

Strategy to Finish the Leadville Trail 100

Following is an account of how to run a 100 mile race written by IBMer Dana Roueche. I have lifted this account from the Ultra Running Pages and placed it here to give people an idea of what it takes to complete such a big race.

Preface

I have spent some time thinking about the drop out rate at Leadville and decided that maybe I can help increase the finisher percentage. Even if it is only by one person, it will be worth my effort. I have completed Leadville 3 times so far and have run the course an additional 2 times in training. Since it is an out and back, I have seen every inch of the trail 10 times and know the course well.

I sincerely believe the low finisher rate does not need to be as low as it is. There are many reasons that contribute to the low rate but can be grouped into a broader generalization. That is, Leadville offers a tremendous opportunity to make many mistakes in strategy and approach. Because of the altitude and level of course difficulty, it is not very forgiving. It does not take too many misjudgements to put you in a position of not being able to recover in time to be able to complete the course.

I would like to offer a strategy to all of those who are running, or plan to run Leadville in the future for the first time and want to finish. This is also for those who have tried before and failed to finish. Over half the starters have not completed Leadville before, so this applies to a lot of people in general and a lot of people on the lists. Let's see if the members on the lists can have a higher finisher rate than 50%.

I plan on posting this strategy in ten segments over the next several weeks/months. Each segment will be from aid station to aid station. If you miss a segment, I will save these on file and will be happy to e-mail them on request. Steve Siguaw, if you'd like to put these on the Leadville Homepage, feel free to do so.

In theory, if you are a strong enough walker, you can walk the entire course and finish within 30 hrs or an average of 18 minutes/mile. In practice, that would be very difficult to do because you need down time at the aid stations to rest, refuel and change equipment. By running some of the course, you can put time in the bank to spend at aid stations and for some of the slower going on the passes. Based on the layout of the course, a reasonable mix of 40 miles of running and 60 miles of walking will allow you to finish

comfortably and in fine form. A higher proportion of running will simply get you to the finish line faster only if you are capable of handling it. If not, you may risk not finishing. There is plenty of opportunity to decide if you can run more than 40 miles without risking a DNF and I'll tell you where that is in the strategy.

Part 1 - Start to May Queen

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
13.5	13.5	12.5	1.0
3:15:00	3:15:00	2:28:30	2:28:30

Before starting, an undertaking as big as this, it is critical to convince yourself that you can do it. Sure you may have doubts, but in your heart you need to believe you can do it! That one aspect is the biggest factor in making the difference between finishing and not.

There are parts of the course to make time and parts to lay back and go with slow and steady progress. This first section is one of the gentler stretches and offers opportunity to get ahead of the cutoff times. As noted in my preface, the assumption will be 40 miles of running and this already accounts for 12.5 of those 40 miles.

Because of the altitude, and many who are coming from much lower elevations, it is critical to start slow in the first few miles to warm up and become aerobically efficient. Fortunately, the first 5 miles are either gently downhill or flat. Great for a warm-up but easy to make the MISTAKE of starting too fast. There will be a rise in the pavement after the first 1/2 mile for a few hundred yards, this should be walked. To make sure you don't start out too fast, check your watch as soon as you hit the dirt road. This is roughly 1 mile, you should be no faster than 10 minutes at this point, preferably slower. The next 2.5 miles are gradually downhill on a wide dirt road called the Boulevard. When you take a sharp right, look at your watch again, you should be no faster than 35 minutes. You'll then make your way towards Turquoise Lake, when you turn right onto a trail for the first time under powerlines, there will be a very steep hill. Check your watch it should be 55 minutes. The point of the watch checking is to make sure you are not going too fast. This will get you used to running 11 minute pace. Remember the pace and try to keep it until the first aid station. At 11 min pace, you will get there in 2:28:30.

While traveling on the trail around the lake to May Queen, it is a single track trail and difficult to pass people. Don't try to pass on this trail unless you find an easy place to do so. It is a big waste of energy, you have a lot of opportunity to pass later. As you progress, the trail will roll with a series of small hills, don't hesitate to walk on the steeper hills. You should walk about a mile in total of these hills along the way.

