

Radioactive C2M Isotits

By Lazedown the Lawlor

Note: skip to the 2nd last page if you want to only hear about how I almost died –literally. Or read the entire thing if you want to know about the fun events that lead up to my near death at one of the best organized Ultra events in the country.

Well Mom was sure to point on the phone during the 10-hour drive home to Salt Lake that the radiation fallout from the Japanese reactor had been raining over Southern California during our little jaunt in the rollers above Ojia. Always the optimist, she pointed out that a little rain and snow during our jaunt was a blessing, being that it would scrub that darn radiation from that already dreadful California air. Well MooMan, Mindalicious, Patoplasm, and I were feeling a bit used up and put away wet on the leg cramping, back aching, dreadfully rank mildew stench ridden music-less drive home (my van still stinks!), and news of the possible radiation had the same effect as drinking Utah strength beer after a large meal.

This episode (“one-of-four” –will explain later) starts rather innocently in the Ventura Bowling Alley with a rather exquisite costume party; copious amounts of beer and laughter, and some really fun bowling to boot. The Utah contingent didn’t fare as well as General Icky Ocky had hoped (he and others had even trained for this event!). Had I know, I would have done my part and picked up a bowling ball more than once in the last 30-years! Without question Patoplasm gets the costume award for the night. We had originally planned to walk from our hotel to the bowling alley, but when Paddy-O came out of the bathroom in this costume, we decided that it might actually be safer to drive! Icky Ocky and Catherine were by far the sexiest couple at the lanes. By standers would agree that it was hard to compete with MooMan and Mindalicious when it came to cuteness. Cheryl was by far the hottest number on our team, but her partner looked a bit shaggy and downright lubricated –an embarrassment to any wife –but the way he could handle those balls was tight. The evening was a success, and although a few of us failed our brave leader w/ gutters, side throws, low scores, and overall drunken disorderly behavior, we ended up second overall for the night – and very likely with the highest bar tab too!



Patoplasm.

See more photos here:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/jared.e.campbell/C2M2011#>

Well with a blister on my left foot from the rented bowling shoes, a lingering planters wart on my right foot, and a tad bit of a lingering hangover –words to a \$100 bar bill at the Ventura Lanes, I was off and jaunting at 6:00pm the next evening. I started w/ this group based on my previous 100 mile Hx (or lack of Hx!). Let's see: a DNF at HURT in /06, a DNF at Wasatch in /06, a 41 hr finish at UTMB in /07, a DNF at Wasatch in /07, a 33 hour finish at Bighorn in /08 (3rd last), a DNF at UTMB in /08, and finally a DNF at HURT in /10 and /11! So clearly I had earned the name assigned to me by Buffoon (our fearless RD) of "Lazedown". There was no indication before this event that I had any jaunting potential whatsoever! So who knew I'd actually turn up a changed man today? I couldn't find any coffee at the start, so I went w/ a pack of jitter beans from the goodie bag, a five-hour energy drink, some sort of 7-11 energy drink, and a few Advil for the hangover.

The first climb was fun. Ten of us or so nattered the entire way. At the top, we banged a right and headed down toward the Sisar Canyon AS. After a few minutes I realized I was alone, and was concerned I'd made a wrong turn. I looked for lights behind for a minute or so, and felt encouraged when I saw one gaining on me. I passed dozens of ground owls along the way, each time they'd look up at me terrified –eyes aglow in my light and then launch themselves into the 2000' dark void to my right. One of them even decided to entertain me with a strafing routine. I reached Sisar AS after a few more minutes of downhill, grabbed my two rocks to carry to the summit of Topa, got asked by a wolf to kiss her, and was off into the night back in the direction I had just come. After a few minutes I passed some of my group coming down the hill. Everyone was in great spirits and eggsited in anticipation of the long journey ahead.

The second climb was long, but went by quickly. It started to rain lightly, and I thought that perhaps it was time to take off my cotton tie-dye T-shirt (a gift from Patoplasm at the start). I reconsidered and decided to leave it on as long as possible. Near the base of Topa was AS2. These guys are awesome! With lots of good love and cheer, I was off to deposit my rocks on the summit. The snow began to fall. I covered my t-shirt w/ my gortex jacket, put on some tights, hat, and gloves. The summit was a complete white-out complete with 50mph gusts. I was wishing I had taken the time to change shirts... There was a glowing orb on the summit with a skull (I think) inside. I paid my respects to the memorial, respectfully placed my rocks in the pile, grabbed a card from the scattered deck, and turned to head back down to the same AS. But which way? It was an absolute whiteout and I had completely lost all my sense of direction. I looked for my footsteps, and found none! I wondered around a few minutes until I found a sign which said 'Trail', I followed the not so evident path behind the sign for 8 minutes or so as it went down steeply. Unexpectedly I hit snowpack, not the fresh snow w/ no snowpack I had come up, but instead fresh snow on top of snowpack. I turned around immediately recognizing my error and began the steep climb back up to the summit for my second time. Upon arrival, another runner had just reached the summit and I realized I had missed my trail by just a few feet. Relieved I ran back to the Topa AS and enjoyed an amazing run down to Rose valley (mile 25 or so). I tied but couldn't put out of my head, that if the weather didn't improve, this was going to be a really long day (or two).

