



Hardrock Hundred Mile Endurance Run

July 11-13, 1997

Hardrock Report - by [Matt Mahoney](#)

Contrary to popular belief, I did train for this. I arrived from Florida 11 days before Hardrock and spent 3 days marking the course, hiking 8-10 hours per day at 9000-13,000 feet. After I ran the Silverton 10K in 59 minutes (top 25%) I decided I needed altitude training more than distance, so I blew off the Leadville training weekend and climbed Mt. Elbert (14,433 ft) on Saturday, then spent Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday rock climbing and running hill repeats on Mt. Evans (14,264 ft). Each day at altitude seemed easier.

On race day I got lost coming down Virginius Pass in the dark. The trail through the tundra and snow simply disappeared and there were no markers. I hooked up with four other runners, equally lost, and we climbed down horrendously steep canyons, tundra, talus, scree, and snow slopes at night to the Governor Basin aid station, arriving in good shape but 30 minutes too late. They did let us continue 7 miles to Ouray, so we got in 42 miles in a little over 19 hours.

The next afternoon I paced Mark "Barkley 100" Williams the last 9 miles to a 39:30 finish. The steep climb (10,000 to 13,000 in 2 miles) out of Cunningham Gulch that had so debilitated me a week ago in training now seemed remarkably easy, just a 90 minute climb, almost twice as fast and not even breathing hard. What a difference a little acclimation makes!

It has long been debated whether Hardrock or Barkley is tougher. Of the 3 (of about 30) Barkley 60 mile finishers this year, Mike Dobies, Craig Wilson, and Blake Wood, all were at Hardrock and all finished with fast times. In contrast, the two previous Hardrock winners, Rick Trujillo and Scott Hurst, both dropped with injuries. So when Mark crossed the finish line, I asked him which was harder. Both race directors, John Cappis and Gary Cantrell, were present. He answered, "The Barkley, of course. It was 20 hours longer".

-- Matt Mahoney, matmahoney@aol.com, www.he.net/~mmahoney/ub/

P.S. One week later I ran the Mosquito Marathon (the lowest point is the start/finish in Leadville at 10,000 ft) in 7:27, middle of the pack. The course included a glissade over a snow cornice with a rope at 13,500 ft. in a thunderstorm. I was 10 minutes behind Don Winkley (5'th at Trans Am) who swore he would never run Hardrock after he hiked up Grant-Swamp pass.

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