When you get to the aid station, check your watch to see if you are around 2 1/2 hrs. That is 45 minutes ahead of the cutoff, you do not want to be any slower than that because there are few finishers able to complete the course in time starting out much slower.

Ideally, you want to be there in 2:28, spend 2 minutes at the aid station and head out at 2:30. There will be aid stations later in the run that you should spend more time at. This isn't one of them. You should fill your bottles, take as much food as you can hold and start walking. You'll be walking after leaving this aid station and have plenty of opportunity to rest and eat while walking. The key is relentless forward motion. It won't be fast but it will be forward.

Hint for enjoyment: Take the time to look out on the lake as you're running around it, it is beautiful at night. You'll see a long string of flashlights around the perimeter from all of the other runners. If the moon is out and it's calm you can see the reflection of Mt Massive in the water.

Next Segment: May Queen to the Fish Hatchery (hopefully next week)

Part 2 - May Queen to the Fish Hatchery

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
23.5	10.0	5.0	5.0
6:00:00	2:45:00	4:43:00	2:13:00

I'd like to take a moment to talk about the weather and various subjects. At the start, you can expect the temperature to be 25 to 40 F. Easy to prepare for. As the day goes on, it can warm up to the 70s even 80, then in an instant, a storm can blow in and drop to freezing. I strongly urge you to carry a goretex jacket the entire way. I tie mine around my waist and forget about it.

Drop bags, I don't use a crew and only use two drop bags. One at the Fish Hatchery and one at Twin Lakes. This allows access every 20 miles. Do not hesitate to have 5, one for each aid station, especially if you don't have a crew. It never hurts to have more than you need.

Calories, let me start by giving some facts. You will burn a good 12,000 calories in order to finish Leadville. Your body can provide around 1,800 from Glycogen and possibly another 2,200 without much trouble from fat. That means you need to consume 8,000 calories from outside. If you don't, the body needs to continue burning fat but you won't feel like moving at a rate that's worth much. In addition, your body will also be using muscle for protein requirements. If you use an energy drink, you can get another 3,000 calories if it isn't overly diluted. The remaining 5,000 calories must come from food. That's 500 calories per aid station. That is a lot, I strongly suggest you have a plan to eat that much.

As you leave May Queen with energy drink in your bottles and food in your hands, you will be walking up a gradual hill on a paved road. No need to run, it is more important to make sure you are eating those 500 calories. In less than 1/2 mile you will turn left and cross the first stream. Usually you can get across without getting your feet wet. I would suggest just wading through but it is very easy to keep your feet dry for the 1st 40 miles on this course. After the stream you will connect with the Colorado trail. The 5 miles leaving May Queen to the top of Sugarloaf pass is a 1,200 foot climb. There will be a few level spots where you can run but for the most part this will be a walk. Be very careful not to go anaerobic as you get higher in altitude.

At this point, after warming up for the first 2 1/2 hrs at 11 minute pace you should feel great. The sun will be rising, you haven't gone out too fast, cleared out the cob webs and are now ready to get to work. After running for most of 2 1/2 hrs, it will feel good to walk. You should walk as briskly as possible climbing the hill. After the Colorado trail, you will turn on Hagerman Pass road. Many people run on this road, there is no need to. If you do, you are burning precious glycogen that can be put to much better use later in the run. A brisk walk at 20 minute pace will do fine. After a mile, you will turn off Hagerman on to a steeper jeep road leading to the top of the pass. You will know you are at the top of the pass when you go under the power lines. From here it is downhill to the next aid station and time to run. The downhill of the pass is very steep at points. I suggest you neither push the pace or hold back. This is a quad trasher so be careful. I am tall and tend to run this section at 7 minute pace or faster, I love the gravity. I suggest trying 9 minute pace if you are concerned about agility and safety.

At the bottom, there will be another stream crossing that usually has a board across it. Soon after, you will hit pavement with lots of people cheering for

you. Walk up a 1/4 mile hill then run downhill for a mile to the Fish Hatchery aid station.

At the aid station, this will be the last quick one, allow 2 minutes to refill your bottles and get another 500 calories of food. You will be leaving the aid station 1:15 ahead of the cutoff.

