

## AFTON TRAIL 50K

# LUNDSTROM TAKES THE VICTORY

by John Storkamp, RD

As is customary, the 20th annual Afton Trail Run 50K arrived on a wave of Upper Midwest heat and humidity. Another record field set out to tackle the hilly and scenic course and see if they could triumph under the oppressive summer conditions. With the mercury slowly rising all day and eventually topping out at 94 degrees with high humidity, the frontrunners were lucky to beat the nasty stuff, and two men breaking away early both managed to go under the previous course record.

Chris Lundstrom of Minneapolis, breaking his previous course record of 3:48:10, won top honors finishing in 3:40:20, with 21-year-old Michael Borst of Slinger, Wisconsin, trailing by just minutes with a time of 3:42:35.

The women's race was no less interesting and the top two were also separated by about two minutes. Melissa Jansen, a master's runner from St. Cloud, took the lead and the first-place prize with a 4:42:55, while local Afton resident Catherine Cumming came in a solid 4:44:56. Rounding out the top three was Pam Nielsen of Minnetonka – an impressive place given that Pam is likely feeling the effects of her bid to finish all of the Leadville series races this year and become a "Leadman."

Considering the conditions, the race saw very few DNFs, with all runners coming in under the final cutoff and no heat-related medical issues, which is a testament to the strength of the runners participating in this year's race. Once again, this year the field limit was met early and an army of dedicated volunteers made the race the success that it was.

### AN INTERVIEW WITH OVERALL WINNER

#### CHRIS LUNDSTROM

**JOHN** You competed in the Olympic Marathon Time Trails in both 2004 and 2008



Men's champion Chris Lundstrom leading Michael Borst

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and have a 2:17 marathon PR. Where are you with the road marathon these days and what is the draw for you to the ultramarathon?

**CHRIS** You know, I haven't run a marathon since the 2012 Olympic Marathon Trials, and I'm starting to get the itch again, and thinking about running Twin Cities Marathon in the fall. That said, I find myself enjoying the trails more and more these days, and will continue running trails for as long as my body allows.

**JOHN** You were one of the last people to sign up for this year's Afton Trail Run. Were you

on the fence about signing up and running? Was your goal to go after the win, the course record or both?

**CHRIS** I had thought about running either Black Hills 50-mile or Afton 50K as a sort-of goal race for the early summer, but then I thought I was going to be headed out of town with my wife and daughter on vacation for that week. Unfortunately, my grandfather fell into very poor health, so we held off on making any plans, and then he passed away last week, so we ended up just going up north for the funeral and spending a couple days up there. Once I knew I'd be around, I signed up for Afton. So, yeah, although it may seem like I just did the race on a whim, I had in fact been training and preparing pretty well.

**JOHN** It looked like the pace started out "hot" from the beginning. Who was pushing the pace in the early miles? When it finally split up and you and the 20-year-old "wonder kid," Michael Borst, found yourselves clear of the rest of the field, you seemed unwilling to let him go. Did the two of you run stride-for-stride until the very end?

**CHRIS** We were just pretty well-matched I think, so we stuck somewhat close on the first loop. Knowing that we were running fairly fast, I tried not to press the pace, but I did feel really good, so I just stayed right with Michael. I might have been taking the lead more on the flats and downhill, and he was pushing a little more on the uphill. We were talking quite a bit, especially over the second half of the first loop. When you're running a long race, there's a psychological benefit to staying with someone. Plus, he seemed like a really nice guy and it just felt like a nice steady long run for much of that loop.