After changing into a warmer shirt, and grabbing some warmer socks and dry shoes, I took off back up the downhill I had just come down. I was feeling great! After about 10 minutes I began seeing some of my group coming down the hill. Everyone was still cheery, and with some I exchanged stories about our epic summit experiences. One thing I learned quickly at C2M is that even though I was basically alone (in fact I ran alone for 80 miles of the day), it is actually a very social event with multiple out-and-backs as the course traverses an amazingly photogenic ridge. The ridge being the highpoint and backbone of the course, while the repeated out-and-back sections off the ridge to the valley floor via different canyons, become painful –yet fun social affairs. After topping out at the Topa AS again, I proceeded downhill for 20 minutes or so until meeting up w the base of the Ridge Road. At the road I saw Patoplasm barreling downhill. He had started w/ the 3:00 am group (nine hours after me). I was roughly 37-miles ahead. He was in great spirits, and it really made me happy to see him. I figured I'd see him again when he passed me in the last 10 miles. I began my long power-hike up the road w/ intermittent jaunting. An amazing moon came out between the remnants of the storm hanging on the

mountainsides. I kept turning to look back towards a mesmerizing Topa Peak behind me aglow in the moonlight and completely plastered with fresh snow. It was a site I'd expect to see in the Alps, and jostled me when I remembered I was actually in So.Cal. The lights of the city below also began to peak out through the mist. The atmosphere was eerily still after such a turbulent night. The sun would be up soon, and I remembered that my sunglasses were still on the dashboard of the van. I hoped the backside of this weather front would hold off until after the race, but I knew that the forecast was grotesque, so I tried to stay in the moment and enjoy this gift of a motionless sky. As I arrived at the Ridge Junction AS, volunteers had just begun the arduous task of setting up for the long day(s) ahead of them. I grabbed some water and Pringles, and I was on my way. Little did I know that on my second visit to the AS at mile 95.5, these same individuals would be the single reason that I am still on this planet today to share this story with you.

From Ridge Junction until I got back to Rose Valley was my lowest point in the jaunt. I tried to keep my attitude positive and go easy on myself for not jaunting. Just keep go-ing, just keep go-ing, just keep go-ing... I repeated to myself – like Dora – the Blue Tang in Finding Nemo ... over and over and over and over. I was really looking forward to my reward - music from my MP3 player at Rose Valley - and clearly I needed it as the jingle was beginning to make me insane yet I couldn't get it out of my freakin' head.

On the decent into Rose Valley, Ewe from Germany caught up with me. We talked about races in Europe, and about his travels to the US and the time flew by. My new friend helped me out of the slump I had been having since the Ridge Junction. At Rose Valley, I changed into shorts and a T, fixed my problematic feet while being interviewed by a nice local reporter. I located some good tunes on my mp3, and I was off like a prom dress. The climb back to the ridge went great. I finally had my soul back words to some good old fashion Led Zeppelin, BTO, and some intermittent Franti. The descent into Howard Creek made me feel like I was in Lord of the Rings. Green moss and tall wet green grass choked this amazing single track on its gentle downhill spiral across the steep mountainside and into Howard Creek. The sun glistened against the hillside to my right, and I stopped to grab and bag a small specimen of moss for my blonde Norwegian gardener at home in our bed. On the climb back up I managed to run 90% of it and even felt hot from the sun blasting on my left side.

Arriving at Griddley top for the first time (about 60 miles), Escobar was there to greet me w/ a big happy helpful smile and a bottle of Jack Daniels. I did a shot to celebrate that I was on a 30 hour pace and to help earn some bonus minutes. Yes this was the jaunt of my life! Problem was that the format of the jaunt was that anyone finishing before 6am would get major sandbagger boner minutes for not starting with a later group. You could work these off and get bonus minutes by doing special things like –well for example - shots of liquor along the way. Escobar's' bar looked well stocked and my choice was the good old fashioned stand-by JD. Was I to slow down and not get the 12 hours of boner minutes I'd get for finishing before 6am, or do I see how fast this motor can really go. What's it like to go so hard you puke I asked myself? ... Not sure, let's see buddy... I blasted down to Lazy Dell, and had a funfest downhill! This part is by far one of the greatest downhill I have ever done. A quick refill, and a hula hoop in front of the cute ladies (just because –not for minutes this time), an awesome burrito, and I

was off back up the 4700 ft. hill. Again, this climb flew by and I ran much of it. I was feeling hotter than Ichy Ocky looked at the bowling alley! I was on fire. I don't even think I have run up a hill like that during training before. Dang I was having fun!

