon. We do everything that we can to help secure spots for our members but, every year, we have a number of runners who apply through AVOHK but are ineligible due to their HKAAA membership having expired. Please visit www.hkaaa.com to check your membership status, and renew if necessary.

Elaine Hall

AVOHK Honorary Life Members

David Bedford OBE (former 10,000m world record holder and olympian)

Rod Dixon (1983 winner of the New York Marathon and olympian)

Chair Elaine Hall chair@avohk.org

Vice Chair Colin Whittington vice-chair@avohk.org

Membership Secretary Frank Riehm membership@avohk.org

Newsletter Editor Vicent Ang vicentavohk@gmail.com (deadline 20th of month)

ANNUAL EVENTS China Coast Marathon & Half Marathon, Round-The-Island Time Trial, 5k Series, Reservoir Cup Series, Malcolm Phillips Memorial Run, Teams to WMA International Events

MEMBERSHIP Annual HK\$150, Over 60 years old HK\$75, HK Lifetime HK\$1,000

CONTACT US AVOHK, PO Box 28893, Gloucester Road Post Office, Wanchai

Himalaya Run and Trek 100-Mile – 160-Kilometre Stage Race in NE India

The Most Scenic Race in the World



Kangchenjunga Rex Whittle 2003

“Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go” TS Eliot

The above observation by TS Eliot applies to all aspects of life and especially so for high altitude running.

It’s cold, there is less oxygen in the air to breath, the trails are rough and accidents will happen but, it can be beautiful beyond words, in what the eyes behold and in the emotions generated.

The claim made by the title describing this annual stage race is challenging but, in this part of India bordering Nepal, the landscape absolutely supports the claim.

So what is a stage race?

- Typical distance is an average of 30-50km/day
- Spread over 3-6 stages, or days
- Often features one longer day, of 70-100km
- Runners sleep in tents or other provided accommodation each night
- There are check points roughly every 10km, typically with water
- May be self-supported (runners carry all food and equipment with them), supported (runners only carry a few small pieces of equipment, food is provided) or somewhere in between
- Usually, stage races are held in areas of special interest – exotic countries, challenging environments and remote locales.

Marathon Handbook

The size of the event is very dependent on ease of access and what the venue will support.

The most famous of all, the 250km Marathon de Sables,

has a typical field of over 300 runners but the locale is a huge flat desert (with some sand dunes!).

The HR&T 100-mile stage race has typically 40 to 50 participants ... mostly runners but also some walkers. Bikes also supported.

With the skies open again, after three years of COVID lockdown, it is time to get out again and for the runner and trekker the HR&T 100-mile stage race is a good place to start.

So what is the format of this stage race?

- The locale of this race is West Bengal in North East India
- Race base is in Mirik on the Bagdogra – Panighata – Darjeeling road
- Local access airport for India flights is Bagdogra.
- Closest access airport for Nepal flights is Bhadrapur across the border in Nepal.
- The route is the same each year so the following is also a quick reference as to distances and heights gained and lost.

Day one. Arrival and briefing. Anyone coming in from Nepal can get a taxi from Bhadrapur to Bagdogra and get the HR&T bus waiting there or take a taxi direct to Mirik.

Day Two. Take the bus to Darjeeling. Stop for photos, etc, at the Simana View Point along the way, take a ride on the famous Darjeeling Toy Train followed by a visit to the local zoo and Himalayan Mountaineering Institute Museum. Lunch is fitted in the middle of above.

Final race briefing on return to Mirik.

Day Three or Stage Race Day One. Very, very early rise, breakfast and board the buses for a two-hour drive to the race start point at Mane Banjang. At the start shed unneeded clothes, etc, to go to the finish and set aside warm clothes in a drop bag to be carried by race staff to one of the higher check points.

Start altitude:	6600 ft / 2011 metres
Distance to run:	24 miles / 38.6 kilometres
Place to run to:	Sandakphu
Height at finish:	11815 ft / 3601 metres

Day Four or Stage Race Day Two. Very early rise and breakfast. The start is just outside the Sandakphu lodge. The run is a there and back. Compared to the first day, the course is much flatter.