Hint for enjoyment: This is one of my favorite sections. I have warmed up, fallen into a rhythm and have become aware that I am in the process of undertaking another incredible experience. As you climb Hagerman rd, the view back to the lake is just spectacular. Turquoise lake is nestled in a valley of lush evergreens, at this time of day, the water is dark blues and greens rather than what it's name implies. The sun is rising in a orange, yellow and violet sky. A mist will be evaporating off the lake and trees. To the West, there will be snow capped peaks of white and pink from the sun hitting them with a deep blue sky background. The richness of all the color is just incredible. This will all be happening right at the same time you experience your first big endorphin rush, wow! At that point you should shout out to the world, "I feel great". You'll be at the top of Sugarloaf before you know it.

Next Segment: Fish Hatchery to Halfmoon

Part 3 - Fish Hatchery to Halfmoon

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
30.5	7.0	4.0	3.0
8:00:00	2:00:00	6:19:00	1:38:00

Leaving the Fish Hatchery, you will hopefully be dressed in shorts and t-shirt with plenty of sunscreen. For those unfamiliar with the Colorado high country, there is a lot less atmosphere blocking the sun's rays and you should be careful especially if you have light skin. A hat with a visor also helps keep the sun or rain from your face. Don't forget your jacket tied around your waist. Last year after leaving this aid station, a storm blew in and it rained and sleeted sideways for hours. Don't forget your 500 calories of food to be carried with you as you progress towards the next aid station.

This is a short segment of 7 miles, the first mile is a gradual downhill on pavement. Hopefully you can eat and jog at the same time, if not, walk briskly until you have finished eating. If you were unable to leave the fish hatchery in 4:45, do not PANIC. We are building plenty of buffer, you do

not want to attempt to make it up all at once. There will be plenty of opportunity for that later. For now, simply shuffle along at a comfortable 10 minute pace. Continue at this pace while on Halfmoon road, a wide dirt road leading towards the Mt. Elbert and Mt. Massive trailhead. When the road climbs, simply shift to a walk, then back to a run. I am suggesting a mix of 4 miles of running at 10 minute pace and 3 miles of walking at 18 minute pace. You may not need to do as much walking here. If you are able to run to the tree line, the point where they won't allow cars to go any further, you have run 4.5 miles and can walk the remaining 2.5 miles to the aid station. You are now far enough into the run that if you go a little faster, you probably won't be overextending yourself. There are some decent climbs on this road and I do encourage you to walk them.

When you arrive at Halfmoon, get some fluids and food and SIT DOWN. You have been on your feet for over 6 hrs, it's time to give them a rest. Stay at this aid station for 5 or 6 minutes or until 6:25 has elapsed. Again, carry food out of the aid station, 500 calories. This time you will be back on Halfmoon road, going uphill, walking. You will be leaving this aid station 1:35 ahead of the cutoff.

Hint for enjoyment: This section is made up primarily of a wide dirt road. Lots of room and easy to run in a group. Try to match up with a group and join in on the conversation. This is definitely the best social part of the run. Everyone has settled into the position they'll keep for most of the run and a lot of faces should start becoming familiar. As you make your way into the trees, the atmosphere has a quiet, camping, vacationing feel to it. I find this a very peaceful and relaxing segment.

Next Segment: Halfmoon to Twin Lakes

Part 4 - Halfmoon to Twin Lakes

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
39.5	9.0	5.0	4.0
10:30:00	2:30:00	8:25:00	2:06:00

It helps to break the course into 3 parts. The start to Halfmoon, Halfmoon to Halfmoon and Halfmoon to the finish. We have completed the first part. If you have followed this strategy, you should feel fairly strong at this point. I have purposely tried to hold you back to save yourself for the middle 41 miles. This is where the heart of Leadville is. This is where it is going to

take a strong heart and soul of every runner who finishes Leadville. The final stretch, if you need to, you will be able to walk the entire 29 miles and finish under the cutoffs.

If you are behind the pace I've suggested, it is time to catch up. It can be done on this section fairly easily. If you're comfortable and on pace, I suggest using this section to get ahead a little. After going 30 miles, the risk of going too fast is diminishing quickly, just use your head if you plan on going faster.

