

SUPERIOR TRAIL

A SUPERIOR TRAIL RACE

by John Storkamp, RD

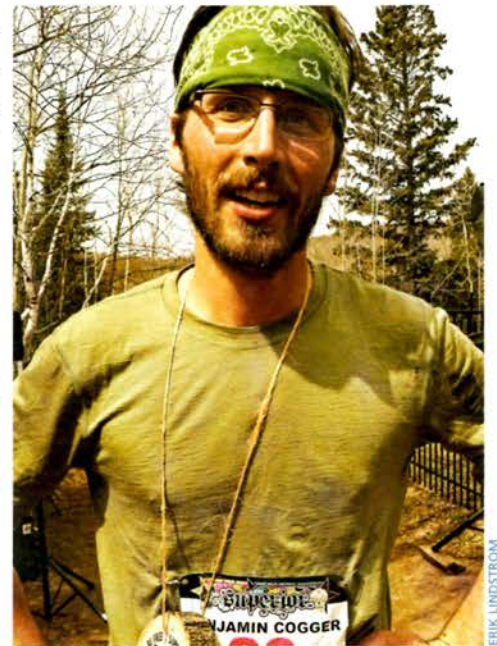
Exactly two weeks prior to race day for the Superior 50K I parked at the Oberg Mountain trailhead, which was 65 degrees, sun-drenched and washed with a warm breeze. The trip up the winding gravel road even left a coating of dust on my truck. Was spring finally here? Reality trumped optimism as I started up the trailhead, my feet crunching over a gnarly crust of snow that had been baking in the midday sun, my head brushing low pine bows above. "That's weird as I'm only five-foot-ei..." then swoosh, I broke through the thigh-deep icy snow. My eyes scanned the trail ahead and then my watch for a quick check of the date. It did in fact say May 3rd and I realized that, once again, Minnesota winter was not going down without a fight. Winter's grip held fast, deep in the Northern Boreal.

One week out, I headed up that gravel road again, parked the truck and found that the snow was still there, but reduced, with some clear patches up now dotting the landscape. Lugging a chainsaw up and over the infamous Moose and Mystery Mountains, we cleared the trail carnage created by downed trees and heavy snow-laden bows, broken and twisted, now obscuring the trail. Over the buzz of my chainsaw, cutting while anchored

knee-deep in snow, feet firmly planted in standing ice-water, I shouted to my fellow "jacks" - "if all goes well, someone could even finish this year!"

After another week of warm weather, trail marking the day before the start, the trails were re-discovered dry with only lingering patches of snow. That is, until you dropped down into the valleys, where all the rushing meltwater was finding its path of least resistance and a viscous slurry of clay mud had coagulated into a shoe-sucking conspiracy.

Breaking four hours in a 50k on trails is tough enough (you could call it the 'A' standard for just about any trail 50k), but on this course that is an even bigger ask, incomprehensible by mortal trail enthusiasts - and with the mud, forget about it. It's hard to say what might have happened on a dry day, but speculation aside, Ben Cogger recorded the day's best time of 3:54, with his nearest competitor exactly 23 minutes behind. Six months of running in knee to hip deep snow in Duluth, MN, obviously paid off in a big way for Ben. On the women's side, Christi Nowak of St. Paul, MN, took command of the women's race early and recorded 5:01 with an even more emphatic margin than in the men's race - 55 minutes ahead of second place.



Ben Cogger runs a sub-four hour race for a dominant win

SUPERIOR TRAIL | LUTSEN, MINNESOTA | MAY 17 | ▲ 3,4

50k | Elevation gain/loss: 4,200 feet/4,200 feet | An out-and-back course on technical trail, which traverses the Sawtooth Mountain Range on the Superior Hiking Trail in northern Minnesota. The course parallels Lake Superior and climbs to near 2,000-foot peaks with breath-taking vistas of the lake and inland forests.