Start altitude:	11815 ft / 3601 metres
Distance to run:	20 miles / 32 kilometres
Place to run to:	Molley
Height at Molley:	11655 ft / 3552 metres
Then back to:	Sandakphu

Day Five or Stage Race Day Three and Mt Everest Challenge Marathon ... Early rise and breakfast. Bags for Rimbik must be packed and handed in.

Walkers start a bit later and take a short cut down to Rimbik with lunch midway. Runners who dropped out on either of the first two stages and became walkers can still run this race.

Start altitude:	11815 ft / 3601 metres
Distance to run:	26.4 miles / 42.5 kilometres
Place to run to:	Rimbik via Molley – Phalutt – Molley
Height at Molley:	11655 ft / 3552 metres
Height at Phalutt:	11380 ft / 3468 metres
Height at Rimbik:	6350 ft / 1935 metres

Day Six or Stage Race Day Four ... Start time typically 0900. This stage, and subsequent stages, are now on paved road. An initial steep down section is followed by a flat section and then a winding section back up to the stage finish. The start is just outside the lodge in Rimbik.

Start height:	6350 ft / 1935 metres
Distance to run:	13 miles / 21 kilometres
Place to run to:	Palmajua
Height at Pالماجوا:	6560 ft / 2000 metres
Lowest point along:	4975 ft / 1516 metres

Day Seven or Stage Race Day Five ... Again, a very early start. At 0630, board the buses to yesterday's finish point at Pالماجوا. Slow runners can start first with faster runners

having the option to start later at 0800. Walkers have the option to stay on the bus up to Dhotreya, the highest point of this stage.

Height at Pالماجوا:	6560 ft / 2000 metres
Distance to run:	17 miles / 27.3 kilometres
Place to run to:	ManeyBhanJang
Height at finish:	6560 ft / 2000 metres
Highest point:	8555 ft / 2607 metres

Remainder of this day is lunch at the finish and then the return to Mirik, awards ceremonies, dinner, packing, etc.

Day Eight ... Buses will provide transport to Bagdogra Airport. Anyone returning to Nepal can get a taxi from Mirik or take the bus to Bagdogra and get a taxi from there to Bhadrapur. Note the bridge next to the border crossing is extremely busy so the earliest start the better.

More details can be found from HR&T's website ... link below.

So why do I keep returning to this stage race?

My first time to participate in this event was October 1999 ... I had already spent several years visiting the Everest region of Nepal, so the altitude thing was not an issue.

What the initial attraction was was the idea of actually running at around the four thousand-metre mark ... my home at the time was just 150 metres above sea level and the highest point on local trail is only about 900 metres.

Having entered the race, got my visa to India sorted and found my way to the Indian border from Nepal and then on to Mirik, I found myself thoroughly enjoying the effort.

Meeting CS Pandey the first time cemented the enjoyment.

The team that CS has around him are just as capable as the operators you find in The Marathon des Sables ... The English language gets mangled a little but who cares? They get the job done with enthusiasm. My own language skills are nothing to boast about.

Day two and I see the trip to Dajeeling serving a number of purposes ... getting acquainted with each other, staff and participants, getting a little acclimatising in and of course indulging in everybody's wish to ride on a steam train ...

Day three you really realise it's not going to be just a walk in the park. The road is motorable, so the grades are manageable. The problem is the slower you get, the longer it takes and the colder it gets. But you get there. If you really have a problem, there is a Land Rover not far away and often with hot tea / coffee!!!

And it is worth it ... Next morning when you see the sun on Kangchenjunga in front of you and on Everest, Lhotse and

Makalu at the far left, it is worth it.

When you are running on a sandy trail through high altitude pasture with these views of almost all Himalaya it is worth it.

Over the first part of the 100 miles of the race route, the terrain varies widely from forest to pasture with occasional settlements, much of which are along a cobble road built by the Aga Khan in 1948. It then transitions to a steep downward section from Molle to Rimbik through hillside forest and farm settlements to where the road is paved. From Rimbik the rest of the road is good clean paving, the elevation varying widely and running through more settlements and forest.

Altogether I have participated nine times. The first five, I think, I was able to finish and without being last. The next event I was trotting along about 5km from the end of the race and I fell asleep, tripped in a hole and dislocated my shoulder ... end of race. The good Doctor, who was never far away, was able to put my arm back where it belonged when I was able to warm up in the sun and relax ... Accidents do happen.