It will be approximately 10:30 AM and possibly warming up. If you have been using an energy drink, you should be fine with respect to electrolytes. If not, it is important to consume some Sodium and Potassium. One of the easiest ways to do this is to take some salt for the Sodium. For the Potassium, you can take Morton light salt, which is 50% potassium chloride, or bananas will help provide some potassium. A tell tale sign of being deficient of electrolytes are cramping muscles, particularly the calves.

In Colorado, the climate is very dry, even dryer at altitude. You can lose water at an alarming rate and need to keep taking those fluids. Because of the dryness, you can be sweating and not even know it because it can evaporate before you get wet. Make sure that you are urinating regularly and it is not dark in color. You will be weighed at Twin Lakes, and they will hold you if your body weight is down, so make sure you stay well hydrated.

The section starts with a gradual climb as you continue for another mile on Halfmoon Rd before hitting the trailhead for the Colorado Trail. The mode here should be to run when you can.

When you are back on the trail, there are 3 climbs with the rest downhill. The first is the toughest and will get your attention with about 400 feet of climbing over 3/4 of a mile. At the top, start running and recover while running. Do this for the next two lesser hills. After the 3rd hill, there is a 3.5 mile downhill shot to Twin Lakes. You will lose about 1,200 feet in this section and can really make up some time. Like on Sugarloaf, let gravity do the job. This is much less steep and more runnable. The terrain is a soft mix of sand and pine needles, a trail runners dream. At the end of this section, you should really feel like you've made some progress.

I recommend that you spend 10 minutes at the Twin Lakes aid station. The next section, Hope Pass is the most demanding in the run and it is critical that you take the time to refuel and hydrate. I also strongly urge you NOT to spend more than 10 minutes here. You have covered 39 miles and your legs will stiffen if you rest too long. More people drop out at this aid station than any of the others. I guess 39 miles is enough to let them know what the course is about and now they have Hope Pass staring them in the face. If you

just get up and leave the aid station, you are greatly increasing your odds of finishing. Now is not the time to decide if you've had enough. You should leave the aid station at 8:35, 1:55 ahead of the cutoff.

Hint for enjoyment: Hopefully you have gotten your social needs satisfied on the last section. After sitting back for 30 miles, it is time to move out. Because you are rested and the trail through here is gorgeous, you'll want to have fun simply running. When running downhill, you'll need to focus on the trail rather than conversation. As you approach Twin Lakes, make sure you catch the view of the lakes through the clearings in the trees. It is really impressive. It is also nice to see your destination. Finally, as you break out of the woods before the aid station, there will be a big crowd cheering for you! Enjoy the rush of adrenaline and don't stumble down the hill with everyone watching.

Part 5 - Twin Lakes to Winfield

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
50.0	10.5	4.0	6.5
14:00:00	3:30:00	12:30:00	4:05:00

We are now at the section we've all been waiting for, the signature of Leadville, Hope Pass. So far, you have run a very controlled race and will be able to go over Hope with no trouble at all. Well, maybe just a little struggle. Actually, this section is brutal and should not be taken lightly. You should train specifically for this section with hill work, weights etc. You may not have a problem while actually climbing Hope but it's damage will manifest itself later in the race. No one is spared.

Before I start, if you've ignored my advice about carrying a jacket up until now, that's ok, but now is not the time to risk it. On the warmest day, it is rare that it will hit 60 on the pass. Most likely it will be 50. It could be 30 and snowing with a 50 mph wind. I have seen the weather drop from 60 to 30 in the high mountains in a matter of minutes on many occasions. For your own safety, you should expect bad weather on top of Hope. If it's nice, consider yourself lucky.

When leaving Twin Lakes, the course will be flat for the 1st 1 1/4 miles. If you've been able to keep your feet dry up to this point, great, it's now time to get them wet. There is a main river crossing, Lake Creek, that feeds Twin Lakes. Depending on the runoff from the snow melt, this could be anywhere

from knee to waist deep. Before you get to this crossing, there are many smaller crossings, 4 or 5 that need to be crossed first. Don't waste your time taking off your shoes and socks to cross. It's too far and rocky to walk barefoot between crossings and you'd take forever putting on and taking off your shoes. If it is dry and sunny out, your feet will dry in a mile or two anyway. The water is freezing cold and feels great after running for 40 miles.