## AFTON TRAIL 50K | AFTON STATE PARK, MN | JULY 13 | ▲ 4,2

### 50 KM

1. Chris Lundstrom, 37, MN	3:40:20	28. Mark Moline, 38, WI	4:53:49	56. Chrissy Stavig Just, 33, MN	5:43:31	84. Kelly Jaworski, 25, MN	6:07:29
2. Michael Borst, 20, WI	3:42:35	29. Anthony Johannes, 26, MN	4:55:51	57. Shannon Lindgren, 41, MN	5:44:01	85. Christopher Lyon, 31, MN	6:10:32
3. Jim Parejko, 28, MN	4:04:00	30. Steve Bailey, 34, MN	4:57:22	58. Craig Woodward, 34, MN	5:45:20	86. Michael Vavra, 62, WI	6:12:57
4. Jason Tischer, 38, MN	4:09:44	31. Chris Jones, 27, IL	4:58:10	59. Timothy Lupfer, 32, MN	5:46:53	87. Horst Willer, 58, MB	6:13:38
5. Brian Klug, 34, MN	4:22:39	32. Dave Schmitz, 48, WI	4:59:22	60. Amy Carolan, 31, MN	5:47:14	88. David Anthes, 49, ON	6:13:49
6. Craig Cardinal, 30, MN	4:24:03	33. Alan Eastlund, 42, MN	5:07:15	61. Ryan Chukuske, 32, MN	5:47:27	89. Marc Harvieux, 43, MN	6:13:51
7. Matthew Johannsen, 26, MN	4:27:09	34. Pam Nielsen, 36, MN	5:09:45	62. Paul Hanusa, 55, SD	5:48:03	90. Keith Gercius, 41, IL	6:14:03
8. Justin Youngblom, 28, MN	4:28:48	35. Daniel Tian, 32, MN	5:11:00	63. Bob Mckenzie, 41, MN	5:48:28	91. Jeff Allen, 47, MN	6:14:05
9. Riccardo Tortini, 30, MI	4:31:01	36. Joshua Brown, 37, MN	5:14:27	64. Pilar Rial, 51, MN	5:49:45	92. Katie Thompson, 29, MN	6:15:13
10. Evan Roberts, 38, MN	4:32:24	37. Erik Sorensen, 30, MN	5:14:54	65. Steve Burrell, 44, IA	5:50:58	93. Mark Gregware, 33, MN	6:15:36
11. Kyle Gulseth, 32, MN	4:34:23	38. Jayna Tilstra, 24, MN	5:20:39	66. Alex Eichman, 27, WI	5:51:18	94. Justin Holdgrafer, 34, IA	6:15:45
12. Chris Robbins, 28, MN	4:35:31	39. Jacob Pittman, 21, WI	5:22:10	67. Eric Byun, 35, MN	5:52:20	95. Zach Pierce, 40, MN	6:16:59
13. Cole Chlouber, 39, MN	4:35:56	40. Brad Whitson, 49, MB	5:22:37	68. Tracy Wallace, 44, MN	5:53:38	96. Steve Smillie, 39, MN	6:17:43
14. Aaron Ehlers, 25, MN	4:36:55	41. Michael Bunda, 32, MN	5:27:15	69. Kamie Nicholls, 35, MN	5:54:02	97. Chad Burt, 37, WI	6:18:25
15. Travis Mcathie, 32, MN	4:37:31	42. David Hansen, 28, MN	5:27:26	70. Dan Harke, 28, MN	5:54:06	98. Sam Simons, 27, WI	6:19:53
16. Scott Ross, 54, MN	4:38:20	43. Duane Feist, 51, MN	5:28:29	71. Kevin Langton, 43, MN	5:54:29	99. Jake Haugen, 25, MN	6:19:58
17. Nick Eugster, 37, MN	4:40:48	44. Dave Just, 53, MN	5:30:59	72. Karen Schoenrock, 50, WI	5:55:03	100. Eric Ealy, 45, MN	6:22:15
18. Jeffrey Lanners, 29, MN	4:40:54	45. Jake Hunt, 20, MN	5:32:47	73. Jane Lanford, 58, AK	5:56:13	101. Cathlin Chyzy, 42, IN	6:24:31
19. Melissa Jansen, 42, MN	4:42:55	46. Andrew Ashton, 33, MN	5:33:54	74. Nathan Fritsch, 32, MN	5:56:22	102. Ryan O'toole, 23, SD	6:25:05
20. Catherine Cumming, 23, MN	4:44:56	47. Bob Andresen, 39, IA	5:34:11	75. Troy Feustel, 38, MN	5:57:35	103. Esteban Martinez, 34, MN	6:26:01
21. Gerard Mead, 33, MN	4:46:10	48. Kathy Jambor, 47, MN	5:36:25	76. Andy Torzewski, 36, MN	5:58:41	104. Dave Bon, 42, MN	6:26:43
22. John Maas, 52, MN	4:46:47	49. Chris Brown, 49, MN	5:38:21	77. Kate Leis, 36, MN	5:59:29	105. Dave Simmons, 35, ND	6:30:15
23. Stephen Tapajna, 38, MN	4:47:30	50. Jonathan Woehl, 27, MN	5:39:03	78. Stephanie Hoff, 33, WI	5:59:30	106. Pavelette Odenthal, 56, MN	6:32:39
24. Forrest Tracy, 33, MN	4:47:30	51. Stephanie Boss, 39, MN	5:39:19	79. Jeffrey Freidhof, 35, IA	6:00:06	107. Kelly Jensen, 36, MN	6:33:30
25. Josh Moen, 31, MN	4:47:30	52. Don Sullivan, 39, MN	5:39:36	80. Derek Johnson, 41, MN	6:00:29	108. Anthony Schuster, 32, MN	6:33:30
26. Justin Bonnett, 38, MN	4:50:21	53. Buddy Juusola, 37, MN	5:39:51	81. Janine Sieja, 46, MN	6:02:48	109. Lulu Taraggs, 51	6:33:39
27. Justin Zahn, 26, WI	4:51:03	54. Maria Barton, 47, MN	5:42:20	82. Jo-anne Hass, 46, MB	6:03:18	110. Brianna Millett, 31, MN	6:34:18
		55. Rachael Vaubel, 31, MN	5:43:14	83. Miles Burd, 49, MN	6:05:38	111. Jon Biermann, 27, MN	6:34:50