I keep returning because I like the people, riding on Toy Trains and running along sandy trails at 4000 metres.

It is no longer about racing, against myself or another. It is all about living!

Because I dare, I win. Exactly how some ancient Arab expressed the same philosophy as TS Eliot expressed as shown in the header.

CS Pandey and this year's event schedule ...

31st Himalayan 100 Mile Stage Race 2023 (Oct. 26 to Nov. 03, 2023)

We are pioneers in Asia to introduce the concept of the high-altitude multi-day stage race. The race is known to be one of the world's most challenging and toughest endurance events with AAA rating – it is also the world's most eco-friendly marathon event.

Many world-famous runners and journalists have participated and has been covered by many renowned sports magazines, e.g. Runner's World, Trail Running, Athletic Weekly, Outdoor, Running Times, Washington Post, Ultra running and many more. 70% of the Himalaya reside in India and on our race trail you can witness four out of the five highest and legendary peaks in the world, Mt Everest, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse and Makalu. In this marathon, there are the categories "runner" and "walker," that is, people of all ages and any sporting level can participate since there are no cut-off times in any of the five daily stages.

This event provides the perfect introduction to India for the first-time visitor, with everything laid on, including a day's

excursion to the historic hill station of Darjeeling. This is one of the most unique and oldest multi-day stage race in the world. This race spread the message of global peace and brotherhood as participants from around the world run, walk and stay together like a family during the trip. Our organization has successfully completed thirty-two years of the Himalayan 100-Mile Stage Race and been serving inbound tourists and clients since 1991. One of the central ambitions to organize this event is to preserve the environment and local heritage of the Indian Himalayas for future generation.

HR&T takes care of transfers, accommodations and meals during the race. You have to fund your pocket for beer, wine, soda, etc., or other items you wish to purchase. Credit cards are accepted all over in India, but it will be good to have rupees on hand.

For more details: <https://himalayan.com/>

Athletics Weekly 2009

The Most Scenic Race in the World

Jason Henderson

Athletics Weekly, UK, Issue Nov. 2009

A tattooed quote on the right calf of Danish runner Jacob Hastrup neatly sums up the essence of the Himalayan 100-mile stage race. It reads: "Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go."

Written by the poet T S Eliot, the phrase has been etched into Hastrup's lower limb for eternity. They are not simply words, though. For Hastrup practices what he preaches and last month was one of 39 hardy souls who completed one of the toughest and most scenic footraces on the planet.

The Himalayan 100-mile stage race sees athletes cover a cool century of miles in five days at lung-bursting altitudes of 6,000 ft to 12,000 ft. Daily distances range from 13 miles through to the grueling Mount Everest Challenge Marathon on the third day.

What's more, it is played out in the shadow of not only Everest but other giant mountains such as Kanchenjunga, Lhotse and Makalu. Indeed, the only mountain in the list of the world's top five peaks that is not visible during the race is K2.

"This event," says director Chander Shekhar Pandey, "is for a special breed of athlete." Gasping for breath and bursting with pride, it is a comment none of the finishers disagree with.

India has always been famous for extreme acts of endurance. The country has held world records for

balancing on one foot (34 hours), non-stop chanting (11,000 days and counting), standing still (17 years) and crawling (1400 km). Then, in recent years, there has been the amazing story of Budhia Singh, a three-year-old marathon-running child who became a national icon after covering distances of upto 30 miles a day. So, given all this, it is no surprise to see the country host one of the most rugged events on the running calendar.

The Himalayan 100 takes place in the Darjeeling area of north-east India, close to the Nepal border. Several towns are used en route, such as Mirik and Rimbik, but the epicenter of the race is arguably Sandakphu – a small Sherpa settlement that sits above the clouds at 11,800 ft.

Such is the altitude in Sandakphu, the air is both thin and chilly, ensuring that the views of the mountains are breathtaking in more ways than one. So much so that in 1948 the Aga Khan ordered a road to be built from Darjeeling to Sandakphu simply to savour the sights himself.