After the crossings you should continue running until you hit the trees, at that point, it will be straight up for 3,400 feet. There are many strategies about climbing Hope. The fact is, you need to get on top and it is going to take a lot of energy. My suggestion, which is part of the strategy is to arrive here fresh, then push it hard until you're at the top. Go as fast as you can without going anaerobic. If you have to stop and rest, you've gone anaerobic. Find a pace that you can continue non-stop until you get to the top. Keep pushing the pace but not so that it forces you to stop. There have been many suggestions to synchronize your breathing with your pace. I think it is a good idea, it really helps with your rhythm.

There will be a small aid station, 1/2 mile before the top. If you need to, fill up your bottles and take some soup or something to carry with you. Don't stop and sit down. You've gotten your momentum going and you'll need it for the final push. If you give yourself a chance to stiffen sitting down, it will be tough getting over the top.

Once at the top, smile for the camera, they'll take an awesome picture of you to show your grandchildren. The next 2 1/4 miles are down a 21% grade. The first part is on loose gravel and switch backs, happy sliding. Take short strides until the footing gets better, but don't waste too much time here. In a few miles you'll be walking again. Since this is an out and back, you'll get a chance to see everyone ahead of you climbing back up the pass. Say hi to all your friends.

When you hit the road to Winfield, it is gradually uphill. You can run a few of the flatter sections. Most of it you will need to walk and it makes no sense to try to fight it. I suggest looking at your watch when you get on the road. It will seem like an eternity walking to Winfield, it should take 30 to 40 minutes depending on how brisk you can walk at this point.

Depending on how well you did on the pass, hopefully you will arrive at Winfield 12:30 into the race. You will be weighed again, after that, sit down and refuel for 10 minutes, no longer. You have gone halfway on a very challenging course. You should feel good about that. Don't be alarmed by how achy your muscles feel, it is expected and you will be going slower on the way back. It took you 12:30 to get here, you now have 17:20 to get back. You should leave the aid station at 12:40, 1:20 ahead of the cutoff. I'm not a

big NSAID user but I usually take my 1st of two 200mg tabs at this point. It takes a little of the edge off. Make sure you continue to eat. Even if the altitude has other ideas for your stomach.

Hint for enjoyment: As you are approaching Hope and when on top, look back to the North, you can see everywhere that you've been. Twin Lakes are below, Turquoise lake which seemed so long ago is off in the distance and Leadville itself is to the east of the lake. To the South you can see straight down into Clear Creek canyon where your headed. On the far side of the Canyon are some spectacular 14,000 ft mountains. They are Mt Oxford, Mt Belford, Mt Missouri and Mt Huron.

Next Segment: Winfield to Twin Lakes

Part 6 - Winfield to Twin Lakes

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
60.5	10.5	7.0	3.5
17:45:00	3:45:00	16:40:00	4:10:00

The 2 mile section of road back to the trail is gradually downhill and should be run unless you are still eating when leaving the aid station. When you hit the trail, you will be walking in a few hundred yards. the climb on this side is steeper but shorter. The gain is about 2,400 over about 2 1/4 miles. Again, you should try to hike at a pace where you don't need to stop until you get to the top. Once you are above tree line, this will be very difficult and will probably need to rest regardless of how slow you go. Just keep plugging away and you'll get there. Your heels won't be touching the ground the entire way.

Once over the top, let gravity do it's job. After Hope pass aid station, the descent is more gradual and very runnable. As you lose altitude, you will be able to notice the richer level of oxygen and will feel a lot better. When it levels out at the bottom, try to keep running all the way to the aid station. You will save valuable time by doing so, even if you don't want to. Don't forget you'll be crossing streams and it will feel great.

At the Twin Lakes aid station it is time to prepare for the night ahead. You will need flashlights warmer clothes, possibly a hat and gloves. You should change into dry shoes as well. If you are careful, they will stay dry all the way to the finish. When dressing warm, you won't need to dress too warm

just yet, but as the night wears on, you'll need to add clothes. I have yet to run here when the temp didn't drop below freezing at night. Compounded by being tired and unable to stay warm, you need to really bundle up. More on this later.

