

2021 Runner Profile: Kaylee Frederick

Kaylee Frederick made her mark at the Tussey Mountainback 50 Mile Relay and Ultramarathon in October 2020, running this 50-mile race in the middle of her high school soccer season and becoming the ultramarathon race's youngest finisher at the ripe old age of 15. Remarkable as that was, she'll be back in Rothrock State Forest to do the Tussey Mountainback again on Oct. 31.

Frederick's run of last year's race was startling for



its impressive time (9:34:20) and also for the sprint she put on for the final 100 meters to the finish line. And she still turned up for soccer practice the next day.

"I was sore for about a week, so I definitely ran slower than normal," recalled Frederick. "But after that week, I was pretty much recovered and back to my normal playing and playing time."

Now a junior at Conemaugh Township Area Middle/High School in Johnstown, PA, Frederick is at it again on the soccer field, where she plays defense on the varsity girls' team.

And she'll be the first to tell you that it takes more than soccer practices to get ready for a race of this distance.

"Outside of school I go to CrossFit Incline every day to work out," said Frederick. "I usually go before school at 5:30 a.m., because I have soccer and work after school most days." Frederick is also in Girl Scouts, where she is working toward earning the Gold Award.

"In school I also run and throw during track and field. If I ever get any off time, I'm either studying or relaxing while hanging out with friends."

Her experience of last year's Mountainback race seemed to leave Frederick ready to return.

"I honestly loved the race so much last year. Everything about it was great. The aid station volunteers were very kind and helpful, the runners were supportive, and the course was great! The Tussey Mountainback is definitely one of my favorite races."

But Frederick hasn't just been doing typical training in the months leading up to the Oct. 31 race. She ran the Pine Creek Challenge 100-mile race on September 11, 2021, finishing in 27:37:32.

"It was definitely the hardest physical challenge I've ever gone through," recalled Frederick, "but it was so worth it once I crossed the finish line. I'd never run for that long before." Frederick's mom, Georgetta, ran 40 miles of the race during the night with her to keep her company. Frederick's previous longest run was for 11 hours and 20 minutes at the Pine Creek 50-miler two years before. "Once I hit that 24-hour mark, everything got so much more difficult. But running 100 miles as a 16-year-old was one of the biggest accomplishments I think I'll ever achieve."

With her busy life in school and out, Frederick remains practical in her outlook toward preparation for a race.

"I really haven't had much time to train, but I would consider the 100 miler a good training run to get my feet prepared for the constant pounding. When going into long races, I try not to set high goals, because then I get too stressed over it and don't perform as well. But, saying that, it would be really cool to finish this race in under 9 hours and 30 minutes."

As for her game plan, she sounds like a veteran racer.

"My strategy is really to just keep up my sugar levels and food at the beginning, so when it's difficult to eat later in the race, I'll have enough energy to continue to push hard."

The Mountainback event welcomes both recreational and competitive runners to participate on relay teams of 2 to 8 runners, as well as offering the solo ultramarathon option.

Proceeds from this year's event will support CommonFood Centre County, a non-profit, all-volunteer group whose key mission is to resource underserved and under-employed elderly, single parent families, and low-income families in Centre County and neighboring areas with nutritious food and related services.

Tussey Mountainback 50 Mile Relay and Ultramarathon