Ironically, the Aga Khan never made the trip, as one of his advisors warned him the road would be too dangerous. More than half a century later, though, the trail is put to good use every year by runners in the Himalayan 100.

The race takes place for the 20th time in 2010 and has grown from strength to strength for many reasons. For one, it is a challenge that ranks alongside other ultra-running tests such as the Marathon des Sables in Morocco, Saprtathlon in Greece and Comrades Marathon in South Africa. With the mighty Everest as a backdrop, the scenery is also impossible to beat. "I love the Scottish Highlands," laughs Pandey. "but your mountains in the UK are teeny! Mere potatoes compared to the Himalaya!"

Yet the event ticks many other boxes, too. Cultural and environmental issues are also at the heart of the race. As the race unfolds, runners pass through dozens of small villages where a mix of Indian, Nepali, Tibetan and Bhutanese people cheer the runners. And the race hopes to promote-in its own modest way-this local heritage.

Similarly, the Himalayan 100 carries a strong eco-friendly ethos. Unlike major events elsewhere in the world, runners do not leave a trail of plastic bottles behind them. Instead, the race has been responsible for encouraging small waste bins to be placed in villages along the route – for locals to use during the 51 weeks of the year when the race is not on.

This green message is one that is promoted with increased urgency, too. Why? Because Pandey believes the spectacular Himalayan landscape is literally vanishing before his eyes. Due to global warming, the traditional big snowfalls during November to January are not taking place, with devastating consequences for the surrounding forest and lowlands.

So with an intoxicating mix of thin air, spectacular mountains, cultural and environmental issues, plus the

daunting prospect of covering 100 miles on foot, the runners started their journey from the village of Maneybhanjang at 6,600 ft on Monday October 26.

Day one: 24 miles

DUE to the time difference, most of Britain slept as the runners gathered at dawn for stage one of the Himalayan 100. Local musicians and young dancers created a carnival atmosphere as the athletes limbered up, while Pandey issued his final piece of advice: "This is not a race, but something to be enjoyed!"

We soon realized what he meant when, almost immediately after the start, we began to climb ... and climb ... and climb. Most entrants, including myself, were reduced to brisk, lung-bursting match within minutes.

"The hills on the first stage are brutal," said Rex Whittle, a 69-year-old Englishman who lives in Hong Kong. He should know, as this was his fifth Himalayan 100 race.

Apart from the occasional brief respite of flat or downhill running, the first stage climbs relentlessly for most of its 24 miles until you reach the finish at 11,800 ft in Sandakphu. In April 2008 and 2009 I had completed the London Marathon in just outside three hours, but the 24 miles here took me more than eight hours.

Struggling in the thin air, the final few miles were hellish, as I had to regularly stop to catch my breath. Would I last the week? At this stage I had big doubts.

Others did not struggle as much, though. Gabriel Santamaria Manso, for example, put down a firm marker as favourite for the overall victory by taking the first stage in 4hr 7min.

The 40-year-old from Burgos in northern Spain is a decent all-round runner with personal bests ranging from 3:52 for 1500m to 2:32 for the marathon, but nowadays he runs for fun in events such as this (when he is not running a socks business back home, that is).

The first woman, meanwhile was Charlotte Penfold, who completed the distance in five hours to not only head the female category but also edge ahead of her husband, Tom. Like Santamaria Manso, Penfold also has a track pedigree, although a far more spectacular one.

In 2002, running under her maiden name of Moore, she was one of the biggest stories of the Commonwealth Games in Manchester when, aged 17, she clocked 1:59.75 to finish sixth in the 800m final. Now aged 24, she works as a primary school teacher and runs mainly for fun and fitness.

Day two: 20 miles

THE highlight of the day took place at dawn when everybody rose in the hope the sky would be clear enough to see

Everest and Kanchenjunga. It was – and Sandakphu was abuzz with the clicking of cameras.

The spectacular views aside, Sandakphu is a Spartan place – the kind of setting that Rocky Balboa would choose to train for a fight – with only basic amenities and a constant chill in the air due to the altitude.

I certainly had problems during the first stage as I rose slowly to Sandakphu. But overnight I felt better and started the second stage feeling. But overnight I felt better and started the second stage feeling refreshed and, like many, more focused on taking some snapshots than running.