Kamie Sledgers-Nicholls runs 5:54:02 with a smile

I wasn't surprised to run 3:40, given the weather was actually quite a bit better than 2010 when I set the previous record. It was 80 degrees at the start that year. I have always said that the course could be pretty fast if not for the heat and humidity that you usually find in July. It was 70 degrees, I think, at the start and warming up by the time we finished, but there was some cloud cover that really helped keep it a little more reasonable.

**JOHN** Any highs, lows or memorable moments from this year's race?

**CHRIS** The whole thing was a high, for sure. It was just fun to be out there, and to feel good. It was really great to see a lot of friends and to do a long run with all the support of the volunteers.

**JOHN** Will this go down as your favorite Afton memory or is there something else that sticks out?

**CHRIS** I'd say this was my most enjoyable run at Afton, though I had a great time in 2010 running with Patrick Russell and Brian Peterson as well. I didn't face plant or throw up this year, so that's a pretty good day on the trails!



The RD and faithful volunteer Holly Karas enjoying the moment

**JOHN** In the end you finished in 3:40:20 and Michael posted an extremely impressive 3:42:35, also besting your previous course record. At what point did you gap Michael? Were you surprised to run that fast given the fact that the Afton 50K has been around for 20 years and many sub-2:30 guys have run this race?

**CHRIS** Heading into the snowshoe loop toward the end of the first loop, he seemed to slow a little bit, so I got past him and more or less controlled things from then on. He stayed with me into the second loop, but by the time we got through the Back 40 loop, he was out of sight and I never saw him again. So I was actually quite surprised at how close he was to me in the end.

**JOHN** You are the proud father of a beautiful baby girl, Leila, who just recently had her first birthday. How are you (and wife Taj) balancing family life and training these days, along with a busy schedule of coaching both adults and high school runners?