At Griddley Top I bumped into Mindaliscious. She was a bit tipsy from doing her shots of Yager (see photos on link provided). I filled up, and was chastised by the Buffon for being a sandbagger. But you don't understand I'd try to explain, I'm possessed, and someone has taken over my body... I did 3 more shots of Jack to try and help alleviate the boner minutes that were coming my way. But not even a smile from Buffon. Nothing. Nada. All he said was, "You're falling behind, you've only done four shots!"

On the way down to Griddley Bottom I have to admit, I was feeling slightly tipsy and had to slow down. This section turned out to be the only rocky section on the course. It was a bit slower, and quite a bit longer than I had planned. Then I noticed that I had misread my topo, it was 2700 ft of descent, not 1700'. I arrived at the AS during daylight, and the wolf was there to greet me again (said something about behaving myself this time and just kiss the wolf). They stuffed me full of these amazing battered, double fried potato logs, skittles, and a turkey sandwich. I pulled out my headlamp and started the climb back up to Griddley Top. Only now I began to waver a bit. Stomach acid churned in my gut, and I knew the deep fried diner on top of the JD shots probably wasn't the best choice! I slowed considerably on the climb, and began to realize that my hopes of a 30 hr finish was quickly diminishing into a 31 hour goal. But it was hard for me to get even slightly bummed out, as it would still be my best 100 ever, and 10 hours faster than what I planned, so who was I to complain!

The rain first began as a nice pleasant cooling drizzle. Kinda like a Sierra Mist on a hot Nevada day. It was taking the edge off an otherwise warm climb. I had had troubles w/ my contact lenses, and ganked them out at Griddley Bottom to trade for my eyeglasses. Probably not the best choice given the torrent to come in my not so distant future. The rain quickly stopped falling and instead started pelting, first from above, then from the right, then from the left, then from every freakin' direction at once. After another 500 ft or so it turned white –surprise surprise! By the time I got back to Griddley Top for my third time it was a near whiteout. Wind was whipping, and there appeared to be a lot of unprepared jaunters caught off guard (drop bags are at the bottom not the top). Luckily as part of my training for Australia (episode "Two-of-four"), UTMB (episode "Three-of-four"), and la Diagonale des Fous (episode "Four-of-four"), my camel bak was stuffed full of everything I needed for the entire race. I put on my tights, fleece top, gortex jacket, balaclava, fleece hat over that, and a hefty bag cut into a vest over the entire outfit. I was prepared. Boy did I feel sorry for the others!

The lead 100K runner had just pulled into Griddley Top as I was leaving. It was so bad, that Buffon asked if the two of us could stay together the entire way back to Ridge Junction. He was in shorts. We had 7.2 miles and 1600 feet to climb on the traverse in this blizzard. I figured there was no way I could go his speed, so he would have to slow down to my bumbling speed. The climb was cold and we jaunted and hiked intermittently –mainly hiking when I could no longer jaunt. He was a real gentleman and stayed with me.

At the Rose Valley junction on the ridge (mile 92), we could make out fresh tracks heading downwards toward the Rose Valley AS and coming from the Ridge Junction AS direction. At this point I could see that my partner (Chris I think –sorry Brah!) was really cold. It was blowing even harder, and the snow was quickly getting deeper. I told him that there were no more junctions, to stay on the ridge, and to run, and run freakin' hard to the AS or he would die. It was only 3.5 miles, but conditions were significantly bad and getting worse. I recognized that the way he was dressed, there was no way he could generate enough body heat to live if he continued on at my speed. The 'snow' was more like supercooled water. It was white and certainly accumulating, but had a humidity level of 100% or more and it was freezing all of my pitot tubes quickly, and I was losing all sense even quicker! Within five minutes I could no longer make out his footprints. The whiteout from the 80mph gusts on the ridge created serious episodes of sensory deprivation. I pondered that the pain from the ice pelting my body must be reminiscent of the experience of being waterboarded by Cheney. It was difficult to breathe. If I didn't keep my balaclava over my face I froze, but if I pulled it over my face my lungs quickly filled with water. Needless to say my glasses were doing no good, so I stuffed them in my pocket and stumbled on. I had to keep my headlamp in my frozen hoof of a hand, so I could make out any slight geographic indication that I was in fact still on the road. Many times for long stretches I had no idea. Small landslides made the road even more difficult to make out (and as I learned later –impassable by 4x4's). This terrified me. When I was pretty sure I was on the road I ran harder and harder and harder out of fear, and a simple need to control my spasmodic shivering episodes. But when I wasn't sure I was on the road my pace slowed dangerously. I was thinking to myself, here I am, better equipped in the clothing department than many other runners I saw, but hanging on to a desperate thread for survival. How on earth are the others behind me fairing I asked. This is crazy I thought. I constantly looked for any indication of a footprint to show me that my partner had headed the same way. Indeed in three or four wind protected segments I saw faint footprints indicating proof of life and direction. But these gifts were view and far between. I was terrified that I had made a terribly poor judgment call by telling him to go ahead. If either of us made a wrong turn, a desperate situation would have truly become an epic situation. The window to recover from any small error was miniscule and closing fast. Being in shorts, my partner was never granted such a window for error, and this truth was ringing home hard. I was feeling very concerned for him.