For this I have to thank the main (and pretty much only) medic who helps competitors during the race. Neeraj Jain is known quite simply as “The Doctor” by everyone in the event – a constant source of reassurance for runners who are struck down by everything from blisters to diarrhea.

Dr. Jain did some of his medical training during eight years in Newcastle and South Shields in the Eighties. And it is a testament to the work of himself and Pandey that during almost two decades worth of races they have witnessed “not one unpleasant incident”.

“The people who come here to do this event are sports people who are generally pretty tough,” he adds. “But we are always very careful because it would not be easy to rescue somebody off the mountain trail if they suffered a serious accident.”

Fortunately, though, only minor problems affected runners at the 2009 event. And in recent years most cases of altitude sickness have been avoided by giving runners the option of taking Diomox – a drug that helps alleviate the symptoms of altitude sickness.

I began taking Diomox just before the race started and while my lungs felt like shrunken walnuts during stage one, I felt much better on stage two – an out-and-back course at more or less the same altitude of 11,800 ft.

It helps to have people to chat to, though, and I spent some of the day running with Jeff Horowitz, a fellow journalist from the United States. The 45-year-old has written a book called *My first 100 Marathons*, the title of which speaks for itself and demonstrates that I could hardly have had a more experienced running companion.

Spending all week eating, sleeping and running with a group of like-minded endurance athletes also creates and incredible camaraderie. An example of this is seen when I am about two miles from the finish and bump into Santamaria Manso walking back down to the course.

“Where are you going?” I ask him with my limited Spanish (the race leader does not speak English). He then explains that he is going to meet one of the back markers, Fiona Muntz, to give her some company during her final few miles.

Muntz, incidentally, is typical of the “type A” personalities that enter this event. Aged 29, she lives in Edinburgh, works for a bank during the week, teaches people how to fly at the weekend and in her spare time climbs the biggest mountains on earth (her idea of fun is spending Christmas Day on Mt. Aconcagua).

She also speaks several languages, including Spanish, which is one of the reasons she struck a bond with Santamaria Manso. The Spaniard completed stage two in 2 hr 53 min, while Muntz took 8 hr 10 min, but the race leader was happy to “warm down” by helping his friend during her painful final few kilometers. A true angel Gabriel.

Day three: 26.2 miles

IF THE first two days were tough, they were merely a taster for stage three. After the novelty of the mountain views on day two, the cameras were a little quieter on day three as we set off again from Sandakphu to retrace many of our steps from the previous day.

The sting in the tail arrives after about 18 miles, though, when we begin a steep and seemingly never-ending descent. The course follows a dried-up river bed and our knees and ankles turn into shock absorbers for a couple of hours as we navigate tricky wooden steps and run through military outposts.

Our final destination is the town of Rimbik and this is by far the toughest stage-physically and mentally-because when most people believe they are almost finished, they discover there is another 10km or so run.

My sanity is preserved by spending much of time running with two English ultra-distance fanatics, Johnny Hall and Joe Mountain. The duo are experienced at packing themselves in events such as this, so I settle in their slipstream on the long downhill.

Among other things, they tell me about a website they have set up called therunningbug.co.uk and how they reckon this marathon stage is tougher than the Marathon des Sables.

Eventually, we reach the finish-it takes us a mammoth 8hr 40min and feels like the gates of heaven. We are not the last to finish, either. Robert Williams and his wife, Jo, stagger home in just outside 13 hours, with Robert having suffered badly with sunstroke.

Given the ordeal, everybody relaxes at the finish in the relative warmth and luxury of Rimbik. The food throughout the trip has been superb and a quiet confidence surges through the group due to the knowledge that the hardest stages are over.

There are some small rivalries to settle, however. Least of all between the Penfold duo. Indeed, after the marathon, which Charlotte and Tom finish in 6 hr 10 min, Charlotte says: “Tom never lets me with a sprint, even when we go

for an easy run at home!”

Being a 3:46 1500m man, Tom also usually has the upper hand. Although not on this occasion, as a mixture of mid-race sickness and his wife’s determination is leading him to a narrow defeat at her hands.