You should arrive at Twin Lakes at 16:30, take 10 minutes. This will be the last 10 minute break, the rest will be 5 minutes. You should leave by 16:40 with flashlight in hand and 1:05 ahead of the cutoff.

Hint for Enjoyment: In addition to the spectacular views, when at the Hope pass aid station, check out the llamas they use to pack in the supplies. They are so at home. My first year doing Leadville, I was sitting on a log at the aid station not doing well at all. I remember looking at the llamas contentedly eating grass. They seemed to really give me peace and strength. I soon got up and was able to run my buns off down the mountain. Also look at the flowers and the rushing mountain creeks along the way, they're just great.

Next Segment: Twin Lakes to Halfmoon

Part 7 - Twin Lakes to Halfmoon

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
69.5	9.0	3.0	6.0
20:45:00	3:00:00	19:45:00	3:05:00

If it helps to make promises to God, you will be inclined to do so during this section. Before I get into the details, I want to make you aware of a fact. The fact is that, given you have left the Twin Lakes aid station, there is a very high probability that you will finish this run. Very few drop out after passing through the Twin Lakes aid station. If they do, it is because of a physical injury or they can't make the cutoffs. We are in no trouble with the cutoffs and if we're careful we won't get injured. That reminds me of a point I omitted earlier. It will be dark and you need as much night vision as possible. A way to help with this is to wear sunglasses during the day. The sun can be very bright, especially on Hope and will temporarily burn the retinas of your eyes. You won't notice this during the day but it will impair your night vision when it gets dark. I suggest you wear sunglasses even if it is cloudy for UV protection at altitude.

Back to promises, this section does not get the same attention as Hope or Sugarloaf passes but it is very tough. There are a lot of factors contributing to this. Physically you have traveled over 60 miles, you have just had the crap beaten out of you twice on Hope pass and you have been on your feet for over 16 hrs. If you haven't eaten or had enough to drink, now is where it will take it's toll. Given that, you now have 1,400 feet to climb. Mentally, you are still a long way from the finish, you are annoyed by aches and pains and it is now dark and cold. If I where to recommend the most important section to have a pacer, it would be this one. On the other hand, if I where a pacer, I may want to stay clear, there are some cranky runners out there.

The atmosphere of the race really changes on this section. It becomes very quiet, dark and runners become scarce. At this point, half the starters have dropped out and the remaining half are spread out over 40 miles. The hike and picnic is over, it is now time to get serious and focus on what you are doing.

There are 3 rises that never seem to end. The first is the worst, most of the climbing is on a jeep road. When you hit the trail, it levels and you get a break. There are several smaller rises so if you are not familiar with the course, it's hard to keep track of the big 3. It's not important, just make sure you run when you can. If it helps, look at your watch when you leave Twin Lakes, it'll take 2:55 to get to Halfmoon. You'll know when you're on the last rise because the trail turns left at a rock pile and quickly heads downhill to Halfmoon road. Once heading down, you can run most of the way to the next aid station.

Expect to arrive at Halfmoon at 19:45. If you have a drop bag, you'll probably need more clothes by now and new batteries. It is now close to midnight, if you haven't had any coffee or caffeine yet, it is time. The caffeine not only helps with alertness but it helps your body metabolize fat for energy, just what you need. Personally, I have found the coffee to be too time consuming unless it is already made and not too hot. Instead, I carry 2 or 3 caffeine pills for the night. You should only take 5 minutes at this aid station leaving at 19:50, 55 minutes ahead of the cutoff.

Hint for enjoyment: In prior segments I have suggested focusing on the external environment, now it is time to look inward. Soon you will be focusing on the finish, at this point there are few distractions other than the here and now. You will be sufficiently tired to let your guard down and possibly learn a few things about yourself. First you should feel really good about making it this far, this was all your doing, the preparation and your performance so far. You will really appreciate this because it will become evident during this section how difficult of an undertaking this really is and the fact that you are doing it. You should hold your head up and be very proud of where you are. Even if you stopped now, you have accomplished a

lot. You should also know that it will get easier as you progress, the hard part is behind you. Enjoy the moment of walking through the evergreens with soft needles underfoot. In spite of this section being tough, if you pass through in harmony with it rather than fighting it, there will be no problem.