**CHRIS** Well, I think Leila has helped me stay in the moment and enjoy life much more than I used to. I'm acutely aware of the fact that she is changing and growing quickly, and I don't want to miss anything. Taj and I sometimes end up just doing tag team with childcare, but recently we've started to do a better job of taking some time to spend as a family. I'm also working on a Ph.D. in exercise physiology at the U of M, and spring semester was definitely

challenging. I think it has just been a learning process, figuring out that I have to be really flexible. As far as fitting in all of those different things, I just get done what I can, when I can. And I drink a lot of coffee.

**JOHN** Anything on the radar coming up?  
**CHRIS** I took a couple days off and am feeling good. With it being summer, I have a more flexible schedule, so that's part of the motivation for training for the Twin Cities Marathon. After that, I'd like to get back on the trails. Maybe go back to North Face SF 50-mile, or the Bandera 100K. ■

112. Aaron Reeves, 39, MN	6:38:49	141. Mike Prendergast, 29, MN	7:23:50
113. Nolan Barrios, 45, MN	6:39:23	142. Brian Slobodow, 44, NJ	7:25:00
114. Jeff Moeur, 31, IA	6:41:23	143. Katie Haberman, 35, MN	7:27:07
115. Matt Schrader, 36, MN	6:41:39	144. Anna Ziskin, 30, MN	7:27:07
116. Faye Lopez, 31, MN	6:42:25	145. Kate Shaffer, 35, MN	7:27:16
117. Maranda Lorraine, 28, MN	6:43:39	146. Gregory Petitto, 36, MN	7:28:54
118. Allan Duffy, 43, MN	6:46:58	147. Joel Button, 45, MN	7:30:50
119. Joseph Eichorn, 26, LA	6:47:21	148. Megan Skauge, 29, MN	7:36:45
120. Dee Brandes, 37, OH	6:48:39	149. Melissa Swanson, 33, MN	7:36:46
121. Gregory Brandes, 43, OH	6:48:39	150. Jim Brun, 58, MN	7:41:33
122. Jon Powers, 44, MN	6:48:47	151. Gary Gentry, 48, IN	7:44:51
123. Tracy Harrison, 47, MN	6:53:28	152. Deb Robinson, 56, MN	7:47:20
124. Herb Byun, 69, MN	6:56:04	153. Mark Stodghill, 64, MN	7:49:33
125. Bohdan Stepchuk, 43, MN	6:57:30	154. Steve Hagedorn, 54, MN	7:53:52
126. Jerry Heaps, 58	6:58:40	155. David Shannon, 55, MN	8:01:26
127. Johanna Sehloff, 22, MN	6:58:43	156. Robert Victorin-vange, 53, MN	8:01:26
128. Kevin Croninger, 29, WI	6:59:00	157. Zachary Maclean, 27, MN	8:05:09
129. Almir Beganovic, 24, MN	7:00:26	158. Andrew Sandor, 27, MN	8:07:03
130. Stephen Corner, 51, MN	7:02:58	159. Ed Sandor, 60, MN	8:07:03
131. Greg Herrold, 34, IA	7:04:42	160. Randy Limas, 37, MN	8:10:07
132. Nick Graham, 40, MN	7:06:35	161. Wally Goettl, 67, MN	8:20:10
133. Harriet Greenlee-hernd, 42, MN	7:06:45	162. Janette Maas, 54, GA	8:22:03
134. Greg Brandt, 42, MN	7:07:44	163. Tom Osterbuhr, 56, NE	8:29:06
135. Bonnie Busch, 55, IA	7:07:44	164. Carol Allen, 45, MN	8:37:32
136. Jack Ver Steegh, 64, MN	7:07:57	165. Randy Zellmer, 58, MN	8:38:51
137. Norbert Paul, 47, WI	7:10:18	166. Melissa Eibner, 34, MN	8:43:20
138. John Focke, 32, MN	7:14:30	167. Joseph Galloway, 56, IA	8:48:42
139. Jack Prentice, 41, MN	7:17:15	168. Doug Allen, 49, MN	8:50:27
140. Jason Husveth, 41, MN	7:23:28		



Women's Winner Melissa Jansen rushes down the trail