Day four: 13 miles

A MERE half-marathon today feels like a sprint compared to the preceding days. The course is also largely on the road, with the first third downhill from Rimbik, the middle section on the flat at 5,000 ft, and the final part uphill to the finish at Palmajua at 6,560 ft.

“It feels great to actually run today!” one competitor jokes with me, as so much of the previous three days seem to have been spent marching up steep, rocky trails and jeep tracks.

Nevertheless, most of us are reduced to a wall again during the final climb. I match strides with Kris Duffy, a banker and snowboarding enthusiast from London, and Nahila Hernandez, a Mexican-based endurance athlete who is second in the women’s race behind Penfold.

It is on this stage, though, that Santamaria Manso really stamps his class on the contest. He clocks 88 minutes, with Penfold running 1:43 and me happy to trudge home in 2:08 - around 40 minutes slower than I would run on a fatter course at sea level.

“I have run many races around the world,” smiles the effortless Santamaria Manso, “but this is the most beautiful.”

Santamaria Manso has not had the week entirely to himself, though. He has been put under pressure from James Lowe, an Englishman who works as a teacher in Holland. Lowe, a keen endurance athlete who competes for the Dutch “ultimate Frisbee” team, was only 15 minutes behind on the first stage, but is now almost two hours adrift, partly because of a twisted ankle injury.

The locals have a unique way of saying hello - “Namaste!” - which broadly translates as “the divinity within me greets the divinity within you”. It is a world we hear many times during the week, but nowhere more than at the finish of this stage, where some of the race’s estimated 300 workers mingle with competitors.

Day five: 17 miles

THE finish is in sight and it is interesting how 17 miles on a largely firm road seems “easy” compared to the much hillier, rougher and longer stages we encountered during the first three days.

I have shared a room all week with Jochen Tensch, a travel writer from Germany who writes for Runner’s World, and

we have gently ribbed each other with England versus Germany football-related jokes all week. “I hope it doesn’t come down to penalties”-and stuff like that.

Unfortunately, for England, there was no chance of it being decided in such a sudden death fashion, because Tensch roundly thrashed me during the first three stages. On day four, I scored a “consolation goal” in the half-marathon, bringing the score to 3-1. So in the final stage I was keen to narrow the gap further.

Unfortunately, the opening stages do not play to my strengths, with a relentless 10km uphill section that reduces everyone to a walk. At one stage Tensch is surrounded by three Englishmen, something I am keen to point out to him, but he responds with a terse. “You will not break me.” And he’s right, as he gradually draws away.

Later, as we pass through aid stations, collecting the by-now-usual supplies of bananas and boiled potatoes. I notice he is 10 minutes ahead of me. I’ll see you at the finish,” I mutter to myself, resigned to a 4-1 defeat.

Soon the road flattens and starts a very long and gradual descent to the finish at Maneybhanjang. I am joined by Duffy and Hastrup, the latter, you will remember, being the Dane with the tattooed calf. By now his other, left calf is bandaged up to protect an injury that he describes as “a lump the size of a golf ball”. Limping heavily and audibly wincing every time he has to run over boulders or bumps in the road, he sets a fierce pace and I make a mental note that these legs in front of me are surely two of the toughest in the world.

Then, for the first time all week, I begin to feel good and enjoy stretching my legs on the downhill road, I can smell the finish and then, miraculously, spot my friend Tensch in the near distance. I draw alongside him and, with neither of us exactly relishing a sprint at the end of the 100th mile, we run through the finish together-the stage completed in 3 hr 20 min.

Moments later Hastrup charges through the line, his battered legs almost collapsing beneath him. Duffy, 32, has also suffered during the final miles and unashamedly breaks down in tears, overwhelmed at the emotion of finishing.

The Aftermath

WHEN the Himalayan 100 was in its infancy, Runner’s World declared it was “the most beautiful race in the world” – and Athletics Weekly can endorse that view. Not only is it an amazing athletic achievement, but it takes place in one of the most scenic and culturally intriguing parts of the world.

The winners, Santamaria Manso and Penfold, were hugely impressive. But Pandey was right, this race is far more about “the enjoying than the racing” and any ultra-runner worth their salt should stick it on their “to do” list.

<https://himalayan.com/athletics-weekly-2009.html>