Next Segment: Halfmoon to the Fish Hatchery

Part 8 - Halfmoon to the Fish Hatchery

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
76.5	7.0	3.5	3.5
23:00:00	2:15:00	21:45:00	1:55:00

In the preface I mentioned a mix of 40 miles of running and 60 miles of walking. Through Halfmoon, the strategy is at 40.5 miles cumulative. If you need to walk the rest of the way in, you can still finish as long as you average slightly better than 21 minute miles. Very possible, but risky. Therefore, I've decided to add just 3.5 miles more of running to the strategy for a total of 44. By doing this, you'll be able to walk the last two sections without the worry of running out of time.

This section happens to be the easiest one of the course. It is gradually downhill on a dirt road for 6 miles followed by a 1 mile slightly uphill paved section. After you leave the aid station, get into a shuffling stride and just keep doing this for as long as possible. There is little risk of falling so you can just waddle along barely picking up your feet. You want to average 15:45 per mile on this section so we are not talking about speed records. The longer you can keep the shuffle going, the more valuable time you will save.

The first landmark you will get to is the treeline where there will be people cheering you on. Yes it will be after midnight and they'll be there waiting to give you some moral support. After that, it's open space until the paved road. If you can run on the paved road, great, if not, then try to maintain a decent pace you'll be at the aid station shortly.

You'll arrive at the Fish Hatchery for your last weigh in at 21:40. Don't hesitate to get more clothes for the next section. You will be going up over 11,000 feet, it will be below freezing and possibly windy. I usually wear enough clothes to keep me warm at 10 degrees during a normal training run. The difference is that you are now exhausted, are moving slow and generating little heat. The last few years, this aid station has had terrific

potato soup. It has really given me the energy to get over Sugarloaf pass which is next on the agenda. If you can, try to leave in 5 minutes at 21:45. The reason is that, it will give you more than enough time to walk the rest of the way, spend time at the next aid station and have 15 minutes to spare at the finish. 21:45 is 1:15 ahead of the cutoff.

Hint for enjoyment: If you are on time with this strategy, at some point during this section, you will come to the conclusion that you are going to finish. It is a tremendous feeling. You only have 20+ miles to go and you are going to do it. All you need to do is keep the momentum going forward. Congratulations!

Next Segment: The Fish Hatchery to May Queen

Part 9 - The Fish Hatchery to May Queen

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
86.5	10.0	0.0	10.0
26:30:00	3:30:00	25:40:00	3:55:00

Leaving the aid station you will continue on the paved road for 1.25 miles. This will be uphill for the first mile, as you crest the top of the hill, the road bears to the right. There will be a ranch on the left with a log rail fence. Stay on the left side of the road, shortly after the fence ends, you will take a sharp left onto the trail. The turn is marked well but could easily be missed if you are half asleep and not looking for it. A suggestion for this run as well as any 100 miler is to study the map before hand and anticipate turns like these.

You are now at the base of the climb back over Sugarloaf. Take a look at your watch, you'll be at the top in 90 minutes. This can be very helpful because there are false summits. It can be very discouraging to reach what you think is the top only to find another climb ahead of you. This is the last climb of any measure in the run, in 90 minutes you will be able to coast the rest of the way. As you are climbing, look for the flashlights of runners ahead and try to catch up to them. It will distract you and help pull you up the hill. If you catch up, congratulate them for a great run and look for the next flashlight.

When at the top, check your watch, if it took longer than 90 minutes, that's ok. If it took longer than 2 hrs from the Fish Hatchery, you should consider running a little of the next stretch. It will lose 1,000 feet over the next 5

miles and is very runnable. That assumes you have any use of your quads left which is unlikely. As you're traversing the pass, it will be flat and open, look forward and down to the right, NW. You can see the lights for the May Queen aid station. If you look back and to the right, NE, you can see Leadville, the finish!

Shuffle your way down the jeep road until you come to a T at Hagerman Rd and go right. You'll be on Hagerman for 1 mile, stay to the left and look for a sharp left onto the trail. The trail will lead you the rest of the way to the May Queen aid station.