50 KM

1. Benjamin Cogger, 29	3:54:18	45. Shawn Severson, 41	6:00:25	90. Derek Fritze, 33, WI	6:47:09	135. Shawn Cilek, 40	7:38:51
2. Jonas Holmberg, 32, Can	4:17:18	46. Kristin Rognerud, 33	6:01:53	91. Patrick Johnson, 41	6:47:38	136. Dale Kaminski, 44, WI	7:39:09
3. Dimitri Drekonja, 40	4:18:20	47. Dmytro Koshev, 26	6:02:29	92. Faye Lopez, 32	6:49:52	137. Robyn Reed, 39	7:41:15
4. Brett Busacker, 28	4:29:35	48. David Treichel, 42	6:04:34	93. Michael Mackellar, 39, MI	6:49:59	138. Bryan Lacore, 30	7:44:57
5. Adam Hill, 38, can	4:36:18	49. Jonathan Woehl, 28	6:05:30	94. Michael Scandrett, 60	6:52:45	139. Laurie McTaggart, 54, can	7:45:07
6. Ethan Richards, 34	4:48:46	50. Eric Whitbrook, 34	6:08:19	95. Zach Pierce, 40	6:53:06	140. Laurie Smith, 40	7:45:59
7. John Horns, 51	4:54:56	51. Reid Plumbo, 30	6:08:34	96. Megan Schrupp, 29	6:55:01	141. Mike Madden, 58	7:46:00
8. Ryan Wold, 34	4:56:29	52. Ron Borchers, 45, WI	6:08:55	97. Jeff Rock, 42	7:01:09	142. Shelly Thompson, 49	7:46:46
9. William Barthen, 38, WI	5:00:10	53. Andrew Hayes, 39	6:09:27	98. Leia Ritt, 32	7:01:34	143. Jennifer Diep, 22, AK	7:51:50
10. Christina Nowak, 26	5:01:32	54. Troy Feustel, 39	6:11:47	99. Mark McGuire, 31	7:02:55	144. Steve Hagedorn, 55	7:52:04
11. Peter Ford, 34	5:03:10	55. Tom Lickteig, 50	6:12:45	100. Maria Barton, 48	7:05:26	145. Sarah Erickson, 35	7:52:27
12. Christian Brekke, 31	5:04:47	56. James Kyes, 40	6:18:17	101. Nick Rogness, 34	7:07:14	146. Gretchen Karstens, 37	7:52:29
13. Jamie Falk, 31	5:10:41	57. John Schuhmacher, 42, WI	6:19:31	102. Geoff Murphy, 41, can	7:07:45	147. Christopher Hoyer, 33	7:58:12
14. Brian Janaszak, 37	5:11:25	58. Joseph Hill, 45	6:19:59	103. Michael Hlusak, 37	7:09:33	148. Rick Bothwell, 52	7:59:02
15. Cody Backman, 30	5:14:45	59. Jason Tintes, 45	6:22:03	104. Scot Rownd, 44	7:09:35	149. Tyler Sears, 26, IL	7:59:08
16. Andrew Westendorf, 29, IA	5:17:27	60. Darrell Wright, 36, can	6:22:53	105. Renee Larson, 25	7:10:28	150. Carrie Resch, 27, IA	7:59:13
17. Lucas Geadelmann, 30	5:18:37	61. Russell Stebner, 35	6:23:20	106. Aaron Larson, 36	7:10:30	151. Mary Ehlers, 25	8:00:18
18. Charlie Murray, 33	5:23:44	62. David Thompson, 37, can	6:23:31	107. Joel Button, 46	7:10:35	152. Carl Bliss, 38	8:02:00
19. Glen Flanagan, 41	5:24:22	63. Mike McCarl, 46, can	6:23:52	108. Jessica Johnson, 34	7:12:36	153. Josh Kois, 39, WI	8:02:35
20. Paul Gucinski, 33, WI	5:27:08	64. Julio Salazar, 44	6:25:32	109. Colleen Supple, 35	7:12:37	154. Matt Wucherer, 40	8:10:32
21. Robert Henderson, 30	5:27:10	65. Samantha Carlson, 31	6:26:48	110. Peter Lynch, 31	7:12:55	155. Tony Oveson, 67	8:10:48
22. Brent Giebink, 43	5:27:28	66. Stephanie Johnson, 31, MT	6:27:27	111. Peter Maves, 31	7:14:05	156. Sarah Neuville, 40, WI	8:11:03
23. Jeff Paulson, 33, CO	5:30:45	67. Jacob Westendorp, 40	6:28:10	112. Andrew Becker, 44	7:14:09	157. Jamie Kasten, 20, WI	8:11:04
24. Steven Andersson, 38	5:33:17	68. Collin Macheel, 27, AK	6:29:54	113. Brandon Klocke, 28	7:16:10	158. Joseph Wright, 52, WI	8:13:41
25. Timothy Lupfer, 33	5:34:59	69. Deb Normand, 42, can	6:30:02	114. Kerri Persons, 38	7:17:57	159. Colleen Snyder, 52, can	8:14:10
Jared Vanderhook, 30	5:34:59	70. Darrell Landry, 38	6:31:58	115. Ross Jilk, 49, WI	7:18:06	160. Patricia Torchia, 51	8:14:12
Brett Balfie, 36	5:36:39	71. Neil Runions, 32	6:33:26	116. Erin Basavage, 38	7:18:28	161. Amy Clark, 50	8:26:30
