

2015 Tussey mOUntaiNBACK Previews: Profiles in Hillage

Penn State Ultramarathon Participant: Josh Litofsky

“This is my first time running this race,” said Josh Litofsky (doctoral candidate, chemical engineering). Litofsky has run five previous ultramarathons, including one 100 miler.

“I started running for exercise when I was 13 or 14,” recalled Litofsky. “I didn't start racing until college when I ran at the NCAA D3 level at Beloit College in the steeplechase. I didn't start running ultras until I graduated from college, when I ran the Kettle Moraine 100K in Eagle, WI, and I didn't start seriously racing ultras until this past spring.”

So what was the allure of the Tussey Mountainback 50 Miler?

“After seeing the quality of runners that the Mountainback had last year, I really wanted to see what I could do against some great runners on a fast course that's in my backyard,” said Litofsky. “I have some friends doing the relay race, and since this is pretty much the only local ultra, there was absolutely no reason for me to not sign up. Also, there's a cash purse, which is always exciting.”

Many runners doing this distance are in it just to finish. Litofsky is aiming higher.

“My goal is to win. I know that pretty much everything will have to go perfectly for me for this to happen, but that's my goal going into every race. The upper end of my realistic expectations is top three, and I know that I'll still have to race really well for that to happen. This race is so fast compared to what I normally run that I'm unsure of exactly where I'll be, but after my sub-9-hour performance at Pine Creek (100K), I'm really excited to see where I'm at.”

How is Litofsky training for the Oct. 25 race?

“I've been trying to get upwards of 80-100 miles a week since early July, and I added two speed workouts a week in early August. I incorporated biking into my regimen last August, and increased strength training in late July. Right now, I'm still in slight recovery from Pine Creek (September 12), but I should be able to return to full training this weekend.”