If you walked the whole section, you should be able to arrive at May Queen at 25:40. The less time you spend here, the more you'll have on the last section to finish. You can walk the last section in 4 hrs, if you leave at 25:45, you'll have a 15 minute buffer. You will be leaving 45 minutes ahead of the cutoff.

Hint for enjoyment: Your confidence should and will be building at this point. You should be able to finally stop worrying about the finish line and enjoy just being out there. Don't forget, in a few hours, the whole incredible experience will be over. Shift your focus to how wonderful the experience is that you are currently going through. The realization that it will be over soon will hit you when you see the lights of Leadville on top of Sugarloaf pass.

Next Segment: May Queen to the Finish

Part 10 - May Queen to the Finish

Total miles	Segment miles	Run miles	Walk miles
Total cutoff	Segment cutoff	Total plan	Segment plan
100.0	13.5	0.0	13.5
30:00:00	3:30:00	29:45:00	4:05:00

The May Queen aid station is my favorite one to leave. I know that once I head out, my next stop is the finish line. There are no more decisions to be made, just keep pushing forward.

It helps to break this into 3 parts, getting to the Tabor boat ramp, getting to the Boulevard, getting to the finish. The Tabor boat ramp is 6.75 miles away with rolling single track trail. I walk all the little uphill and try to run the

downhills and flats. After the boat ramp which is a concrete landing with people waiting for their runners, the trail widens and flattens. If you are going to do any more running, it will need to be over the next 3.5 miles. If you do run, this section will go very quick. Along the way, there are campgrounds with restrooms close to the trail. Outside the restrooms are water spigots if you are running low. After leaving the lake, you will cross a paved road and head down a torturous steep downhill for 1/3 mile dropping to a flat dirt, then paved road. After the railroad tracks, turn right and follow to the wide dirt road, the Boulevard. When you turn left on the Boulevard, you have 3.25 miles to the finish. It will be uphill for the most part and you will be walking. When you hit pavement again you have 1 mile to go. At the top of a small hill, you will be able to see the finish about 1,000 yards away.

At the finish line, don't forget to run the last 10 steps in to break the ribbon!

Hint for enjoyment: What can I say, smile the entire last section, you deserve it. I have found that as much as I want to walk during this last section, it gets very long. Any running will help you get to the coffee and pancakes that much sooner.

Follow on

Since posting the Leadville strategy, I have had many people write to me direct to ask for my thoughts on a 25 hr pace. This August will be my 4th attempt at 25 hrs. I have been unsuccessful maintaining 25 hour pace for the last 25 miles on my prior 3 attempts. I'm convinced this was the result of a poor energy plan and not consuming enough calories. I sincerely believe there is an effective pace to follow which is outlined below. If you choose to follow this pace, you will have lots of company. Similar to a 40 minute 10K or a 3 hr marathon, a lot will have the same goal and have the same race strategy. My experience has been that there will be a fairly large group running close together for the first 60 miles. After that, the group starts to disperse quickly and only a few make the 25 hr cutoff. Maybe some of us can be in that small group that are successful.

In my strategy to finish, I suggested running 44 miles and walking the rest. For 25 hours, you will need to run approximately 70 miles. Essentially, the walking is done climbing Hope pass both ways, most of the way from Twin Lakes to the Fish hatchery, the return over Sugarloaf pass and occasionally from Mayqueen to the finish. The time in the aid stations should be minimal, a few minutes, in the first 50 miles. After 50, depending on how well you are maintaining your pace will determine how much of a time luxury you will have in the aid stations. The split times are the times LEAVING the aid

station not arriving. If you are 10 minutes off or so, it isn't a big deal but you need to work at getting back on pace in the next section.

Aid Station	Hours
Mayqueen	2:10
Fish Hatchery	4:05
Halfmoon	5:15
Twin Lakes	7:15
Winfield	10:30
Twin Lakes	13:45
Halfmoon	16:30
Fish Hatchery	18:00
Mayqueen	21:30
Finish	25:00

Hope to see some of you in the 25 hr group as we make our way to Winfield.

Dana Roueche