And then I dropped my headlamp...

I fell to my knees and luckily located it in the depths of a frozen slush puddle, but I could see no light emitting from it! Crap. OK keep it together, you have an extra light in your camel bak. But, how to open the zipper? Every task seemed larger than life. My hands were frozen from the puddle and I realized I was kneeling in it too –but it was warmer than the air. I fumbled in the dark for the zipper on my camel back, opened it with my teeth, and identified the extra light immediately, since luckily there was nothing else in that pocket but extra batteries. I switched it on with my tongue and mouth as my hands were useless, and was back in business. Whew! Within 10 minutes I saw light, the major light of relief! Turns out it was a truck coming from the AS. They rolled down their window and I shouted, "You guys better call this thing or someone is gonna die!" Turns out it had been called 10 minutes after we left Griddley Top. A great decision

which I agree with 100%! They asked if anyone was behind me, took my number, and kept on driving. I asked if my partner had made it, and they said he had arrived 10 minutes earlier. I was elated!

A few minutes later I arrived at the Ridge junction AS. I was met by an army of men and women who proceeded to strip me down, redress me in dry clothes, wrap me in a sleeping bag, and deliver hot coco to my bedside. I could see my partner being attended to in the other cot, still shivering. My first gulp of hot chocolate felt like a nuclear reaction in my stomach. The warmth slid through every vein to the outer extremities of my torso. My body completely relaxed and immediately stopped the spasmodic shivering. Then 10 seconds later it started again. We repeated the process over and over. Then they brought us each warm water bottles to place on our bodies. I began to make up female names for each of them as I moved them around inside my sleeping bag. Wow what an amazing feeling literally coming back from a deep cold near death. And the general opinion at the AS was that I wasn't as bad off upon arrival as my partner! Good job Brah!

After a few hours, they informed us that we would stay all night and try the road in the morning. Turns out that we were the only two runners that left Griddley Top. We jovially suggested that we put on our wet clothes and run the 4.5 mile downhill home. But this suggestion was met with dissatisfaction, so we left that alone and dozed back off to sleep. The steel-framed tent was constantly being bombarded by a torrent of rain, snow, ice, and extremely strong gusts (later learned that they maxed out at 80mph). At about 4am I awoke to a large loud bang, and noticed that I was completely soaked. We whistled for help, but nobody heard. Turns out they were all in the trucks with the heater on, and couldn't see or hear anything. So we ran in our bare feet to the nearest rig and climbed in. We spent the rest of the night crunched in the back of a bronco drinking beer and listening to oldies (Ok I had half a beer my partner had 12, words to being a wine maker he said!). The heat in the Bronco was really nice and it seemed 100 miles away from the moderate hypothermia I was experiencing just a few hours ago.

At about 7am the radio operator for the AS, Brett, showed us a radar picture of the storm, which indicated that it was about to get worse. Worse? How is that even possible? They quickly broke down the AS throwing all the wet crap that hadn't blown away into the back of the vehicles. I was nervous about a steep mountain drive in this weather, but was relieved when I got shotgun position in Bret's amazing jeep. Equipped with roll bars, air breaks and differential, and every other tricky gadget a 4x4 mechanic from Ventura could want! The trip down was slow, words to mudslides and rock falls, but we made it down the 10 miles of mountain roads safely thanks to the amazing effort from these amazing volunteers. All of the volunteers and race organizers at C2M are amazing! Thanks, from the bottom of my heart you guys!

Cheers!

Lazedown

See a better story here, with lots of photos to boot (names changed to protect the innocent):
<http://www.vcstar.com/news/2011/mar/26/runners-push-bodies-and-minds-to-run-100-miles/>