Stephen Cameron, 41, can	5:38:30	72. Clinton Dehne, 44, WI	6:35:40	117. Abbey Pierce, 34	7:18:45	162. Todd Rowe, 57	8:26:31
Colin Gardner-Springer, 44	5:38:50	73. Ryan Teegarden, 38	6:36:36	118. Joseph Hiestand, 19	7:19:42	163. Fabio Roza, 49	8:27:11
Joseph Schneiderhan, 48	5:38:56	74. Ron Hendrickson, 47	6:37:49	119. Jason Bociurko, 40, can	7:21:39	164. Ryan Yearley, 36	8:28:41
Jeremy Lindquist, 27	5:42:30	75. Zanne Engelbrecht, 44, CA	6:39:30	120. Andrew Johnson, 53	7:22:05	165. Bonnie Finnerty, 40	8:29:32
Mark Smith, 35	5:45:39	76. Andy Gunsaulus, 39	6:39:32	121. Todd Carter, 40	7:22:43	166. Jeff Kolehmainen, 41	8:32:00
Jim Ramacier, 50	5:48:18	77. Matt Tornow, 43	6:40:00	122. Erin Hammer, 42	7:23:30	167. Sarah Simpson, 25	8:35:47
Ben Jones, 40	5:48:19	78. Patrick Susnik, 49	6:40:18	123. Spenser Halterman, 27	7:24:54	168. Jared Simpson, 26	8:35:50
Kyle Rickert, 32	5:50:34	79. Julie Miller, 44	6:40:21	124. Nicole Fisher, 25	7:24:58	169. Julie Bane, 50, IL	8:42:05
Jon Howard, 34	5:51:31	80. Mark Yungbauer, 46	6:40:35	125. Alex Stephens, 35	7:25:13	170. Daniel Sears, 51, IL	8:46:21
Seth Korhonen, 20, WI	5:53:18	81. Leila McGrath, 56	6:40:52	126. Daryl Saari, 51	7:26:31	171. Benjamin Bestland, 41	9:10:39
Alexander Christenson, 19	5:53:19	82. Michael Korpela, 40, WI	6:40:56	127. Jeff Danovsky, 45	7:28:52	172. Todd Reemtsma, 47	9:15:38
Sebastian Corby, 28	5:53:52	83. Allison Carolan, 30	6:41:11	Ryan Foss, 40	7:28:52	173. John Mordal, 44	9:15:41
Jeff Armoock, 34, MI	5:55:49	84. Scott Propson, 39, IA	6:42:29	129. Jonathan Burbey, 37	7:28:53	174. Daniel Boich, 42	9:15:52
Tiffany Kari, 33	5:55:59	85. Brian Beckman, 26, WI	6:42:51	130. Diamond Jones, 31	7:33:01	175. Patty McLeod, 57, can	9:30:26
Jeremy Peterson, 35	5:57:45	86. Matt Mitchell, 37	6:43:19	131. Rick Stevens, 52	7:34:13	176. Paul Beck, 33	9:35:05
Craig Woodward, 35	5:57:46	87. Adam Endicott, 38	6:43:49	132. Mike Witt, 51, WI	7:34:42	177. Eric Olson, 38, WI	9:35:10
Andy Wolf, 50, WI	5:58:58	88. Brett Schoech, 38	6:44:41	133. John Connelly, 41	7:38:47		
		89. Brad Whitson, 50, can	6:45:00	134. Darren Huebert, 42	7:38:49		



Cruising some switchbacks

AMANDA SUSNIK

As in every ultra, the time keeps ticking after the first runner breaks the tape, but each and every individual performance is no less impressive than the last, the accomplishment in no way diminished. In the absence of an official team division, the women of the local Kwepack (kwe meaning woman in Ojibwe) Indigenous Women's Running Group clearly owned the day and made a huge impression on other racers and spectators alike. Bringing with them several past finishers of our races and many newcomers, these proud, native, mostly local women have banded together to change their health, their lives and the lives of others in their community by sharing the joy of running trails. While many in their ranks ran our (no less impressive) non-ultra offering of 25k, we expect to see several graduate to the 50k next year.

As cries of happiness, celebration and joy were heard throughout the day, each finisher completed their personal journey of the Superior Hiking Trail on the shore of the greatest fresh-water lake in the world. The Great Spirit was proven great, Superior reigned superior and spring had finally sprung. 🏃‍♂️

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