

Hassan “Sammi” Lotfi-Pour Wins Fat Dog 100 Inaugural Race

At 4 am on July 24th, 2010, Hassan began a race that he claimed was the hardest thing he has ever done in his life! The Fat Dog 100 lived up to its name and has proven to be one of the most scenic and epic races of the year.



Pictured here: Hassan (Sammi) Lotfi-Pour, Suzanne Johnson, and Julie Flynn.

Sammi's finish time: 27:59:42.

Here are excerpts from Sammi's interview with Laura Jones of North Shore Athletics.

Why did you decide to run 100 miles?

After running a few 50 milers and 100 km races, I wanted to test a longer distance to find out how far my body could go. Last year after finishing Stormy 50 miler, I decided to do 100 miles in 2010.

Why did you pick the Fat Dog 100?

When I heard about the Fat Dog that will be in Manning Park and that Heather Macdonald was the director I decided to go ahead and make Fat Dog my first 100 mile race. Heather Macdonald is the best race director and her volunteers are second to none. I am very thankful for their generosity and their patience.

What were you most nervous about going into the race?

Lack of long runs, my longest run from Jan 1 to the race day was 4 hr and 20 min with the exception of Elk Lake race in May.

What did your training consist of?

I am a true sports junkie, anything, anywhere, any time.

As much as I love to just run, sometimes my busy life schedule doesn't permit it. I pick the bits and pieces of any time available to do all kind of sports, swim (goofing around the pool) with my daughter, tennis, core workout alone or with my friends at the gym, etc.

After Elk Lake race, my longest week was 85 miles; the rest were mostly 50 miles and less. To run a good 100 mile race, these distances are very low.

What was your nutrition plan and how did it change during the race?

I usually have a hard time eating anything solid during my races so I stick to fluid mostly.

I stuck with Carbo-Pro mixed with water, coke, water, Gatorade and gels. At the stations I tried pretzels, chips and at some I took watermelon and chicken soup.

Surprisingly at the last major aid station I had a slice of pizza courtesy of Gary Robbins which was a great help to satisfy my hunger.

Can you briefly describe your experience: exciting and memorable moments, challenges, highs and lows, wildlife encounters

By far, Fat Dog 100 is the hardest thing I have done in my life.

Climbs were nasty and fun, downhill were great and some parts scary. I love Fat Dog!!!!

I was very excited to be entering the race and extremely excited to be finishing the race. Most memorable moment was when I saw my family at the Bonnevier aid station after 8 hr and 30 min. This was the first race my family was there with me to crew me during the course. The look on their smiley faces and their excitement seeing me even after being late, made my day.

Challenges: I had two moments that I wanted to drop; one was about 40 min into the race. I had a huge pain in my lower back and spine that I usually get it when I do the Grouse Grind. Second moment was about 30 min before the 2nd aid station; I tripped over a taller tree root while trying to balance myself I pulled the hamstring. That was quite painful.

After that I knew nothing was going to stop me including the bears. ☺

I was out of water for 1 hr and 20 min before the Calcite aid station; this was tough in the exposed area with scorching heat.

I was running too fast for a 100 mile race in desperation for water which I paid the price for the rest of the way running with a painful shin.

My lows were definitely the moments I was cursing the distance and elevation. My highs were when I conquered the climbs and that race strategy was working regardless of its difficulty. I had a few encounters with deers and elks, birds, gophers. About 3 miles to the finish I ran into a deer from a blind spot 2 yards apart, we both stared at each other, deer was nice to give me the way, I suppose she realized I was too tired and wasn't going to budge, she decided to climb up.

What was it like running through the night?

Start of the race reminded me of the Haney2Harrison, which also starts at 4:00 am and I knew within an hour the headlamp was unnecessary. I didn't have any night training for Fat Dog since I had estimated to be done the race

before dark. But I ran 9 hrs in the dark. You may call it scary, creepy and lonely.

Birds flying over my headlamp, thanks to the Saucony cap which protected my eyes and head, bugs doing their criss-cross dancing excited to see the light at night.

I wasn't able to run. Every time I tried, I tripped over roots or rocks. Once I banged my knee on a rock and it started bleeding. I fell face down but I managed to save my face from falling on the sharp rock. After that moment my focus was to survive and to get out of the jungle as quickly as possible.

What did it feel like to finish 100 miles?

Speechless, words can't describe it, you just got to feel it.

My sweetest finish by far especially running the last few yards with my daughter, niece and wife at the finish line.

Will you be doing another 100 miler?

Most definitely, I am coming back to Fat Dog next year to do the same course under 24 hours; it is very difficult but I'd love to give it another shot. These are the moments we live for!

I like to thank my sponsor Saucony for their wonderful clothing and foot gear. ProGrid Xodus, good gripping, tough and very flexible shoe for trail running, they saved my feet 3 times in the race. Thank you to NorthShore Athletics for their continued support. Thank you to Peter Watson and Nicola Gildersleeve for their generosity sharing their wealth of knowledge and experience from WS100 with me. I kept rewinding the tape in my head which saved me from going off the course. Thank you to all the volunteers for your tremendous and hearty support. Thank you to Heather Macdonald our course director. Thank you to all my running buddies specially our Tuesday advance group at NorthShore Athletics for their encouragement and support. Most importantly thanks to my Family for allowing me to do what I love, for their love and support and crewing me at this race. A month before the race I was a fat dog, the day before the race I was a dead dog, after finishing the race I am a super dog!

Note: Sammi holds the course record for the 120 mile distance: 27:59:42.