

Reaching for 100 100-mile Finishes



When I attempted to run my first 100-miler at [The Bear in 2004](#), I ran quite a few miles near the 100-mile legend, Hans-Dieter Weisshaar from Germany who was at that time 64 years old. That race was Hans's 66th 100-mile finish. That year in 2004, finished 13 of them. Hans was indeed a legend. He started running 100s at the age of 58. When I DNFed the race, and was given a ride to the finish line, I was able to watch Hans finish in 32:54 to a chorus of cheers. I was in awe.

I had failed to finish my first 100 mile race and believed that I was in way over my head at age 46. Here was a man 20 years older than me, finishing 100-milers every month. If I could only just finish one! I did get that first finish, a few months later and was hooked on running 100-milers.

Hans continued to run. He finished an astonishing 20 100-milers in one year. What was totally impressive is that his finishes each year always included some of the toughest 100s, including Hardrock 100. He coined a "Super Slam", to finish four tough mountain races in a single year that didn't need to include Western States 100. In 2007, he finished his 100th 100-miler at Hardrock 100. There were rumors that he was going to retire from running 100s, but he didn't.

100 100 milers! Hans was the king of 100s. When Hans finished his 100th, I only had seven 100-mile finishes to my name. But, I was progressing to the point where I could now finish ahead of Hans in a race. I could gage my progress on comparing our finishing times in the same races.

In 2016, Hans is 75 years old and it appears that he may have finally hung up the 100-mile running shoes. He has amassed about 140 100-mile finishes, the most in the world as of 2013. (Ed Ettinghausen passed him in 2017).



Hans-Dieter Weisshaar

As of 2018, there are a handful of others who have also finished 100 100s. Ed Ettinghausen, California (Most in the world as of 2017, 150+, 40 in one year), Dan Brenden (140+), Arizona, Monica Scholz, Canada (125+, 25 in one year), Catra Corbett, California (120+), Mike Smith, New Mexico (120+), Ray Krolewicz (105+), South Carolina, and Liz Bauer (100+), South Carolina.

I met Ed Ettinghausen (150+ finishes), for the first time in 2010 when he came to run my Pony Express Trail 100. He was very early into his ultrarunning career with only four 100-mile finishes. When he ran



Pony Express, he was still experimenting with hats and wore a coonskin hat in my honor. Shortly after that he settled on his jester attire. I still tease Ed about [sneaking up and passing him at about mile 82](#) for the win.



Ed on the left in coonskin hat

Ed, the Jester, now wears a full Jester costume when he runs. I run with him at races several times a year. He has gone on to run 135

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marathon distance runs in a year, and in 2014 finished 40 100-mile races in a calendar year, the record. He embraces the Jester theme and has his own “Jester Nation.” Ed is kind to all and very encouraging, usually with a group of runners following after him. I enjoy running with him. I’m sure in a couple years Ed will soon be top of the career list of 100 finishes. He holds several age group world and American records for long distances. In April, 2016, he ran 717 miles in ten days at Sri Chinmoy. He is age 54 in 2017.

Dan Brenden (140+ finishes), age 65 in 2016, from Phoenix, Arizona is a humble, friendly runner, and good friend of mine. He started his 100-mile career in about 2002 at the age of 51. He has completed the grand slam of ultrarunning eight times, more than anyone in history. I’ve shared many miles with Dan. You will always see him smiling and running in his short shorts. DNFs are becoming more frequent for him, but he is tough as nails and continues to do what he enjoys. He is very humble about his amazing accomplishments. I’ve tried to have him tell me how many 100-mile finishes he has, but he does not really like to put focus on himself.



Dan Brenden

In 2016, after we ran at the same race near Las Vegas, Dan sent me a note that contained: “I was impressed how hard you were pushing it even so early in the run—any way you were impressive and motivating that I really need to follow your example more and push harder—I did sprints this morning—not fun but did it—OH well it was a start in your direction. Very Nice Davy thanks for getting me going in the right direction.” Amazing! I totally look up to him but he is always looking to others to improve.

Monica Scholz (125+ finishes) age 48 in 2016, is an attorney from Canada. She has a long list of accomplishments. I’ve never had a chance to meet her, only running in a few large races with her. She began her 100-mile running career in 1999, at the age of 31. She won the 2004 Trail Runner Series, female ultra division. In 2010, she set the record for [most 100-mile finishes in a year at 25](#) (Later broken by Liz Bauer and then by Ed Ettinghausen). She has finished the very tough H.U.R.T 100 eleven times and Badwater seven times. It appears that Monica’s last 100-mile finish was in 2013.



Catra Corbett “Dirt Diva” (120+ finishes) age 51 in 2016 from California can’t be missed on the trail with her colorful dress, more than 50 tatoos and numerous piercings. She started running 100s in 1999 at the age of 34. She took up running in 1996 after finding herself in jail in 1994, a meth addict. She had abused drugs and alcohol for 20 years. She cleaned up her life, overcame her addiction, and instead became addicted to running 100 miles. In 2004 she did the 424 mile round-trip of the John Muir Trail over many 12,000 and 13,000 peaks in just over 12 days, a feat which no one has attempted to break yet.



I have run many races that she was in and we greet each other as we pass. I ran with her for the first time at H.U.R.T 100 which she has finished seven times. Her advice for life: “Always think positive. You know, things will always be better, even if you hit a rough patch in life, just use what you learned from your running: go through it, keep going, always remains positive. Sunshine behind the dark clouds!”

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Mike Smith (120+ finishes) age 58 in 2016 is from Indiana, now living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I've never met Mike. He finished the Grand Slam in 2014. Run100s.com records that he reached 100 finishes in April, 2016. He took up running 100s in 2000, at the age of 42.

Ultrarunning legend, Ray Krolewicz (105+) also is on the list, along with Liz Bauer (100+).

For years, I never had any hopes or goals at how many 100-milers I might one day finish, but with each year my finishes started to pile up. I was getting a reputation of finishing many each year. In 2011, I did set a goal to finish 10 100s that year and reached it, finishing my 47th 100. I knew that I was among the top-20 in the world at that point for career 100-mile finishes.

When I experienced my severe stress fracture in 2012, I wondered if my 100-mile days were over and if I would ever reach 50 100-mile finishes. I eventually recovered and finished my 50th that year at The Bear.

In 2015, I finished 11 100-milers, 2016, a personal record of 12, and in 2017 11 again. I reached 75 finishes in early 2016 and I finally considered the possibility of one day reaching 100 finishes. By the end of 2017 I had finished 97 100s and the 100 finish mark seemed within reach soon until I got injured in early 2018. There are two others who reached 100-finishes mark in 2017, John Taylor (100+) and Susan Donnelly (100+). John and Susan reached their 100th 100 at Superior Sawtooth 100 in September, 2017. Matt Watts is nearing 90 finishes. There is no accurate list of career finishes, but it appears that I am now in the top-10, and have the most 100-mile finishes among runners from Utah. To me this is astonishing. It seems like it was just a few years ago that I watched Hans finish his 66th. I felt like such a failure and a poor runner. I never dreamed about being on a list that included his name.

One year at Bighorn 100, I rode in a car to the start with Hans, Matt Watts and a couple other accomplished 100-milers. I realized that in the car were nearly 300 finishes to our names. In 2016, I was running in the same race as Dan Brenden and Ed Ettinghausen and saw them walking together during the night. As I went by in the other direction, I called out, "There they are, the 100-mile legends!" They laughed. I have shared many miles with the two of them. Between the two of them, they had nearly 250 100-mile finishes.

Will I reach 100? I'm asked that question frequently now. I used to brush it off, but now I hope that I will reach that milestone. Now the question is, "Which race?" The main factor is to be free from injuries, and I was seriously injured in January 2018. The other factor is age. With each passing year, staying in shape to consistently finish 100s takes more and more effort. In 2016, the problem was mostly mental. In late stages of a 100-miler I would lose interest and determination. Thoughts about quitting would arise more often. Others my age also battle the same challenge. For me, it took some serious soul-searching and mental exercises to put me back on the road to consistent finishes. But, you never know. Life's higher priorities can set this goal aside. Finishing 100s are not easy. Some runners collect marathon finishes, which to me is easy because I run a marathon run nearly every week. With 100 miles, success is far less predictable